

## **City looks to use more technology, less print**

**By Anthony Welch**

The City of Manitou Springs values its local newspaper, the Pikes Peak Bulletin, but as a part of its penny-pinching efforts, it will no longer publish entire ordinances in the paper.

At its regular Tuesday night meeting, Council passed an ordinance, on second reading, enabling the City to choose to publish ordinances on its website instead. The city will still have to publish certain items such as land issue matters as mandated by state laws.

It's an effort to progress and use today's technology, and also saves the City approximately \$3,000 a year. The City will still publish ordinance titles and reference points on where to find the full ordinance. The ordinance, the brainchild of City Clerk Donna Kast, allows the City to exclusively use its website.

"Printing ordinances in full is costly," City Administrator Jack Benson said. "This ordinance's intent is to move us forward and start publishing business city council does in a more efficient manner."

Bulletin Publisher Bruce Schlabaugh addressed Council and said 10 years ago, when he started the Bulletin after the demise of the Pikes Peak Journal, that he had great support from the mayor at the time, Marcy Morrison.

"We enjoy publishing this paper. There's always great response to community issues," Schlabaugh said. "There are never two sides to an issue. There are usually about 13 sides. We've had a good time in this town."

Schlabaugh added that Manitou Springs is a hard place for a newspaper to make it. Many businesses are tourist-driven and don't need to advertise in the paper, he said. The Bulletin's advertising revenue barely pays for printing costs, and subscriptions provide just enough revenue to deliver the paper, Schlabaugh added.

The paper's publishing of public foreclosures keeps it afloat. The Bulletin has charged the City of Manitou Springs discounted rates not only for its ordinances but its quarterly newsletter's well, Schlabaugh said. He's not surprised the City is pinching pennies.

"We know we're going to lose some revenue," he said. "We would've rather had a chance to talk to city management before this came down. We're just hoping in the future there's a chance to retain revenue."

Morrison, who was also in attendance, asked Council to think about the history of having a newspaper in town and how important the newspaper is. She understands the City is trying to save money and progress by putting everything online.

"One of the things I look forward to every Friday is reading that paper," Morrison said. "It's like a tradition. It offers the community something."

Mayor Marc Snyder said the sentiment of Council is the Bulletin is very valuable to the community. He appreciates the unique coverage Council meetings get in the Bulletin.

"Not a week goes by that I don't meet somebody who says, 'I read in the paper,'" Snyder said. "Come to think of it, I don't recall anybody ;very saying, 'I read on the website.'"

Councilman Rick Barry advised hat Council be cautious about putting everything online. By doing so, the City could be excluding a good number of people, he said.

"Not everyone owns a computer or chooses to own a computer," Barry said. "There are some people who simply do not use computers."

Avenue Bed and Breakfast owner Randy Hodges expressed his support of the Bulletin. He said he likes the internet, but still loves to sit down with a newspaper.

"It's very important to our small community," he said. "A lot of people get a lot out of it. I hate to think of not having the Bulletin here to sit down and read on Friday nights."

Kast said her idea wasn't meant to try and put the paper out of business, but to save the City some money. She intends to still utilize the newspaper for some things.

"I think it's a great way to get the word out. I just didn't feel it was a great way for long, lengthy ordinances," she said.

## **Cliff House West traffic study**

Council approved the revised traffic study for Cliff House West with the stipulation certain improvements be made.

The study was required as part of the Cliff House's agreement with the City, according to Planning Director Dan Folke. Counts for the study were taken in July during five consecutive days, including three summer weekdays and a weekend.

Some of the recommended improvements include signage warning people of the driveway entrance, an improved crosswalk and a bump out on the south side of Park Avenue to improve safety of pedestrians crossing there.

The improvements coincide with the City's Phase 5B plan which will turn Park Avenue into a two-lane road. Folke estimates the road will lose possibly seven parking spaces. However, three or four spaces could be recovered by altering a loading zone or changing its hours.

## **In other business, Council...**

- Approved a Memorandum of Understanding with Manitou Springs Forward. Already allotted \$10,000, the MSForward has requested an additional \$7,500. That request will be looked at as Council continues the 2012 budget process. The Memorandum of Understanding is an informal contract that defines what the City is committed to and what MSForward has set out to accomplish.

- Approved the appointment of Hillary Mannion as an alternate to the Historical Preservation Commission. Mannion worked as a museum professional in Washington, D.C. and was involved in historical preservation work with the White House Historical Association.

- Approved a conditional use permit for a house located at 105 Trestle Trail to be used as a vacation rental.

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