

Council OKs purchase agreement for Iron Mountain

By Jeanne Davant

Manitou Springs City Council passed Tuesday night an emergency ordinance approving a lease-purchase agreement for the Iron Mountain Open Space.

Council in July approved a purchase and settlement agreement to buy Tom McGee's 99-acre property and home atop Iron Mountain for \$1.1 million. The house, which is very visible from Manitou, has long been a sore spot for people who think it spoils Manitou's mountain backdrop. McGee's efforts to build a road up the mountain to his home were vigorously opposed by the city in a lengthy and complex series of lawsuits.

McGee, wearied by the legal battle, finally decided to sell the property, and the agreement was reached just before a hearing was to be held on the case. Mayor Marc Snyder was instrumental in resolving the dispute.

Tuesday's ordinance was passed on an emergency basis because the city needs to close on the purchase by Dec. 31. Snyder and Finance Director Mike Leslie were to sign the lease-purchase documents today (Dec. 23).

"I'm so impressed with how you've handled this," Councilwoman Ingrid Richter said to Leslie and Snyder, noting that financing has been difficult to obtain in the current economic climate.

The property will be held in trust until the end of the lease-purchase terms, when it will be dedicated to the city.

Many people would like to see the "house on the hill" torn down, but its fate has yet to be decided. The Open Space Advisory Committee will make a recommendation on its disposition. The rest of the property will be preserved and managed as open space.

The city now has closed on two of the three parcels that comprise the property, Leslie said. It must close on the third parcel, which includes the house, by July 2012. -

"It's my sincere hope that we can purchase the last parcel without having to dip into the open space fund," Leslie said, noting that the city has applied for a grant to help cover the remainder of the purchase.

Also Tuesday, Council approved a resolution relating to a land parcel that the late Timothy A. Jaynes left to the city. The transaction was scheduled to be approved in El Paso County District Court later this week.

In other business, Council...

- Heard a report from Richter, who said she is working with the Metropolitan District and Parking Advisory Board on financial projections for a parking structure. Richter said she could not talk about details of the project, since it is in the initial stages, but that "we are looking for a way to finance a parking structure. It is really something we need to start looking at."

- Appointed Joy Maples to the Library Board of Trustees.

[Return to Article Index](#)