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Temple fray reaches pinnacle, but county delays decision

Arroyo Hondo neighbors spar late into night with religious group that uses hallucinogens

Phaedra Haywood | The New Mexican
Posted: Tuesday, June 14, 2011

The Santa Fe County Commission voted late Tuesday night to table until July 12 an application by a religious group to build a temple in the Arroyo Hondo area.

The public hearing before the Santa Fe County Commission concerned a proposal by the O Centro Espirita Beneficiente Uniao do Vegetal — commonly referred to as UDV — to build a 4,600-square-foot temple and other structures on a 2.5-acre parcel of land east of the city.

The group, which uses a hallucinogenic tea in its services, has been seeking approval of its master plan and preliminary development plan for nearly two years but has faced strong opposition from area residents.

Opponents of the project say it's incompatible with the residential nature of the neighborhood, that there is not enough water to support the project, and that the development will lower property values and create unwanted traffic in the area.

They are also worried the hallucinogenic tea brewed from two different Amazonian plants the group uses as its sacrament will get into the water table. Fears that UDV church members will leave the temple late at night and drive their vehicles while impaired also have been raised.

Supporters of the UDV temple project say the group is a quiet, family-oriented religious organization that has a right to exist like any other church. They also note UDV already has been meeting on the property unbeknownst to neighbors for the past 15 years without incident. The developers of the temple say their Christian-based religion reveres the natural world, teaches them to treat others with respect and compels them to be good neighbors and create a development that is as sustainable as possible. Members of the UDV group state that there have never been any auto accidents associated with the consumption of the sacramental tea and that consumption of the tea is conducted in a very controlled environment.

The County Commission Chambers were packed during Tuesday's hearing, with opponents of the project outnumbering supporters by about 3-1. Water consultants, attorneys and physicians for each side presented competing testimony about the accuracy of the information presented by their opponents.

In addition to the expert and public testimony presented during the hearing, commissioners also had 1,200 pages of water studies, storm-drainage calculations and traffic reports, and about 200 pages of letters from residents divided almost equally between the two camps.

Much of the testimony presented during the hearing was extremely technical in nature, and commission Chairwoman Virginia Vigil reminded participants on more than one occasion that the proceeding was a land-use hearing and admonished them to keep their arguments focused on issues that related to the county land-use code.

County staff has recommended approval of the project, saying it meets county code, and that it does not require any variances or set any precedence that would pave the way for similar projects.

County staff has recommended approval of the project, saying it meets county code, and that it does not require any variances or set any precedence that would pave the way for similar projects. The vote to table the matter until the next land use meeting came after 11:30 p.m. following a motion from Commissioner Liz Stefanics.

Kudos to Taos Recycling Center



Photo by Sarah Pierpont, NMRC

English Bird and Tim Gray of the **New Mexico Recycling Coalition** look on as Brandon Gutierrez accepts the Community Recycler of the Year Award for the Town of Taos.

The Town of Taos Recycling Center has operated for the past twelve years and provided the mountain community with a comprehensive drop-off recycling center used by their 5,500 town residents, as well as residents from the entire region of 32,000. Processing cardboard, mixed paper, plastic 1 & 2, glass, steel and tin cans, along with electronic scrap, white goods, carpet padding, pallets, Compact Fluorescent Lamps, and of course, the famous Taos Free Box, the program has been able to not only cover its costs, but also put revenue away for further investment into the infrastructure and program. Taos processed more than 1,300 tons of recyclable materials in 2010, (which does not include the organic and scrap metals diverted at the Taos Regional Landfill). *Courtesy NMRC*

Jo's Slow Cooker Lasagna

Josie Navarrette
Village of Los Lunas

If you are like me, you are busy after work taking your kids to softball practice, dance class, to a game, etc... and your husband might be at home sleeping all day because he leaves to work at 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. and would absolutely love a home-cooked meal before he left to work... what do you do? Well, you leave dinner cooking all day in Crock-Pot®, that's what you do! Here is just one of many recipes I have that you might find very handy some day.... Yes, you can cook pasta in the Crock-Pot®... and you can do this before you leave to work in the morning or go home for lunch and do it...(and you can do most of it before you go to bed and just throw it in the Crock-Pot®).

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- One 29-ounce can tomato sauce
- One 6-ounce can tomato paste
- 1-1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- One 12-ounce package lasagna noodles
- 12 ounces cottage cheese
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 16 ounces shredded Mozzarella cheese



DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large skillet over medium heat, cook the ground beef, onion and garlic until brown. Add the tomato sauce, tomato paste, salt and oregano, and stir until well incorporated. Cook until heated through.
2. In a large bowl, mix together the cottage cheese, grated Parmesan cheese, and shredded Mozzarella cheese.
3. Spoon a layer of the meat mixture onto the bottom of the slow cooker. Add a double layer of the uncooked lasagna noodles. Break to fit noodles into slow cooker. Top noodles with a portion of the cheese mixture. Repeat the layering of sauce, noodles, and cheese until all the ingredients are used.
4. Cover and cook on LOW setting for 4 to 6 hours. (I have left this on low up to 9 hours and it was still perfect)

Next time: a Crock-Pot® dessert that will become a big time favorite!

Growing Your Professional Garden

By: Linda Alire-Naranjo
Program Development & Training Director
New Mexico Municipal League

If your attendance at the NMLZO Annual Meeting/Workshop on September 21-23 in Taos will be considered your fourth NMLZO Workshop and you meet all of the other criteria in order to be eligible to receive your Certification then **NOW IS THE TIME** to fill out the Certification Application. Please review the application and if you determine that you meet all of the criteria, please complete the application and make note that you will be completing your fourth workshop in September.

If you would like to become certified during the upcoming conference, please submit your application and back-up documents before or by Wednesday, September 7th and send it to my attention. Please NOTE that if you do not submit all of the required back-up documents by this deadline, it may delay your certification. *You can also apply at any point in time after the September Annual Conference to become certified, however, you will not be recognized in front of your peers until the next meeting in May 2012.*

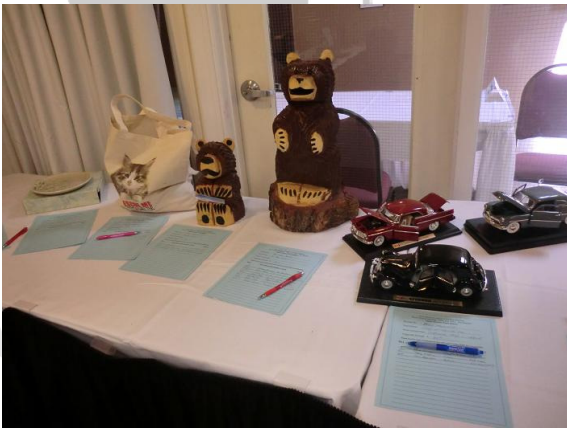


Remember, certification eligibility is based on a 100 point system of which 30 points are for attendance at four NMLZO Workshops. Upon submittal of your application, and after review and approval, you may be able to receive your prestigious Certified Zoning Official (CZO) designation during the September Workshop. Should you have any questions regarding the application and your eligibility, please call me at 800-432-2036, extension 513.

The certification application with criteria is on-line at the NMML website at www.nmml.org, click on Subsections then Zoning Officials.

SPECIAL NOTE: In order to be eligible for certification, you must be a Member of the NMLZO. A NMLZO Membership Application form can be obtained on-line at www.nmml.org, click on Subsections then on Zoning Officials.

1986 – 2011 ~ NMLZO 25th ANNIVERSARY
May 2011 NMLZO Semi-Annual Meeting – Rio Rancho



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Photos by Renée Santos

Maryanne Seiderer
City of Santa Fe
Short Term Rental/Ordinance Enforcement



I'm Maryanne Seiderer and I work for the City of Santa Fe enforcing the short term rental ordinance since January 2008. We have approximately 340 “registered” short term rentals within the city. Some people are still renting short term illegally. At some point I always find out who they are and they either need to come in and apply to become legal or I take them to court.

At first there were major concerns that the neighborhoods would be turned into commercial areas and become like hotels or B&B's. Fortunately, the neighbors that are next to the short term rentals are happy that someone is renting the house next to them and that it's being monitored not only by me but usually by a property manager. The house is not sitting empty to be vandalized or broken into by transients. It works for the homeowner and it's an extra income that helps pay for their mortgage.

Since 2008 the ordinance has been tweaked and is continuously looked at for discrepancies. Everyone who has a short term rental seems to be really happy with the way things are going. Of course there are always some complaints regarding the ordinance, but you can't please everyone, no matter how you try.



NMLZO POLOS



Want to be part of the in-crowd of promoting NMLZO...our Professional Association? Buy a NMLZO “Anniversary” Polo Shirt! They will be available at the NMLZO Conference on September 21-23 in Taos where we will commemorate our 25th Anniversary. For \$20.00, you can choose red, navy or white from the sizes available.

NMLZO caps will also be available in Tan with the standard logo at \$15 each.

Remember, this is a worthy cause as proceeds from the sales of these shirts and caps help fund NMLZO scholarships.

NMLZO

Membership Recruitment & Motivation

By: Ben Maynes, CZO, NMLZO President
Commercial Plans Reviewer – City of Santa Fe

Somewhere between being involved and becoming a part of something greater and larger than ourselves lays purpose. Without purpose, we have no reason to be on God's green earth. Thus, this is a forthright and excellent reason why we belong to the New Mexico League of Zoning Officials. One of the primary reasons I continue to believe in this Association is its performance-driven programs.

The recruitment of members is an ongoing process. The NMLZO President selects the "right arm" of the NMLZO, the District Representative Committee (DRC). This select group of dedicated zoning officials has a purpose and vision to promote the NMLZO through membership drives and conference participation. The DRC is always vigilant to make sure the internal gears of our membership program remain healthy through fresh ideas and the recharging of new members.

As a seasoned veteran of the NMLZO, I have seen motivated zoning officials climb to high ranks; I have also witnessed some not-so-motivated zoning officials dissolve into the woodwork. Being a part of the NMLZO, one of the largest (membership) and active subsections of the New Mexico Municipal League (NMML), begins with a staunch

belief that our membership is strongly supported by a solid foundation, the NMML. The benefits and involvement by the membership are unfathomable to municipalities and counties. The NMLZO provides us an avenue to solve statewide problems together and assist each other through the tough times. As a subsection of the NMML, the goals of the NMLZO are commitment, professionalism and dedication to professional development and recruitment.

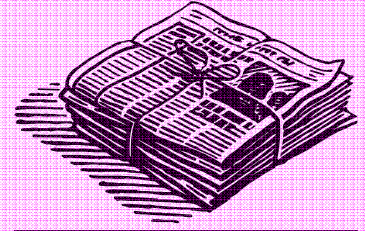
We are all here to make a difference. The long chain of Past Presidents that have served the NMLZO is a testament to the unbreakable lifeline that we continue to hold on to as we continue to promote its mission and purpose. There in the membership lies the future makeup of new NMLZO leaders -- Presidents, DRC Chairs, Vice Presidents, Board Members, etc. who are ready to "step up to the plate".

The Board and DRC of the NMLZO are visionaries with a purpose to the NMLZO's 200 plus membership. "Zoners", as we are known, stand as sentinels, protecting our municipalities and counties in many ways. The dream by a few choice individuals is still here 25 years later, available to us the members of the NMLZO and the residents of the Great State of New Mexico!

**"Que Viva el NMLZO"----
Recruit a member today!
"You have to believe to Achieve!"**



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E-mail your next article:

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We would like to thank every one of you who submitted an article for this newsletter. We're all busy and we know how hectic it gets at times, so anytime between now and the next newsletter, feel free to send Sylvia an article. We'll save it for inclusion in the next **ZONING STONE**.