



THE FOUNTAIN HILLS TIMES

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Online permitting forum

Beginning in October the Town of Fountain Hills will go live with a new online electronic permitting system - TOPPS (Town's Online Permitting and Planning System).

The town is inviting interested parties to attend a contractors' forum on Tuesday, Sept. 28, at 7:30 a.m. at Town Hall council chambers.

This forum will describe how to submit an online permit to the Town of Fountain Hills. TOPPS will allow developers, contractors and residents to file an application or check on the status of an application electronically. TOPPS will also allow contractors to request inspections and receive results online.

Wednesday, September 15, 2021

\$1.00

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Times photo by Brent Cruikshank

The Four Peaks Rotary Club of Fountain Hills installed a display of the World Trade Center twin towers surrounded by flags for the town's Sept. 11, commemoration on Saturday, Sept. 11, at Fountain Park.

Town fees Council talks waivers

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

Last fall the town adopted a new fee schedule for its services and facilities based on input from a consulting firm hired to update the fees. At that time the council asked staff to go a step further and prepare a fee waiver policy as a companion to the updated fees.

When council first reviewed the fee plan Councilman David Spelich stated, "I think we give away too much and should raise fees and legitimately collect what we are owed." He specifically requested a policy be developed on fee waivers.

At the Sept. 7 regular council session Community Services Director Rachael Goodwin presented her first concept for the new policy, and it appears it will be the subject of much council discussion before possible adoption.

At last week's meeting Spelich called for a "fair and equitable policy with no one getting a free ride."

Goodwin said in preparing the plan staff noted three categories of fee waivers related to Community Services. Those include special events, Community Center use and sports groups/activity.

"Each of these face separate challenges, as there is no comprehensive policy

that advises when, where and who may receive fee waivers," Goodwin said. "There is also limited documentation regarding the extent of the waivers and inconsistent application of the existing policy."

"Staff have begun to develop suggestions and recommendations on how this new policy may take shape, however, council input is sought to ensure that they are consistent with leadership's vision."

"Staff have begun to develop suggestions and recommendations on how this new policy may take shape."

Rachael Goodwin
Community Services
Director

In developing a new policy, Goodwin said she would like to move away from using full-cost waivers and only consider fee discounts up to 50 percent. She is also proposing criteria for eligibility for any type of fee waiver. Those include:

*Must be a Fountain Hills non-profit group.

*Must not be fundraising or have revenue component to the event such as

(cont. on page 6A)

Fountain Hills remembers 9/11

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

Fountain Hills was among no doubt thousands of communities nationwide that paid tribute to the victims, both surviving and deceased, on the 20th anniversary of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, this past Saturday.

Mayor Ginny Dickey led

the commemoration at the amphitheater in Fountain Park Saturday evening with more than 100 in attendance.

Dickey acknowledged Michael Taddonio, a cousin lost in the attack, her father, Vincent Russo, whose sculpture "Brothers" depicting police and firefighters in the attack, is on display in the Town Hall

lobby, as well as her son, Brian Chin, a Scottsdale Fire captain who participated in that city's ceremonies earlier on Saturday.

In a town proclamation from Dickey, she said, "Sept. 11, 2001, the United States endured the most devastating terrorist attack on American soil leading to the tragic deaths and injuries of thousands of

innocent people.

"Twenty years later the country continues to, and shall forever, mourn those who lost their lives at the Pentagon, the World Trade Center and in a field in SW Pennsylvania.

"Many first responders, rescue and recovery workers, volunteers, and

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Council considers uses for Rescue Plan Act funds

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

The Town of Fountain Hills is slated to receive \$8.4 million in federal assistance coming from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), divided between the current fiscal year and next fiscal year.

At its regular session last week, the Town Council approved a plan that would use those funds for public safety, primarily the town's contract with Rural/Metro for fire and emer-

gency medical services.

Staff determined that 80 percent of fire department responses are medical related and proposed that 80 percent of the funding go to the fire and medical services. With approximately \$4.2 million each year, \$3.1 million goes to the Rural/Metro contract and just over \$1 million to the MCSO law enforcement agreement. Staff proposed the 80/20 split was chosen because the ARPA funding has more restrictions than the previous CARES Act

when the money was split evenly between fire and law enforcement.

Councilwoman Peggy McMahon questioned whether 80 percent wasn't a high number since the calls needed to be related to COVID. Councilman Mike Scharnow noted that COVID protocols now relate to nearly all medical responses, and Fountain Hills Rural/Metro Fire Chief Dave Ott confirmed for *The Times* that COVID

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Hospital zoning approved

By Bob Burns
Times Reporter

The Town Council had little problem approving an amendment to the zoning ordinance to clarify the zoning in which a hospital facility is permitted, as well as providing a clear definition of a "hospital."

The vote at the Sept. 7

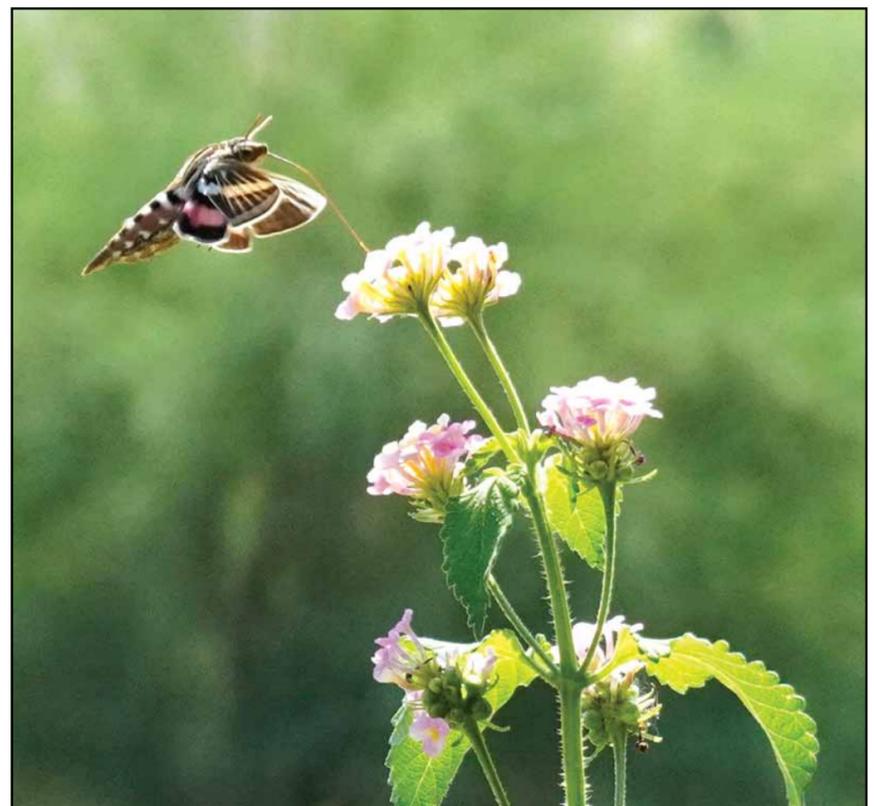
regular council session was unanimous and in agreement with about a dozen members of the public who offered their perspectives.

The amendment allows hospital facilities in all commercial zoning districts; C-2 and C-3 by right and in the C-1 and CC districts with a special use permit allowing for 24-hour

operation.

Earlier this year when staff and Planning and Zoning Commission were considering the proposed amendment, there were rumors that some businesses were attempting to bring substance abuse detox and rehab facilities

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Fountain Hills aflutter

Fountain Hills is positively fluttering with moths and butterflies, the result of a healthy monsoon season. Above, *Times* Creative/Production Director Duke Kirkendoll captured the symbiotic nature between local flora and fauna just outside the office of *The Fountain Hills Times*.

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INSIDE THIS WEEK

Opioid epidemic:

Community invited to forum focused on dangers, treatment.

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COVID plan:

FHUSD continues to hammer out safety measures.

See Page 14A

Citizen participation:

Council approves zoning amendment.

See Page 7A

WEATHER

	H	L	P
Tues., Sept. 7	101	79	--
Wed., Sept. 8	100	82	--
Thurs., Sept. 9	106	79	--
Fri., Sept. 10	105	79	--
Sat., Sept. 11	103	77	--
Sun., Sept. 12	105	79	--
Mon., Sept. 13	105	74	--

For weather updates and forecasts go to fhtimes.com

