

Town of Edgewood

Howard Calkins, Mayor

Report to the Citizens

As Mayor of Edgewood I feel I must comment on several Town concerns that have been brought to my attention:

Sewer

If we want to keep our ground water safe from commercial contamination, a sewer system for the businesses along Route 66 and 344 is the ONLY responsible solution. Businesses are located more closely together and put out far more sewage and potential contaminants than homes do. That combination will have negative consequences for Edgewood if we do not act now and get a commercial sewer system in place.

I have supported a sewer system in the business areas of Edgewood because we must keep our ground water safe. To suggest Edgewood doesn't need a commercial sewer and wastewater treatment facility is completely irresponsible and shortsighted. I want to keep Edgewood's water safe now and for future generations.

Animal Control

I strongly support animal control for the safety of Edgewood residents. The Council has directed staff to develop a sensible animal control ordinance that addresses public safety concerns. That ordinance is nearly ready for Council vote, so I anticipate we will have an ordinance very soon.

The Council has approached this in a very practical manner. I directed staff to negotiate with Moriarty and Torrance County for a regional facility. Those negotiations are nearly complete and a facility will be available to serve the region in the very near future. Edgewood will share the cost of the building and operational expenses which means we save a substantial amount of money to use toward other services for Edgewood residents. I believe this approach of using shared facilities with our own animal control officer gives Edgewood the service it needs in an economical manner.

Roads

This is a subject near and dear to all of us. I have been a resident of southern Santa Fe County for 68 years, and since Edgewood became a Town there is no doubt that our roads are definitely better than ever before. That's something to be proud of, but the Council and I believe we need to continue to improve roads in Edgewood.

We have graveled eight miles of Town roads and the grader is out there nearly every day keeping up with community needs. Snow removal had some rough times last year, but this year we have a better plan in place and snow removal has been much more effective. The majority of subdivisions in Edgewood (60%) are private roads, which the Town cannot legally maintain; the remaining 40% are getting more attention that they ever previously received. If you are not sure whether your road is public or private, you can call the Town Office to obtain that information; staff will be happy to get an answer for you. Our record on public road maintenance is good and getting better all the time. That's the simple verifiable truth of the matter.

Cell Towers

The Town is doing everything legally possible to control the existing cell tower. Changes may be possible in the future, and we have not given up on this issue-we simply must follow the laws of the state and county to accomplish this goal.

Parks & Recreation

Edgewood has made great progress in bringing recreational programs into the community. I have been a strong supporter of Edgewood's growing parks and recreation program. This last summer we held a very successful summer day camp for elementary-aged children. The program received an overall rating of 9+ from parents and children.

Parks and recreation is also working on a recreation facility that we hope will one day include a pool. The initial plan is for athletic fields and a recreation building. As funding becomes available a pool would be added. We have come a long way in a short time. Recreation is something we all want, and I will continue to support it.

Annexation and Campbell Ranch Master Plan

The 14,000-acre annexation includes Campbell Ranch and private lands between Campbell Ranch and the Town limits. Those private landowners included in the annexation voluntarily signed a petition to be included in the annexation.

Though the vision of the project seems ambitious it will position Edgewood to provide its residents with much needed services and infrastructure. Sales tax revenue, the Town's principal income source, will be significantly increased through the development of Campbell Ranch. These additional funds will be available to all Town residents to pay for roads, safety, animal control, the swimming pool, recreation center and youth programs.

Litigation

From feedback received by the Town Council and staff, some residents are still under the impression that Campbell Farming Corporation had as a bargaining ploy offered to buy the Town of Edgewood a sewer. That is simply not the case. Using new legislation known as Public Improvement District (PID) Campbell Ranch landowners and residents will pay their own way through self-taxation. This innovative financing plan will fund liquid waste management as well as public safety services including fire and police protection. This will be an asset to all Edgewood residents.

Another misconception is that homes will pop up overnight. Campbell Ranch will be phased in over a number of years. And in keeping with the Campbell Farming Corporation tradition of preserving the environment, approximately 60% of the Master Plan will be preserved as open space. That includes more than 2000 acres of the Monte Largo mountain range and 900 acres of South Mountain.

Since the annexation of private property leading to Campbell Ranch and of Campbell Ranch the Town of Edgewood has been threatened with litigation. Now the Town is facing a lawsuit and two appeals as a result of the annexation the first appeal was filed by Santa Fe County. The second appeal was filed by the State Highway and Transportation Department. The lawsuit was filed by Town Councilor, Bob Stearley; Candidate for Town Council, Paul Hoffman; and resident, Linda Sparling.

According to court records, the two appeals filed by the County and NMHTD were filed because the Town did not obtain consent to annex county roads within the area. In addition, the county contends that the annexation does not conform to state laws that say municipal annexations must be contiguous. The county further contends that the Town would not be able to pay for basic services to the area. Our Town attorney believes these issues can be worked out.

As for the Stearley, Hoffman and Sparling lawsuit; they allege the Town did not legally designate the Campbell Ranch area as a master plan area, that the Town violated procedural rules when the council approved development rules for the property before the property was legally annexed into the Town, that any municipal annexation is not complete until 30 days after it's approved and that it's a shoestring annexation and violates state law. The suit calls on a judge to void the annexation as unconstitutional. That means that until this is resolved votes cast by those in the annexed area will not be counted unless a judge orders them to be counted. And the annexed area votes can be contested even after the judge's ruling that they be counted.

This is the second lawsuit Town Councilor Bob Stearley has filed against the Town he serves. The first lawsuit was filed in 2000 when he contested the last election. After months of legal wrangling a judge found in favor of the Town. This lawsuit cost the Town of Edgewood more than \$32,000; that money would have put a lot of gravel on the Town roads.

Sincerely,

Howard Calkins
Mayor