

Mayor proclaims Constitution Week

FROM STAFF REPORTS

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The national celebration of Constitution Week will end Wednesday.

The week-long commemoration of America's most important document is one of the country's least known official observances. At the request of the Broken Arrow Creek Chapter of National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Broken Arrow Mayor Craig

Thurmond proclaimed Sept. 17-23 Constitution Week. The chapter received the official proclamation earlier this month.

To celebrate Constitution Week, Broken Arrow Creek member and Constitution Committee Chair Diane Kempe created an interactive display for children at Broken Arrow South Library.

Every few days Kempe changes the display to keep children interested — and

the information fresh.

"It was fun to create the display. I believe it is important for children to start studying the Constitution and early American history as soon as they can. Children are never too young to learn the importance the Revolutionary War period had on the nation as it is today."

In addition to Thurmond's declaring Constitution Week, the Broken Arrow Creek chapter dis-

seminated Constitution Week yard signs for members to display, and took Constitution facts and handouts to locations throughout the city.

The tradition of celebrating the Constitution was started many years ago by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). In 1955, the Daughters petitioned Congress to set aside Sept. 17-23 annually to be dedicated for the observance of Constitution Week.



TRYING OUT THE OLD WAY — Diane Kempe's grandson Calvin finds out what it's like to write with a quill.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

City's Comprehensive Plan changes with times

BY JOHN FERGUSON

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The Broken Arrow City Council showed that the 1997 Comprehensive Plan that guides the city planning could be changed to fit the times.

That happened at the regular Tuesday night meeting when a 19.64-acre development set for Level 2 (single family residences) was approved to change to Level 3 (for high density apartments) near Omaha Street and east of Elm Place.

The vote was 3-0 as Mayor Craig Thurmond and councilman Scott Eudey recused themselves from the discussion and vote.

The development still has some hurdles left to clear, but neighbors and the architect Larry Kester, who represented the developer group,

hashed out the Elm Ridge Crossing II plan.

The discussion touched on traffic issues, being built so close to schools and another apartment complex, some drainage points and the potential extension of a street into a near by neighborhood.

However, the real point of contention was the surprise that the Comprehensive Plan (CP) could be changed at all. Opposition speakers reminded the council of recent meetings where the CP was held up as unchangeable.

"The plan exists," said Darin Swinney. "Why are we changing it? Is it right for the city to change (the CP) for a single individual?"

The proposed development will be upscale apartments rising two- and three-stories high. The rent will range from \$850 to \$1,200, according to Kester.

If built, it will be very close to

the schools at Country Lane. It was proposed that part of the development will include school bus pick up and drop off points right next to the 300 or so apartment complex.

"The apartment would worsen traffic," said Bill Day. "We bought to get away from traffic. The concern is traffic will be bad for a long time."

One speaker talked of the 2,800 apartments already in the area. Another spoke of the 2,745 children and their safety from potential predators that might live so close to the schools.

"It's a huge fear of mine," said Erin Duin.

Kester attempted to allay the fears.

"There are drainage issues and we will find ways as best we can to deal with it," Kester said. He added that the school and the developer would work together on a pond

system.

Council members reminded the audience that housing trends are going away from single-family units to apartments.

"The entire (Home Owners Association) board is opposed to this change," said HOA president David Pearsall.

Others were worried about property values and crime. In the end, the change moved forward after the vote.

In other council action:

- Fire Chief Jeremy Moore made a pitch for the council to approve a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant that will fund the salaries and benefits for nine new firefighters for two years.

That was approved 5-0.

- Acting City Manager Russell Gale spent his last meeting as acting CM. He will return to his Human

Resources job with a pay increase for doing a yearlong double-duty.

Gale stepped in when Thom Moton resigned July 2014. The council showed its appreciation for Gale's and city attorney Beth Anne Wilkening's hard work.

"Russell and Beth Anne have done well and kept the city more than between the curbs," said Thurmond.

The new CM, Michael Spurgeon, took over on Monday.

- Spurgeon has already been assigned to be part of the Indian Nations Council of Governments Board of Directors and the General Assembly.

- The city settled a lawsuit with Green Acre Sod Farms for \$50,000 for damage done to the business.

- The City will add one more holiday to its calendar. It was approved that Dec. 24 would also be a day off from work.

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