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## **Senseless actions weaken Foothills' community**

**by Ronald Hopp, Executive Director of Foothills Park & Recreation District**

In response to recent news articles regarding issues between Foothills Park & Recreation District and the Mesa View Estates HOA, I would like to provide further detail. This is an extremely complex issue and it is important the residents of our District are fully informed.

In May 2009, following months of rumors and threats, a letter from the Mesa View Estates HOA notified that they would like to exclude from the District and purchase all of the District's property in the neighborhood. After several months of correspondence and meetings trying to resolve differences and negotiate a possible agreement, it became increasingly obvious that they were unwilling to work with us. They indicated they wanted to take control of Estates Park, eliminate taxes they pay to the District and possibly wanted to build private facilities in the park. Throughout conversations regarding Estates Park, we communicated that we provide the same level of service to them as everywhere in the District. Additionally, Mesa View residents already pay less in taxes than the rest of the District.

In November 2009, a final letter from the HOA noted that they would take legal action to exclude. We responded to all Mesa View residents by providing accurate information and showing transparency as we didn't feel their board was providing full disclosure to their homeowners. Foothills hosted an informational meeting on January 28 as another attempt to inform residents. We are extremely concerned for Mesa View homeowners that their board is trying to get petitions signed to exclude without educating them on the required legal process and costs associated. The exclusion process includes a hearing where our Board listens to petitioners and determines if their desire to exclude is in the best interest of the petitioners, all District homeowners, and the District itself. By law, petitioners would be responsible for all the costs associated for a hearing to be held.

Regarding the pending lawsuit, our Board decided to change to a ward system of representation. A Court order approving the change was issued in November 2009. The goal was to ensure fair and equal representation for all areas of the District. Additionally, the change ensures that a majority of the board will not reside in one small area, with the potential to do irreparable harm to the District such as appropriating operational or capital dollars disproportionately to an area and causing an unfair situation for the rest of the District. Despite the assertion that the District's action was illegal, a signed court order indicates the contrary. Unfortunately, their lawsuit will end up costing all taxpayers of this District, and will doubly cost the residents of Mesa View.

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We are disappointed by the counterproductive actions taken by the Mesa View Estates HOA. We have worked hard to become better stewards of tax dollars, work with the community to accomplish goals, enhance transparency and become more efficient in our operations. Senseless actions like this hinder that progress, deter cooperation and weaken the community.

To learn more about this issue and review documents posted on the Foothills website, visit [www.ifoohills.org/MesaViewEstates.asp](http://www.ifoohills.org/MesaViewEstates.asp)

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*Foothills Park & Recreation District, founded in 1959, serves a community of 90,000 residents in a 28 square mile area of unincorporated Jefferson County generally bounded by Hampden Avenue south to C-470 from Sheridan Boulevard west to the Dakota Hogback. The District operates the Ridge Recreation Center, Edge Ice Arena, Lilley Gulch Recreation Center, Peak Community and Wellness Center, four outdoor swimming pools, Indoor Sports Arena, Foothills Golf Course complex, Meadows Golf Course, and 70 park sites totaling more than 2,400 acres and including four regional parks, 42 neighborhood and community parks and 24 greenbelts. In addition Foothills manages six regional trail corridors for public use, which, combined with park trails, total more than 31 miles. For more information visit [www.ifoohills.org](http://www.ifoohills.org) ,or call 303.409.2100.*