

PUBLIC NOTICE: WILDWOOD FIRE STATION AND NEW AMBULANCE SERVICE IN JEOPARDY

The Monarch Fire Protection District, which serves large portions of west St. Louis County, including a portion of the City of Wildwood announced today that the planned replacement for Fire House #2 may not come to fruition. Construction of this station, which includes budgeted facilities for a future ALS ambulance, has been repeatedly blocked by Wildwood elected officials. Fire District officials describe nearly 26 months of ever-changing site plans, building construction and building design requirements that have resulted in legal action currently slated for trial in late August. The start of this station has been held up since June 2020 after voters overwhelmingly passed a bond issue for its construction.

More than a year ago, the Conditional Use Permit needed for construction was granted, only to be rescinded a few weeks later. Additional studies and testing began being added to a list of new requirements including a professional archeological study, environmental testing and finally an independent professional traffic study. When all were met, Wildwood unexpectedly and arbitrarily rejected the traffic study and still denied permission for this station to be built. Fire houses do not typically impact traffic flow and, with the new location about a third of a mile away on the same street, its effect on traffic would be insignificant. The costs of ongoing delays and associated additional costs to taxpayers became untenable, forcing Monarch to turn to the courts for relief.

Rebuilding at the House #2 current site is not an option since Wildwood requires a minimum of two acres and the current site is 1.2 acres with no possibility of acquiring adjacent acreage. Accordingly, Monarch purchased sufficient land approximately one-third of a mile east of the current fire house and is ready to build a new station which is to house an ALS Ambulance. This will provide significantly improved Emergency Medical Service to Wildwood and surrounding areas. The ALS Ambulance that is planned for the new station, as well as today's larger more capable fire/rescue trucks, understandably, do not fit into the current station that was constructed more than 52 years ago.

In its sixty plus years of Monarch's existence, updating and building new stations has always been met with welcoming arms by other St. Louis County municipalities for whom Monarch provides Fire and EMS services.

Questions about this matter should be sent to Fire & EMS Chief Cary Spiegel at spiegel.c@monarchfpd.org or 314-514-0900 Ext 2200.