

The main suggestion was that the town bring in a certified public accountant (CPA) to provide a high-level review and to assist for a couple of hours a month to help close out the books and help develop policies and procedures. This should help to develop a usable process and make future audits go more quickly.

Mayor John Cressman thanked Green for his honesty and remarked that there were too many deficiencies, some of which were repeat findings from previous years. Trustee Rich Kuehster recalled that last year the town had received high marks. David Green responded that last year he did not put as much detail in the letter and a

lot of issues were written off due to the town converting to new software from White Mountain, which was an improvement from previous years. Green noted that he was able to gather enough audit evidence to issue a clean opinion that the financial statements are fairly represented.

Town Manager Cathy Green-Sinard noted that a number of the issues were taken care of but additional work was needed. Green-Sinard said she had talked to several accountants and would come back to the council with three proposals for an accountant to come in two days a month to help keep track of the town's books and provide an extra set of eyes.

Private fence on town property

Green-Sinard raised an item for discussion regarding the town gate at the intersection of Lake Avenue and Star View Circle just southeast of the lake. The town had put the gate up on an unimproved right of way because kids were taking four-wheel-drive vehicles back there and starting bonfires. The town put dirt berms on either side of the gate so that no one could easily drive around the gate. This seemed to calm down unwanted activity.

Green-Sinard indicated that Kipp Murray, who lives on Star View, fenced his property right up to the town gate. She reported that there were some complaints that the fence had to pass through the town's right of way to be attached to the gate. She said Murray feels that he has done the town a favor in securing the property from trespassers; others feel this is a public right of way and they

should have access. There are also additional lots that are not currently developable, that can only be reached by this right of way. Green-Sinard suggested he bring the issue to the board for resolution.

Murray spoke to the council and indicated he improved the gate last October. Before that, police had been constantly having to deal with issues in those back lots. A lot of local kids went back there, built bonfires, and got inebriated, he said. Since the gate has been improved, there haven't been any new occurrences. He also mentioned that a woman had fallen to her death while hiking in the back lots, creating a liability for property owners. He complained that people park at the intersection blocking the fire hydrant despite "no parking" signs. He noted that there is ample parking and access from the Santa Fe trailhead. Murray said the town hadn't accepted responsibility for maintaining the right of way, and therefore there is only access for the property owners and not for the public. Murray asserted that the town is encouraging trespassing by creating that access.

Trustee Paul Banta, who lives in the area, said he had not seen people parking near the intersection. His biggest concern was that there is a fence at the front and at the back, which implies that Murray is taking steps to appropriate town land for himself. Murray indicated he had no interest in appropriating the land and that that since people would be fenced into his property, he had to fence the back gate to prevent them from coming in. Murray noted that lot owners, neighbors, police, and fire all have keys to that gate. He said he and other property owners are concerned about the liability if the town were to put in a trailhead and that they would want a liability waiver from the town in case anyone gets hurt.

Town lawyer Maureen Juran noted that the land is owned by the town and that no one can adversely possess government-owned land. She also indicated that the town would not provide a liability waiver. It is up to property owners to keep people off their property by putting up signs or using other methods. It is a public roadway for all of the public; the town can, at any time, say you've encroached on town property and must remove any changes. Mayor John Cressman suggested that the fence be opened up by moving the posts back 24 inches so people can walk back there but not drive.

Green-Sinnard said that the town had asked Murray to move the fence and he said he would do so in April, but it never happened. She said if he moved it two feet, the town would be happy. Cressman indicated it was good resolution. A motion was made to require Murray to remove the back fence and to move the fence 2.5 feet away from the gate toward the Santa Fe Trail to allow bikes to get through. The motion carried unanimously.

Other business

- The town unanimously approved a business license for Purple Door LLC, a company that makes vintage signs and is owned by John Craft and his wife Deb. The company is located at 579 County Line Road.
- The town unanimously approved a business license for Arlene's Beans LLC at 56A Highway 105, across from The Rock House. The business will include a convenience store, takeout Mexican food and, upon approval of a liquor license, beer and wine.
- The town adopted ordinance 2.04.125 of the Palmer Lake municipal code to publish only the title of any new ordinances in the paper with a notice that the body of the ordinance can be viewed online and in person at Town Hall after the approval of voters in the November election.
- The town approved a lien on two properties for failure to pay outstanding water bills of over \$7,000.
- The town postponed discussion on bids for HVAC work in Town Hall, sending it back for more information.
- Town lawyer Juran is working on reviewing code to implement the wholesale marijuana excise tax and public safety tax extension that passed in the November election.

The next two meetings will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 10 and Dec. 24, at Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent. Meetings are normally held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Information: 481-2953 and www.townofpalmerlake.com.

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