

Here are some of the questions and comments:

- “We don’t need annexation, it’s more bureaucracy in the safest part of the county.”
- “Is the fire department dependent on annexation?”
- “The boundaries of the annexation need to be clarified?”
- “The new Property Tax Assessment numbers are not beneficial in swaying a decision.”
- “What the TOM has done with their downtown area, allowing developers to infest the town like locusts is not inspiring, and the annexation appears to be greed driven by the new assessments, it looks like a disingenuous money grab, and more honesty is needed.”
- “We do not want any other water, sewer district, or electric company, and with only one school, Gleneagle has a great thing going, we don’t need annexation.”
- “How would it affect Antelope Trails Elementary School, school districting and D20?”
- “It was disappointing to find out about the meeting from Nextdoor.com on Aug. 25, prompting a canvass of the neighborhood to get the word out.”
- “I found out about the meeting about 90 minutes beforehand, and the presentations look time consuming, just how long had the town been planning the meeting?”

- “The communication is abysmal, I heard about it on the 5 p.m. news on Channel 5.
- “Pleasant View Estates residents were not notified; we are not part of Gleneagle.”
- “Are the Monument residents satisfied with the performance of the Public Works Department?”
- “Growth looks out of control and over expanded, and why did Donala Water and Sanitation District (DWSD) help Monument out with water about five years ago?”
- “This looks like a water grab, and Gleneagle has the best water in the area, with a separate aquifer from Denver and its own wells.”

Several residents said they were confused about why the meeting was organized, and the majority expressed their appreciation for the fire and police departments.

In response, LaKind said he had not been involved with organizing the meeting and there had been zero discussion at the Monument Town Council meetings. He said it was no skin off his back whether annexation is pursued or not, the town would have less work, no additional requirements, and no legal fees. Monument is not making money out of annexation, and there are other Town Council members to ask and meeting minutes to confirm. He wished the residents that approached him at the Street Fair had attended the meeting. Monument has no control over Colorado Springs

annexing Gleneagle and the residents can choose to do nothing or go with Colorado Springs, he said.

Kovacs said MFD is already serving the Gleneagle district and east to Highway 83 (Station 5), and annexation would not change the level of service. However, if Gleneagle residents were to decide to annex into Colorado Springs, MFD would have to negotiate the sale of Stations 4 and 5, retain the apparatus and have 24 firefighters to either absorb some into the remaining stations or lay them off. The greatest loss would be losing the firefighters, he said.

Foreman said he had organized the meeting, in an effort to hear from the residents, and based on the feedback received, it is to do nothing, and he said in response:

- The meeting was announced on the town website and via multiple social media sites last week.
- Gleneagle residents would be eligible to run for office in Monument, vote for ballot measures, and make decisions.
- If annexation were to go ahead, residents would pay 7.63% sales tax and the extra 1 cent that Gleneagle and some Monument residents pay to support the voter-approved Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority for road maintenance, capital projects and transportation needs.
- Monument property taxes are assessed 5.75 mills.
- The annexation bound-

aries to the east had not been worked out before the meeting but would likely extend to Roller Coaster Road.

- Gleneagle’s neighbors to the north reside in Triview Metropolitan District (TMD), a separate special district with different taxation, managing its own wells, roads, and infrastructure, to include the construction of the Northern Delivery System pipeline project.

LaKind said the overlay of the school districts would not change, and that the TOM only has one school within the town; the rest are located in unincorporated El Paso County. DWSD would still provide the water and sanitation to the residents. The property tax bills from the El Paso County treasurer break down how much is paid into the districts by each resident. The school districts are self-governing and there would be no change there, he said.

Note: None of the water districts in northern El Paso County has its own exclusive aquifer. They do operate their own wells within their districts, typically extracting groundwater from the Denver and Arapahoe aquifers. Districts have existing interconnects should emergencies occur, and any water exchanged between districts would be purchased or replenished. See www.ocn.me/v16n9.htm#tmd. DWSD supplied TMD in late June/early July 2016 after a 5-foot break occurred. DWSD was reimbursed \$151,943 for providing the water. See www.triviewmetrodistrict.com.

Residents of Monument receive electricity service from Mountain View Electric Association.

Resident Jones said the Gleneagle community was not fully represented at the meeting, and it is not fair to shut it down or go forward because most of the residents did not receive any information or notification. As strong as the meeting is against annexation, there has to be more representation from the neighborhood and more communication, she said.

Foreman said the meeting was preliminary and the boundaries for annexation were not defined before the meeting and that would require working with the county. If the residents want to reach out to the TOM staff, that would be the next step. Any annexation would require 51% voter approval and requires resident initiation. He apologized for the missteps in communication and thanked the residents for attending the meeting.

In conclusion, the last resident to speak requested a show of hands for or against annexation. The majority of residents stood in opposition to any annexation and the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Note: On Aug. 30, a letter of apology from the town manager to the residents of Gleneagle was posted at www.townofmonument.org.

Natalie Barszcz can be reached at nataliebarszcz@ocn.me.

Monument Town Council, Sept. 5 and 18

Unanimous vote hopes to put ethics allegations to rest

By Chris Jeub

The Monument Town Council met twice in September to swear in and promote new officers and staff, pass ordinances to clean up the town’s permitting code, and grant the local ice cream shop a liquor license to expand its services. The council also broke into executive session, of which the mayor abstained, to prepare a response for two remaining ethics charges from an independent investigation into a previous council meeting. The resolution, which passed unanimously, was expressed with hope that this would end “frivolous allegations.”

Promotions

On Sept. 5, Police Chief Patrick Regan administered the oaths of office to three new police officers: Pablo Barrientos, Morgan Chapman, and William Rios, underscoring their commitment to serving the town. A noteworthy promotion took place as Deputy Town Clerk

Tina Erickson was elevated to the position of town clerk. Mayor Mitch LaKind remarked that it was “long overdue.” Erickson reflected on her journey, stating, “I started in 2017 working as a front desk admin, and now here we are.” Erickson had successfully passed the Colorado Municipal Clerks Association examination, solidifying her qualifications for this pivotal role within the community’s administration.

All ordinances pass unanimously

The council passed four ordinances unanimously.

- Ordinance No. 18-2023: The council addressed an inconsistency in the Monument Municipal Code related to the approval process for final plats. Town Planner Jeff Liljegen explained, “Current code contradicts itself in approval of final plats, creating confusion.” The change man-

dates public hearings before the Planning Commission and Town Council for Final Plat applications. Councilmember Marco Fiorito led a short discussion about updating language in the code to reflect “Town Council” instead of “Board of Trustees” in line with the Home Rule Charter, a change anticipated following the 2022 election.

- Ordinance No. 19-2023: Liljegen presented this ordinance which focused on amending a section of the Municipal Code related to signs and awnings. The Planning Commission voted unanimously to approve the revision, simplifying the code and ensuring its coherence. This change was deemed necessary as it, in the words of Erickson, “removed chapters that are confusing.”
- Ordinance No. 20-2023:

Town Attorney Bob Cole presented an ordinance that approved a real property exchange with Porchlight Properties LLC. This exchange was designed to benefit the town’s water supply system by securing property where a new well sits. Councilmember Steve King inquired about potential implications for the Santa Fe Trail and right-of-way for expanding Beacon Lite Road. Town Manager Mike Foreman clarified that adequate right-of-way would be available for road widening as the area develops.

- Ordinance No. 21-2023: In a presentation by Foreman, the council authorized the acquisition of real property described as Lot 2, Block 1, Buttonwood Park Subdivision No. 2, located near the current Town Hall. For several years, the town

had been trying to purchase these lots for the benefit of the community. King, seeking clarification, asked if this ordinance committed the town to the purchase, and Foreman emphasized that negotiations and further studies would be conducted in future executive sessions.

Executive session addressed ethics complaint

The council convened an executive session on Sept. 18. This session delved into two critical topics: 1. regarding personnel matters involving the town manager and 2. regarding the partial dismissal and ethics complaint from the Independent Ethics Commission. Attorney Cole presided and Mayor LaKind abstained.

The complaint encompassed several issues related to town staff, with most of the complaints being dismissed by the state commission. However, two allegations moved forward. First, it was alleged that Mayor LaKind advised the council on a matter in which he had a personal interest. Secondly, there were concerns about the mayor’s possible conflict of interest during the April 11 meeting of the Town Council. During this meeting, the council had approved payment of Mayor LaKind’s legal invoice for work that had been deemed beneficial to the town.

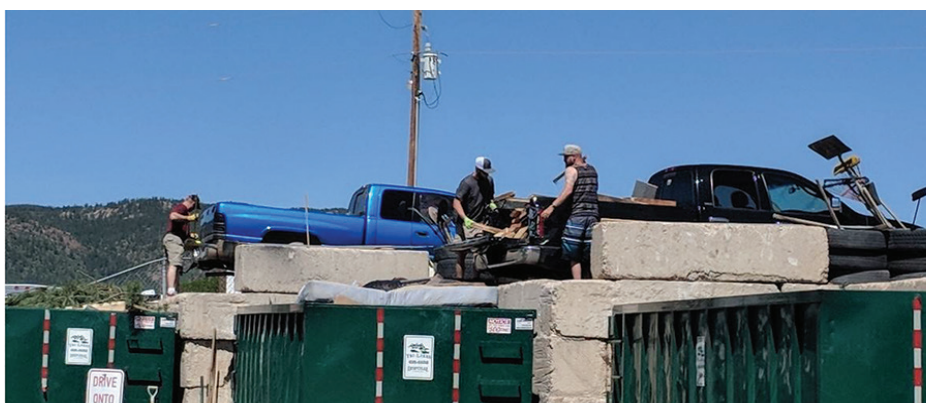
Cole expressed his opinion that these complaints appeared to be an attempt to “harass and embarrass” the new Town Council. He further explained that when faced with tort claims, the town has a responsibility to defend its personnel. The resolution passed during the session directing the town attorney and staff to provide a response to the complaints, emphasizing the alignment of interests between the mayor and the town.

Councilmember Ken Kimple inquired about the deadline for the response, to which



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