

# Our Community News

Volunteers reporting on community issues in Monument, Palmer Lake, and the surrounding Tri-Lakes area



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Free

Visit [OCN.ME](http://OCN.ME) on the web. We now have audio posted for many of the recent articles and videos for some events.



## Local Events

Readers should assume that event information published in this issue is subject to change and information should be confirmed a day or two before the event by calling the information number or checking the organization's website.

See pages 18-19 for event locations and other details of these and many other local events.

- OCN mailing days, Thu., Feb. 29 & Apr. 4, approx. 9 am-noon.
- Tri-Lakes Senior Center Age Strong workshops: Fri., Feb. 9 & 16
- Winter fun at Fox Run Regional Park, Sat., Feb. 10, 10-2 pm
- Kiwanis Stars of Tomorrow application deadline Sat., Feb. 10
- Palmer Lake Historical Society Meeting, Thu. Feb. 15, 7 pm; (doors open at 6:30 pm).
- Ham radio technician license 20 hour course, introductory session in person Sat., Feb. 17, 1-3 p.m.
- D38 K-12 Chess Tournament, 17th annual free event Sat. Feb. 24, 8:15 a.m.
- MVEA student scholarships application deadline Wed., Feb. 28
- The Love Shop: Restyle Your Furs, Wed.-Thu., Mar. 13-14. See ad on page 8.

## Broomball on Palmer Lake, Jan. 20



**Above:** Two rinks on frozen Palmer Lake were used for the annual Broomball Tournament on Jan. 20. One rink was for adults, the other for children and families. Broomball is like hockey except you use brooms instead of sticks and balls instead of pucks. The tournament isn't supposed to be taken very seriously. In fact, it's advertised by the Palmer Lake Parks and Trails Commission as "good old-fashioned buffoonery" for "the world's okayest broomball players." All proceeds went to the maintenance and improvement of trails in Palmer Lake. *Photo by Michael Weinfeld.* See page 16 for information on the Palmer Lake Outdoor Classic hockey match held on Palmer Lake two weeks earlier.

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Jan. 11 and 25

## Ben Lomand annexation considered; TLCA closed to the public

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans  
At its meeting on Jan. 25, the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) held a public hearing to consider three land use issues. Of the three, the eligibility of the Ben Lomand property owned by the United Congregational Church for annexation by the town was the most contentious. At the same meeting the board continued its discussion of the conditional use permit it had granted to The Movement Church to use the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA) building as a church.

The board also addressed a request to vacate a town right of way (ROW) on Petite Avenue. After some discussion, the board tabled a resolution concerning the memo of understanding (MOU) with Awake the Lake (ATL) regarding the proposed pickleball courts. The policy for public comments was also updated at this meeting.

At the board's first meeting of 2024, held on Jan. 11, the board held a public hearing on a conditional use permit for a new business. It also voted on several resolutions appointing volunteers to commissions and boards.

Both meetings ended with executive sessions.

### Board assesses eligibility for annexation

Mayor Pro Tem Dennis Stern opened the public hearing to consider a petition from the United Congregational Church to the town requesting annexation of 181.5 acres of land the church owns. The land in question is south of County Line Road, west of Indi Drive, and north of Capella Drive and is currently part of unincorporated El Paso County. The land is part of a larger property owned by the church, 163 acres of which are already part of the town. Stern said the applicant for annexation would speak first and then the public could comment. After public comments, the applicant would make a closing statement. Stern stressed the hearing was to assess eligibility only and other issues would be addressed later in the process.

Dan Madison, a civil engineer with Manheart Consulting, represented the

PALMER LAKE (Cont. on 3)

BOCC, Jan. 9, 23, 25

## Palmer Lake annexation discussed

By Helen Walklett

During January, the El Paso Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) considered an annexation notification from the Town of Palmer Lake. The commissioners also adopted the 2024 budget and reappointed their chair and vice chair for a second year.

### Ben Lomand Mountain Village annexation

Notification of an annexation request from the Town of Palmer Lake was received by the commissioners at their Jan. 23 meeting. The BOCC cannot approve or deny an annexation report; it serves to notify it of the annexation request and sets out potential impacts in general terms.

The Ben Lomand Mountain Village annexation concerns 181.5 acres of RR-5-zoned land south of County Line Road, west of Indi Drive, north of the Lakeview Heights subdivision, and east of Oakdale Drive. The request to annex the land into the town is being made by the United Congregational Church and was scheduled to be heard at the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting on Jan. 25. Meggan Herington, executive director, Planning and Community Development, told the commissioners that she expected the request to be continued to a later date after an hour of testimony as required by statute. See the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting article at left.

The applicant's intend to develop the proposed 181.5 acres along with an additional 163 acres within Palmer Lake and rezone the land to the RE Estate Zone, which allows single-family dwellings on a minimum lot size of 2.5 acres. All existing structures, including the church and youth center, would remain. The county thought the development might number 80 or so houses.

The commissioners heard that the town had not yet provided a full Annexation Impact Report and had initially requested a waiver for this from the BOCC but had later said the information would be provided. The commissioners voted unanimously to decline the waiver, meaning the matter will return to the BOCC at a later date

BOCC (Cont. on 2)



**Above and below:** Fireworks brightened the dark sky to mark the start of the Palmer Lake Outdoor Classic high school hockey tournament. See page 16. *Photos by Michael Weinfeld.*



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Monument Town Council, Jan. 2 and 16

## "It's hard to do business here," developers claim before moratorium approval

By Chris Jeub

The Monument Town Council (MTC) convened for its first meeting of the year on Jan. 2, addressing various topics including the ArtSites Program, new ordinances, a major Planned Unit Development (PUD) amendment, and property tax mill levy scenarios. The second meeting commenced on Jan. 16 with a contentious debate with developers over a proposed moratorium on new applications for development, a moratorium that passed unanimously.

**ArtSites program presentation**  
Madeline VanDenHoeck from the ArtSites Committee presented an update on the town's ArtSites program. The

program, managed by Parks and Trails Planner and Program Manager Cassie Olgren, currently boasts 25 sites with 14 rotating sculptures, six permanent sculptures, and five murals. VanDenHoeck highlighted the program's growth in 2023, with an increased budget of \$19,760 for 2024. The town aims to expand the program further and is seeking additional committees to contribute to its development.

Residents can explore the ArtSites using the Otcasat app. More information can be found on the town's website at [www.townofmonument.org/582/ArtSites](http://www.townofmonument.org/582/ArtSites).

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