

usually meets at 6:30 p.m. on the first and third Mondays of each month at Monument Town Hall, 645 Beacon Lite Road. The next meetings are scheduled for Monday, May 6 and 20. Call

719-884-8014 or see www.townofmonument.org for information. To see upcoming agendas and complete board packets or to download audio recordings of past meetings, see <http://monu->

menttownco.minutesondemand.com and click on Town Council.

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Monument Planning Commission, April 10

Development processes discussed

By Janet Sellers

At the April 10 Monument Planning Commission meeting, the development process was discussed with a focus on providing more information upfront, streamlining the submittal process, clarifying the Planning Commission's role, advocating for providing detailed information to address concerns, and providing individual submittals each time a new version is received. The group also brought up the issue of litigation and the lawyer's role, while emphasizing the importance of having a final, unique project to discuss.

Speakers shared their previous experiences with the process, emphasizing the importance of reaching a consensus and expressing concerns about the cost of an attorney, while questioning the consistency of the Town Council in providing information to the public.

Development projects, Planning Commission roles

Speakers addressed concerns about providing too much information and suggested a more streamlined submittal process, while some questions revolved around the Planning Commission's ability to comment on development

projects, specifically regarding compliance with comprehensive plans and zoning regulations. Some explained that the commission can't undo previous decisions but can provide input on individual projects through the preliminary and final PUD process.

Development process in a town

Speakers express frustration with the development process, feeling disoriented by multiple applications and lack of consolidation and that staff and developers should work together to consolidate projects and allow for a more efficient review process. A suggestion was made that negotiations with developers should be done at town level, not by staff, since staff can make administrative decisions, but big decisions should be made by the town body.

Planning changes and development in a community

The commission advocated for a thorough review of a comprehensive plan before zoning changes, emphasizing the importance of recording comments about roadway concerns for future reference.

Legal requirements for Town Council meetings

The board discussed the importance of record-keeping for public representatives, mentioning the need to protect constituents by keeping a clear record of past decisions and emphasizing the value of open forums for constituents to research and understand past decisions, particularly when controversial items come up in the future. Since the board expressed frustration with inconsistent availability of an attorney during meetings, the town manager approved a request for legal counsel.

Monument Planning Commission meeting are usually held on the second Wednesday of each month. The next meeting will be held Wednesday, May 8 at 6 pm at Town Hall Board Room, 645 Beacon Lite Rd., Monument. To see the options for remote public participation in each meeting, visit www.townofmonument.org/263/Planning-Commission-Board-of-Adjustment. For information call 719-884-8028 or visit www.townofmonument.org. JanetSellerscanbereachedatJanetSellers@ocn.me.

Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, April 3, 11, 25

Elephant Rock advisory committee formed

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

In April, the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) continued its long-running effort to plan the future of the Elephant Rock property, which was donated to the town by the Living Word Church in 2021, by forming an advisory committee to organize suggestions from citizens and to advise the board on the property's future use.

The board addressed several land use issues and considered two issues related to signs. Fire Chief John Vincent reported to the board on his plans to make Palmer Lake a fire-adapted community. The board granted four special event permits. Trustee Dennis Sterns announced that he was donating his time to act as the general contractor for the Tri-Lakes Center for the Arts (TLCA).

The April 11 meeting was followed by an executive session and the Apr. 25 meeting was preceded by an executive session.

Elephant Rock committee will only advise, board will decide

On April 3, Mayor Glant Havenar opened a workshop meeting attended by members of the Palmer Lake Planning Commission and the Board of Trustees by observing the Elephant Rock property had become a burden on the town due to contention about its future uses. She said the proposal from Franco Pisani, of Paravicini's Italian Bistro, to use a portion of the property as a wedding venue was "unclear."

At the workshop, Planning Commissioner Susan Miner suggested the creation of an Elephant Rock Advisory Committee, which she offered to chair. The committee would focus on a masterplan for the property, she said.

At its meeting on April 11, the board considered Resolution 25-2024, which establishes a temporary advisory committee with representatives from the Planning Commission, the Parks and Trail Commission (PTC), a local nonprofit and the community at large. The resolution calls for seven members on the committee, but that number was later revised to ten members. The resolution passed with Havenar, Trustees Kevin Dreher, Nick Erhard and Dennis Stern voting in favor, Trustee Jessica Farr voted no. Trustees Shana Ball and Samantha Padgett were excused from the meeting.

At the April 25 board meeting, Miner gave the board an update on the advisory committee's progress. The committee held its first meeting on April 22 and began reviewing all the suggestions received from citizens in the last three years. The committee will consider the compatibility of each suggestion with all the others and will score each idea against a mission statement for the property. All suggestions will be considered, she said, and the committee has trail plans from the PTC. Miner emphasized that the committee's role was only advisory, and board would make all decisions. She said the committee would complete its work in 90 days and she would give the board an update at each of its scheduled board meetings.

The advisory committee scheduled a meeting for Monday, April 29 at 5 p.m. at the Palmer Lake Town Hall.

Land use decisions

Ordinance 4-2023 was considered at the April 11 meeting. Town Attorney Scott Krob said that the town's municipal code did not address the procedure and criteria for the annexation of land. Krob advised the approval of the ordinance, which would add language to the code to clarify the conditions under which land could be annexed into the town. He said annexation is a matter of negotiation between the town and the property owner and the town's masterplan should be considered in that negotiation but was not binding. The board voted unanimously in favor of adopting the ordinance.

At the same meeting, the board voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 24-2024, which establishes checklists written by Town Administrator Dawn Collins to guide land use applications through the approval process.

The board debated modifying the definition of R4 zoning to allow the use of septic systems for multi-family residences. The question of septic use arose in response to a request from Rebecca Allbright and Philip Tedeschi to develop a "pocket neighborhood" adjacent to Ben Lomand Mountain. The proposed development is east of the railroad tracks in a location where the Palmer Lake Sewer Department can't provide service. The board asked town staff to work with the Planning Commission to determine if septic systems could handle multi-family residences.

Sign policy discussed

At its April 11 meeting, the board tabled a request from Brenda Woodward, owner of Alpine Essentials, to place a sign advertising her business in a town easement. Woodward explained that she had asked to place her sign on the property of another business, as the board had previously suggested she do, but had been denied.

At the same meeting, the board asked the town staff to collect examples of wayfaring signs used by other towns and bring them to the April 25 meeting for the board to consider. Wayfaring signs direct visitors and tourists to parks, schools, public buildings, parking, and businesses. Staff collected examples from Estes Park, Alamosa, Parker, Monument, and several other towns.

The board did not choose a specific design but agreed that signs should be placed by Highway 105 at the north and south boundaries of the town. Ball and Havenar suggested that businesses should contribute to the cost of the signs.

Fire chief envisions wildfire resilience

Vincent said his goal was to lower the risk of wildfire to the town. Doing so would lower insurance costs for residents, he said. Vincent said fire was a given and his intention was to have a grass fire not a forest fire. He presented a seven-point plan:

- Establish slash drop-off points.
 - Mitigate wildland fuel.
 - Adequately staff Fire Department.
 - Become a fire-adapted community.
 - Reduce insurance rates.
 - Properly dispose of biomass by burning it safely.
 - Engage with state government in Denver.
- He discussed reducing fuel by encouraging homeowners to collect slash on their properties and participate in the town's chipping program. Vin-

cent said the town needed a more capable chipper and needed to identify a location where the chips could be accumulated and then burned. He suggested moving chipped fuel either to the Elephant Rock property or the dirt bike track north of the lake. The consensus of the board was that the Elephant Rock property was not a good location.

At the April 25 meeting, Ball discussed her efforts to locate a grant to help with purchasing a higher-capacity chipper. She said the grant she was pursuing required a documented plan for the chopper debris.

The board did not take any action following the discussion.

Special event permits

The board granted four special event permits:

- Ducks Unlimited Dash Run, to be held on Sunday, June 9, on the east side of the Palmer Lake Recreation Area. Runners will check in at the pavilion starting at 7:30 a.m. A 5K and a 10K race will begin at 8:30 a.m. on the Santa Fe Trail. Ducks Unlimited raises money to preserve wetlands.
- 24 Hour Run, hosted by Stride Events LLC, to be held Friday, Sept. 27 through Sunday, Sept. 29. Lance Pierce said \$5 of every entrance fee would be donated to Palmer Lakes Parks and Trail Commission.
- Cinco de Mayo Dinner Service, hosted by Joy on the Rock Church on Saturday, May 4 at the Town Hall. The event will include a worship service with music. Dinner will be served at 5 p.m.
- Palmer Lake Wine Festival, to be held Saturday, Sep 14, at the Palmer Lake Recreation Area. The event will raise funds for Tri-Lakes Cares.

Stern to assist TLCA

In response to a question from a resident concerning TLCA's temporary Certificate of Occupancy, Stern announced that he had been retained by TLCA as a general contractor to address the changes to the building required by the Pikes Peak Regional Building Department. Stern said he had been advised this was not a conflict of interest since he was donating his time to the TLCA.

Executive sessions

The April 11 meeting was followed by an executive session to discuss negotiating positions on a possible sale of town property.

The April 25 meeting was preceded by an executive session on the same topic. No actions were taken following either executive session.

The next regular board meetings are scheduled for May 9 and 23. All meetings will be held at the Town Hall. See the town's website at www.townofpalmerlake.com to confirm times and dates of board meetings and workshops. Meetings are typically held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at the Town Hall. Information: 719-481-2953.

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