

Palmer Lake Town Council special meeting, April 16

Council approves plan for Great Outdoors Colorado grant work

By James Howald

In April, the Palmer Lake Town Council departed from its regular schedule for meetings. A workshop session originally scheduled for April 2 was postponed until April 9, the date of its regularly scheduled monthly meeting. The April 9 meeting was in turn postponed until April 14, because a quorum of trustees could not be present. The April 14 meeting was cancelled, again due to a lack of a quorum. The council held a special meeting on April 16 to review the short-term plan for improvements to the park at Palmer Lake funded by the Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) grant and

organized by the Awake Palmer Lake committee, and to clarify the council's role in approving the future work on the project.

Council discusses motion requiring all groups to get a vote of approval

The council began its meeting by discussing changes to a motion passed in an executive session held on March 24. This motion requires the Awake Palmer Lake committee to get approval by a vote of the council at a public meeting for all proposed work. Fire Trustee Richard Kuehster suggested changing this motion to make it

apply to all town-sanctioned groups, thus making it broader in scope.

Awake the Lake committee member Jeff Hulsmann argued that requiring a vote at a public meeting for all work would slow down the effort to improve the park, and that the project relied on volunteers and donated equipment that could only be used when they were available. Hulsmann pointed out that the GOCO grant includes a scope of work, that the grant has already been approved by the council, and that latitude to make small changes to the plan without a formal approval process was needed. Kuehster said the point of the motion was to keep all stakeholders informed and coordinated, to assure residents that all needed approvals have been obtained, and to ensure that all work plans are clear to the council.

The council voted to approve the minutes from the March 24 executive session, but did not vote on updating the motion.

Resident questions handling of GOCO grant by Awake Palmer Lake

During the citizen comment portion of the meeting, resident Tom Allen criticized both the council and the Awake Palmer Lake committee for the way the GOCO

grant has been handled. Allen pointed out that the Town of Palmer Lake has the ultimate responsibility for managing the grant, that no one in town government is truly in control of the effort, and that the town needs a dedicated administrator. Allen also questioned the accuracy of statements Hulsmann made on the GOCO grant application, particularly his assertion that the town had an annual Parks and Recreation budget of \$50,000, and that these funds could be used to maintain the park after the grant work was complete. According to Allen, the true figure for the Parks and Recreation budget for 2015 is \$7,000.

The discussion between Allen and Hulsmann became heated at times. Allen concluded by saying he doesn't want to take water from the reservoir to fill the lake, which he thinks will be required if the springs that naturally fill the lake are legally deemed to be wells and their input to the lake needs to be replaced for other holders of rights to the water. Hulsmann concluded by saying he would correct any inaccurate statements he made on the GOCO application by the end of the week.

Hulsmann presents short-term plan for work at park

Working item by item with Parks and Recreation Trustee Paul Banta, Hulsmann detailed the work to be done at the park over the next six weeks. The work will consist of:

- Grading of three parking lots using equipment and personnel provided by the town.
- Digging trenches for park lighting using equipment and personnel provided by the town.
- Running wire in the trenches for park lighting.
- Filling the trenches.
- Seeding two areas of the park, specifically the south end of the lake and the area between the parking lot and the railroad property.
- Blocking off the seeded areas from drivers.
- Delineating parking areas.
- Adding nine holes to the disc golf course.
- Delineating trails and pathways.

Hulsmann confirmed these tasks would be

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