

Citizens for a Better Palmer Lake, Oct. 8

# Citizens for a Better Palmer Lake gets visit from trustees

By Allison Robenstein

On Oct. 9, the Citizens for a Better Palmer Lake group held its third meeting and hosted Palmer Lake Trustees Gary Faust, Glant Havenar, and Mark Schuler. Many topics were discussed, including statutory town requirements, municipal code updates, the new consultant fee reimburse-

ment agreement, and budget concerns.

D38 school board member Chris Taylor also attended the meeting since he represents District 1, which covers Palmer Lake.

Flake told the trustees the town is frustrated by what they perceive as the lack of transparency by the board, saying,

“We feel like you’re not listening.”

Flake said the citizens’ group perceives the town manager and the town attorney to be running the town, which doesn’t reflect statutory town government requirements. According to Flake, the town is required to have a clerk, but they have not had one since Verla Bruner resigned. See <https://www.ocn.me/v19n7.htm#pltc>. The town is in the hiring process, but Schuler said he worried the salary may be too low, indicating Mayor John Cressman had unilaterally reduced the salary for the clerk position.

The citizens’ group members wondered whether Town Attorney Maureen Juran had been advising the board in a way that doesn’t encourage citizens’ trust. Their issues in-



Above: At the Oct. 9 meeting, Citizens for a Better Palmer Lake was visited by Palmer Lake Trustees Gary Faust, Glant Havenar, and Mark Schuler. Although no decisions were made, the citizens and trustees had a chance to discuss ongoing issues. Photo by Allison Robenstein.



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cluded the following:

- The group asked if Juran had advised the board to start using Colorado Intergovernmental Risk Sharing Agency for their insurance.
- Because Juran is also the attorney for the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD), the group asked if she had been the impetus for the possible Fire Department consolidation with TLMFPD.

The trustees told the group they are updating older municipal codes. Faust said the board can decide whether to enforce the codes if they don’t

apply anymore, to which a number of people expressed unease. Resident Karen Stuth was concerned about codes being ignored, but as she spoke, Faust began chuckling. “You could be arrested. Do you think this is funny?” she asked. Faust answered, “I do a little bit.”

The town recently began charging a \$5,000 consultant fee for new home builds as well as for remodeling projects. Schuler said because the town doesn’t have a planning department, drainage and other issues weren’t identified until after the build was complete. He said the money will be used to pay for an engineering report. Currently, all builds whether new or a remodel, so Faust suggested the board might need to consider a fee schedule.

The group expressed concern over how the budget is maintained. Former Mayor Nikki McDonald was specifically worried the town’s budget only has one general fund, although it collects a fire mill levy that she felt should be in its own fund. Flake said it seems like Town Administrator/Manager Valerie Remington has all the power, even creating the budget.

In the end, the group asked for the following:

- A formal forensic audit.
- A hiring committee including some of the public.
- Town clerk.
- Personnel manual updated.

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