

quality and design the water treatment aspects of the project, told the board that the latest water quality data were in line with previous results. Two herbicides were detected for the first time, but the levels were below the maximum

contaminate levels for those chemicals.

Executive session and vote

The board adjourned the regular meeting and went into executive session to receive legal

advice on a water use offer. After the executive session, the board voted unanimously to authorize counsel to prepare a response letter to the water use offer. No details about the offer were provided.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Sept. 21 at 9 a.m. Regular meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of each month at 9 a.m. at the Monument Town Hall at 645 Beacon Lite Road. Workshop meetings are held every Thurs-

day at 9 a.m. at rotating venues. Please see loopwater.org or call 719-488-3603 to verify meeting times and locations. James Howald can be reached at jameshowald@ocn.me.

Monument Town Council, Aug. 7

“Shoddy work,” says mayor, before voting “no” on change order

By Chris Jeub

One public Monument Town Council meeting took place in August which included two presentations, both underscoring the town’s dedication to preserving its heritage and enhancing its natural landscapes. An ordinance allowing a local health facility to host classes in its downtown studio was unanimously approved.

The mayor cast a dissenting vote coupled with stern admonition for a change order request by the director of Public Works.

The meeting also featured Monument’s police chief explaining the town’s support for Monument Academy’s School Resource Officer (SRO) which prompted concerns from one councilmember.

Mayor votes against “shoddy work”

Resolution No. 58-2023, concerning a change order for the Wagner Construction Contract for the new 2-million-gallon Tank Pipeline Project, spurred a thorough discussion within the Town Council. The resolution ultimately passed with a 6-1 majority, Mayor LaKind casting the sole dissenting vote. LaKind expressed dissatisfaction with the project’s progression.

During the exchange, LaKind questioned the project’s

timeline and challenged Director of Public Works Thomas Tharnish on the lay-down date of the fiber and sewer lines. Tharnish explained the complexities of the AT&T fiber line’s installation and the challenges it posed due to its unconventional placement. The discussion escalated as LaKind criticized the project’s engineering efforts, calling it “shoddy work,” citing multiple issues that had led to cost overruns. LaKind voiced frustration over what he perceived as insufficient engineer efforts and expressed his belief that the engineering firm, Forsgren Associates, should be financially accountable for the \$55,000 cost overrun.

Councilmembers engaged in a deliberation on the situation. Kronick raised questions about Palmer Lake’s cooperation, while King and Fiorito discussed the expense of the project and the necessity of proper bore work. The conversation pivoted to accountability, with LaKind urging Tharnish to take proactive measures to ensure that similar issues do not arise in the future. The mayor pressed for a commitment to avoid further cost overruns and to take necessary precautions to prevent reoccurrence.

In response, Director Tharnish pledged his best ef-

forts to prevent future incidents but acknowledged the absence of a fail-safe guarantee. Foreman intervened, proposing to take a proactive stance by ensuring a comprehensive re-evaluation of all factors involved. This commitment was aimed at assuring the council that due diligence would be exercised to prevent further financial implications. Even with this commitment, LaKind voted “no” for the change order, the only councilmember to do so.

Monument Cemetery and Northern Nature Center

John Howe and Michael Weinfeld presented an insightful history of the Monument Cemetery, uncovering more than anticipated. Initially envisioned as a several months-long project, it took 13 years, resulting in a 73-page report. Among the revelations, 150 unknown Plaster of Paris gravestones were replaced by granite stones for an Eagle Scout project. Another 36 granite stones were made by the Public Works Department for the remaining unknown graves. Their research revealed discrepancies that were rectified for accuracy. Howe and Weinfeld advocated for the Public Works Department to continue maintaining the

headstones and proposed installing an informational kiosk for visitors.

Councilmember Steve King posed an intriguing question about the cemetery’s most prominent resident, prompting discussion about notables like “Freddy Krueger” and “Anna Frank,” interesting names but not the famous originals. Councilmember Laura Kronick praised the report, while Fiorito encouraged Howe and Weinfeld to collaborate with the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs’ History Journal for more exposure. The presentation garnered accolades and recognition for their volunteer work. See [cemeteryrecordsphotoandcaption](#) on page 20.

Todd Marts, executive director of the El Paso County Parks Department, introduced the Northern Nature Center project. The endeavor began with a feasibility study in 2019, culminating in a focus on Fox Run Regional Park. Marts emphasized community involvement in shaping the park’s development. The planned nature center, acting as a welcoming hub, will include a tower and canopy walk. Anchored in the mission to “connect and inspire stewards,” the center’s architecture reflects this intent. The project carries a price tag of \$12 million, with

fundraising set through 2024 and construction scheduled for 2025. Councilmembers raised questions about conservation easements, Native American history, and park security, receiving affirming responses from Marts.

Bloom Healing Arts approved for yoga studio

Ordinance No. 17-2023, an ordinance approving a conditional use for a yoga studio at 267 B N. Washington St., passed with a vote of 7-0. The ordinance sought approval for a recreation and entertainment, indoor use—a departure from its existing classification as a “clinic.” The applicant, Bloom Healing Arts, desired to extend its services by offering open yoga classes to the public, necessitating the reclassification and a conditional use permit.

The history behind the application traced back to the town directors’ initial permission for the location to function as a “clinic.” However, with aspirations to provide broader recreational opportunities to the community, the applicant sought a change in classification to accommodate their vision for a yoga studio. Town staff determined that the reclassification fulfilled all the requisite review criteria and, noteworthy, no new construction was anticipated. Moreover, staff recognized the yoga studio as being “generally consistent” with the Comprehensive Plan, further underscoring its alignment with the town’s broader developmental vision.

Terry Hayes, president and chief executive officer of the Tri-Lakes Chamber of Commerce, expressed its support for this conditional use application, citing the significance of such an establishment for the town’s vibrant downtown area, calling it “a perfect addition” to the downtown landscape. Amid the discussions, Katrina Maldonado, owner of Bloom Healing Arts, extended gratitude to the town staff for its role in facilitating the process.







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