

MONUMENT (Cont. from 12)

to have officers in every school. Town Manager Mike Foreman noted that other District 38 schools were utilizing El Paso County SROs and wished to continue with that arrangement.

The annexation status of Monument schools was discussed, with Councilmember Marco Fiorito highlighting the distinction. Further inquiry arose about extending SRO coverage to St. Peter School, to which Regan expressed willingness, contingent on available resources. The conversation touched on the equitable

distribution of resources, with Kimple emphasizing the importance of fair treatment across schools.

The motion to approve the resolution was made by Fiorito and passed with unanimous agreement. However, Kimple reiterated his concern for equal treatment among all schools. The resolution's approval reflected the Town Council's support for providing SROs to Monument Academy, while ongoing discussions centered on the broader scope of SRO distribution among schools in District 38.

The second Town Council meeting originally set for Aug. 21 was cancelled to make time for a training session.

Monument Planning Commission, Aug. 9

Variance approved for affordable housing project

By Leslie Hanks

The Aug. 9 Monument Planning Commission meeting was attended by Commissioners Chair Martin Trujillo, Vice Chair Danny Ours, Cathy Green, Sean Zernikow, Ray Egley, Greg Collins, and Chad Smith.

The planning staff started the meeting by explaining that the planning commissioners acting as the Board of Adjustment was appropriate. According to the Home Rule Charter, the Board of Adjustment has five members and the Planning Commission has seven. The staff said this was consistent with the charter which states: "the responsibilities of the BOA are to be absorbed by the Planning Commission, since positions on the adjustment board are difficult to fill."

The first order of business was a proposed variance for a Final Plat of a proposed affordable housing project at 245 Front St., which had been previously approved but because of a staff error, the required applicant signatures were not submitted in a timely fashion. Without the variance, the applicant would be

required to start the process over from the beginning.

This project is intended to provide affordable housing for community members. Several who testified, during public comment, that they were in favor of the variance mentioned Monument firefighters and first responders as those who might benefit the most.

Vice Chair Ours raised a question about language in the variance resolution, which implied that the applicant had somehow been at fault, when in fact it was determined that the planning staff had been in error. There was agreement that the resolution should be slightly reworded to properly reflect what had transpired and to clarify any potential confusion.

Planning Commission attorney Bob Cole had proposed that the applicant be required to sign a liability waiver, but community member Bonnie Hildebrandt asked the commission to support the variance without the liability waiver. Commissioner Green agreed that the variance should proceed without the

The Monument Council 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 two regular meetings are scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 5 (the day after Labor Day) and Monday, Sept. 18. 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://monumenttownco.minute-sondemand.com> and click on Town Council.

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liability waiver and suggested that the code should be revised so that this situation couldn't happen again. She also raised concerns about whether the variance was the appropriate remedy for the situation.

Following the discussion about those technical issues, the Planning Commission passed the proposed variance unanimously, 7-0.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to several other code revisions where language clarifications should make applicant requirements clearer and assist staff in being as specific as possible to avoid confusion.

The next Planning Commission meeting will be held on Sept. 13 at Town Hall, 645 Beacon Lite Road. The agenda and packet can be found at <https://townofmonument.org>.

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Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, Aug. 10, 16, and 24

Board extends permits and taps for former mayors' property

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans

In August, the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees held two regular meetings, on Aug. 10 and 24, each ending with an executive session. The Aug. 10 regular meeting was preceded by a one-hour board retreat to review rules and roles. The board met for a third executive session, online only, on Aug. 16, to receive legal advice on a human resources complaint and a personnel matter involving the police chief.

The board considered a resolution permitting John Cressman and Nikki McDonald, both of whom have served terms as mayor, to extend the expiration of building permits and associated water taps for four lots they own jointly on Greeley Boulevard. Mayor Glant Havenar, who was involved in the sale of the lots, recused herself from the discussion and the vote on the resolution.

The board held a public hearing and voted on a resolution and an ordinance concerning a request to annex and rezone parcels of land belonging to James Parco and James Fitzgerald. The board passed an ordinance regulating recreational vehicle storage and usage and considered next steps on creating a water enterprise fund. Three permits for special events were granted. A masterplan for Centennial Park was approved and two commissioners were appointed to the Parks Commission.

Building permits and taps extended

A lengthy discussion preceded the board's vote on Resolution 58-2023, which extends the building permits and associated water taps on four lots owned by Cressman and McDonald.

Town Administrator Dawn Collins summarized some of the background: Water taps had been issued for the lots, two of which have building permits in place, but a moratorium on land use applications had prevented the development planned by Cressman and McDonald. Now Cressman and McDonald want to sell the lots along with the associated building permits and water taps, she said. The resolution would authorize an agreement extending the building permits for one year, allowing the lots to be sold together or individually, along with the permits and taps.

Attorney Matthew Krob explained that people who own unused taps pay a monthly fee to support the water system even though the unused taps are not delivering any water. He said the municipal code was written to prevent people from buying water taps as an investment and from buying taps not associated with a specific lot.

Trustee Shana Ball pointed out that if someone were to purchase a water tap now, they would pay more than Cressman and McDonald paid.

Collins said that previously the town sold water taps for cash even though those sales were not in line with the municipal code.

Trustee Samantha Padgett argued the board was trying to create clear processes and that the processes in place when the taps were sold were not followed. She said she wanted to avoid the need for exceptions and the creation of new precedents. She suggested the taps should be considered abandoned so they could be resold by the town. Municipal code 13.08.060 says:



Above: At the Aug. 24 Palmer Lake Board of Trustees meeting, Cub Scout George Bartufiak, a third-grader at Larkspur Elementary School, led the Pledge of Allegiance that opened the meeting. Bartufiak attended with his mother and is in Larkspur-Monument Cub Scout Pack 217. The group met to fish at Palmer Lake on Sunday, Aug. 27. More information can be found on the pack's Facebook page. Photo by Jackie Burhans.

"A water tap shall be deemed abandoned if a building permit utilizing the water tap has not been issued within one year from the date of purchase. If the building permit is allowed to lapse, the water tap shall also be deemed abandoned."

McDonald pointed out that easement issues with CORE, the town's power company, were preventing the plans for the lots from moving forward, and Cressman added that he had been paying the monthly fees for the unused taps since their purchase. He said he wanted to sell the lots and let the purchaser deal with the problems with CORE.

Following the discussion, the board voted unanimously in favor of the resolution to extend the building permits.

Cressman and McDonald appeared before a previous board on March 6, 2021 to discuss the lots and water taps. Details of that meeting can be found here: <https://www.ocn.me/v21n3.htm#plbot>.

Board approves parcel annexation and rezoning

The board held a public hearing and considered several items on the agenda to resolve a land use and property tax issue. First was an application to annex and rezone a parcel of land owned by James Parco, followed by a resolution on findings of fact and an ordinance to approve the request.

Parco explained that in 2012, he and his wife had purchased Lot 1 of a parcel of land in the Coldwater subdivision, where the Fitzgeralds had purchased Lot 2. One Lot was in the Town of Palmer Lake, and the other was in unincorporated El Paso County. Shortly after that, the Parcos and Fitzgeralds agreed to adjust the lot line between the two lots to improve access, swapping an equal amount of land. They had their properties surveyed, replatted, and filed documents by 2015. After that time, each property owner received two tax bills since they now each owned land in two jurisdictions. They later contacted the county assessor for advice on how to resolve the issue. Toward that end, Parco was now asking the town to annex and rezone his county property to incorporate it with his Palmer Lake land. Similarly, the Fitzgeralds would like their land disconnected from the town so they could incorporate it with the land they own in the county as one property. These actions would change the boundary line of Palmer Lake but not change its total property size.

Noting that the Palmer Lake Planning Commis-

sion had recommended approval of the annexation and rezone request on a vote of 7-0, Collins said that staff supports Resolution 60-2023 making findings of fact and Ordinance 18-2023 to annex and rezone Parco's property as requested. The public hearing was closed with no comments, and the board voted unanimously to pass both the resolution and ordinance related to Parco's request.

The last part of the solution would be to disconnect the Fitzgeralds' land from Palmer Lake so they could incorporate it with their property in unincorporated El Paso County. The board directed the staff to draft the relevant resolution and ordinance and bring it back to the next board meeting.

Recreational vehicle storage ordinance passes

Completing a discussion begun in previous meetings, the board passed Ordinance 19-2023, which prohibits the storage or use of recreational vehicles on public property, with a 24-hour exception for loading and unloading, and sets parameters for the storage and use on private property that include 30 consecutive days of occupancy and prohibit connection to the sewer system.

The complete text of the ordinance can be found on the town's web page here: <https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/ordinances/regulating-storage-and-use-rvs>.

Storm water enterprise fund next steps

At the Aug. 10 meeting, Ball made a motion requesting town staff to initiate an analysis of the steps needed to create an enterprise water fund. Collins and Krob will oversee the effort.

Special event permits approved

The board approved special event permits for:

- The Lewis-Palmer Middle School Cross Country Meet, to be held on Sept. 13.
- A Melodrama Play to be put on by the Palmer Lake Arts Council on Oct. 6 and 8.
- The Ninth Annual .5K Race, a fund-raising event for Awake Palmer Lake, to be held on Oct. 15.

Centennial Park master plan approved; commissioners appointed

At the Aug. 10 meeting, the board approved Resolution 52-2023, which approves the Parks Commission's master plan for Centennial Park. Parks Commission Chair Reid Wiecks said the plan was an update of three previously developed plans. Trustee Kevin Dreher thanked Wiecks for his work on the plan.

At the Aug. 24 meeting, Kevin Magner and Jennifer Nilson were appointed to open seats on the Parks Commission.

Executive sessions

The Aug. 10 meeting ended with an executive session to determine negotiating positions relative to lease agreements and a possible annexation and to address the town administrator's evaluation.

The virtual executive session held on Aug. 16 was for the purpose of receiving legal advice concerning a human resources complaint and a personnel matter involving the police chief.

The Aug. 24 meeting ended with an executive session to determine negotiating positions relative to lease agreements.

The next board meetings are scheduled for Sept. 14 and 28. 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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