

July 25 board meeting.

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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Palmer Lake Board of Trustees, July 11 and 25

Elephant Rock discussion becomes contentious

By James Howald and Jackie Burhans
The future of the Elephant Rock property was the focus of the Palmer Lake Board of Trustees (PLBOT) at its board meetings in July. The board also held two workshops devoted to the question. For coverage of the first workshop, held on July 10, see article on page 11. The Elephant Rock Property Citizen Advisory Committee (ERPCA) delivered to the board the results of its months-long analysis of the suggestions for the property submitted by residents. The second workshop preceded the July 25 board meeting. The board passed a resolution to establish a fee for farmers markets, amended the ordinance regulating peddler's permits, and updated the regulation governing business licenses. The board held a public hearing and took a vote on a conditional use permit for a landscaping business moving into Illumination Point. The board updated its code governing subdivisions.

Consensus on Elephant Rock emerges from angry discussion
Asbestos removal at the Elephant Rock property was on the agenda at the July 11 board meeting, but the topic was tabled until the July 25 board meeting.

At the workshop preceding the July 25 board meeting, Mayor Glant Havenar said the purpose of the workshop was to address any unanswered questions about the ERPCA's work and to set a direction for the property.

Trustee Kevin Dreher said the first decision was whether to use the property as a park or as a cultural district. He said he leaned toward using it as a park.

Trustee Shana Ball argued that the next step should be the formation of a new committee to do a financial analysis, as suggested by the ERPCA. Havenar questioned the role of a new committee.

Susan Miner, one of the co-chairs of the ERPCA, pointed out that every square foot of the Elephant Rock property that is not generating revenue is costing the town money. She said the property could be a combination of park and cultural district. The purpose of the new committee was to ensure there would be enough revenue to make the property self-sustaining.

Havenar pointed out that the board had already voted to demolish the cabins. She asked if Miner would lead the new committee; Miner said she would not.

Havenar argued the problem with the suggestion that groups adopt a cabin is that it would take five to seven years before the town would receive any revenue. Miner said she thought revenue could be produced sooner than Havenar's estimate.

Trustee Dennis Stern said he did not oppose the creation of a new committee but thought the board should choose a direction before the committee was launched.

Ball said she would like to understand the revenue that would be generated from the cabins and argued that most of the community wanted to keep them. Havenar disagreed that was the desire of most residents. Ball asked for another survey of the community. Trustee Jessica Farr felt the community had been surveyed many times and the board should decide between parks and a cultural district.

Dreher said he favored turning the big building into a restaurant or event center that would generate revenue. Farr pointed out no one would invest the money needed without owning the building.

Havenar said she would like to see the Pavilion used for park rentals and the Chapel used by the Forest School. Miner said the next step should be to hire a property manager funded by a grant. Havenar pointed out the town did not yet have such a grant.

Town Administrator Dawn Collins pointed out that any new use would require all aspects of the property—drainage and roads, for example—to be brought up to current code requirements. She said the buildings were continuing to deteriorate and there was a cost to doing nothing. She estimated the town had spent \$5,000 on the property in the first half of 2024.

Havenar argued the asbestos would need to be remediated in all cases. She repeated her point that the board had already voted to demolish the cabins.

Ball repeated her desire for more input from citizens. Ehrhardt and Farr said there was already plenty of input from citizens. During Tim Cave's remarks to the board, Havenar became angry with Ball, implied Ball was keeping information secret from the board, and demanded that Ball stop talking and shut her mouth.

Reid Wiecks, who is on the Parks and Trails Commission, suggested that the large buildings could accommodate any uses the cabins could be put to, and said he favored demolishing the cabins.

Following Wiecks's remarks, the workshop was closed.

During the board meeting following the workshop, Farr moved to demolish seven buildings, remediate the asbestos as needed, and form a new committee to develop a financial plan in six months. Trustees Ball and Ehrhardt voted no; Trustees Dreher, Farr, Padgett and Stern, along with Havenar, voted yes.

Farmers markets, peddler's permits and business licenses
At its July 11 meeting, the board voted in favor of Resolution 38-2024, which requires a fee to be paid by applicants organizing farmers markets. Staff recommended a fee of \$100. It also amended Ordinance

7-2024 so that a peddler's permit, which would be required to sell items at a farmers market, would be valid for a calendar year at a cost of \$25. A simple background check would be included in the process to grant a peddler's permit.

At its July 25 meeting, at the request of Farr, the board took up the issue of business licenses. At present, Farr said, subcontractors were required to obtain a business license from Palmer Lake. She thought this was unenforceable and a waste of time. Stern said he thought most towns did not require subcontractors to maintain a business license but did require home-based businesses in the town to be licensed. Collins said the code currently does require subcontractors to have a business license, even if they will be performing a single job, but that was enforced only when a subcontractor submits a land use application.

Town Attorney Scott Krob said the board could decide how broad they wanted the requirement for a license to be. Local builder Kurt Ehrhardt told the board he thought the requirement would mean excessive work for town staff. Krob said he would draft language for the board to consider at a future meeting.

Public hearing on conditional use permit

Jared Whiteley, representing Greater Grounds, requested a conditional use permit to use his property at Illumination Point to park trucks and equipment for a landscaping business. Illumination Point is zoned C2 General Business and Commercial. He said an 8-foot privacy fence would be built to shield the equipment from Highway 105.

Whiteley said if the Colorado Department of Transportation required a turn lane on Highway 105, he could use Cloven Hoof Road to access the parking lot.

The board voted unanimously in favor of Resolution 40-2024, which grants the permit.

Subdivision ordinance rewritten

Collins told the board that the municipal code governing the subdivision process had been rewritten by the town's Planning Commission and the Community Matter Institute to address gaps in the process. Krob said the old code was 50 years old and due for updating.

The board voted in favor of Ordinance 8-2024, which repeals and replaces Chapter 16 of the Subdivision Code. Farr voted no; all others voted in favor.

Executive session

The July 11 and 25 meetings ended with executive sessions to discuss a possible annexation request.

The next regular board meetings are scheduled for 6 p.m. Aug. 8 and 22. 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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