

well.

No public comments were made either for or against the project during the open portion of the public hearing.

Commissioner Jim Fitzpatrick recommended approval of the Final PD Site Plan Major Amendment with the following conditions that must be met prior to final approval by the Monument Board of Trustees:

- Provide to the town written proof of supplemental water services for WWSD.
- The site plan improvement agreement shall be executed by the owner applicant prior to the issuance of any construction permits for the development
- Approval is subject to minor technical corrections to the satisfaction of the staff.

The proposed major amendment was unanimously approved. Chairman Ed DeLaney said, "We have fought for this for a long time.... This is going to be an addition that is going to be great." Fitzpatrick added, "This looks like a great plan, and you are going to bring a lot to the community."

The meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Due to a packed December agenda, the next Planning Commission meetings are scheduled for Dec. 11 and Dec. 18 at 6:30 p.m. in Monument Town Hall. Meetings are normally held on the second Wednesday of the month. Information: 884-8017 or www.townofmonument.org/meetings/.

Lisa Hatfield can be reached at lihatfield@ocn.me.

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Palmer Lake Town Council, Nov. 7

Budgets for 2014 approved

By Lisa Hatfield

The Palmer Lake Town Council approved its 2014 water and town budgets at the Nov. 7 meeting. Palmer Lake Volunteer Fire Department Chief John Vincent and resident Judith Harrington talked about Palmer Lake working toward becoming a "firewise" community. Awake Palmer Lake committee representatives described the new disc golf course that opened Nov. 17. And Mayor Nikki McDonald announced that the Palmer Lake Town Hall may now be rented by private parties who wish to bring their own alcohol.

Economic Development Trustee Shana Ball was excused from the meeting.

Town and water 2014 budgets approved

Town Accountant Linda Ousnamer and Town Clerk Tara Berreth presented drafts of the 2014 town and water budgets.

The trustees unanimously approved the 2014 budget for the Water Department, which is an enterprise fund. No questions were asked about the water budget. The total projected water enterprise fund revenues and expenses for 2014 are both \$835,000.

There was considerable discussion of the town operating budget as trustees and residents asked several questions for clarification, since some wages had been reallocated to new line items. As had occurred in the 2013 budget, the various actual 2014 operating budget column totals were not listed as separate line items.

Overall, the town operating budget would shrink by a projected \$30,000 or 2 percent from 2013 to 2014. Ousnamer said the departments "have really excelled in keeping track of your expenses and not overspending" to date in 2013 and need to continue doing so, since revenues are not coming in at the rate they had budgeted for 2013. Berreth said she hopes they receive more revenue than what she has anticipated, but she used conservative revenue estimates for the 2014 budget.

Some of the major line item totals for the approved 2014 Palmer Lake town budget were:

- 2013 estimated actual total general fund revenue* – \$1.33 million
- 2013 estimated actual total general fund expenses* – \$850,000
- 2013 estimated general fund ending balance* – \$ 856,000
- 2014 total budgeted revenues (including emergency reserve funds) – \$2.14 million
- 2014 total budgeted expenses (including emergency reserve funds) – \$2.14 million
- 2014 net total budgeted revenues (excluding emergency reserve funds)* – \$1.16 million
- 2014 net total operating budget (excluding emergency reserve funds)* – \$1.10 million
- 2014 budgeted beginning total general fund balance – \$ 978,000

* Calculated totals: No estimated values were listed or presented in the 2014 budget for these specific line items, so these numbers were calculated by OCN.

After Harrington made a presentation about the need for the town to support firewise programming efforts for residents and increase the possibility of winning fuel mitigation grants, \$2,000 was reallocated from the Conservation Trust to a new firewise line item in the Parks budget. The town budget was then approved unanimously with that amendment.

Firewise community discussion

Harrington said that according to the Colorado State Forest Service website, Palmer Lake is "smack dab in the middle of a Red Zone," which is being used by insurance companies to require wildfire assessment and audits and threaten homeowners with loss of insurance. She recommended that residents ask the Fire Department for free firewise assessments if they have questions about how to do mitigation.

Vincent agreed with Harrington that Palmer Lake needs to become a firewise community. His comments included:

- Our forests are not healthy, and our fuel load is getting heavier and heavier.
- An explanation of the masticated scrub oak fire breaks recently cut into Ben Lomond.
- When you mitigate scrub oak, you're not done. It's a lifestyle.
- Homeowners really need to get serious; if you give me

defensible space and an area to work in, I can do that.

But I am not going to die to save your house.

- Reduce your home ignition possibilities.
- McDonald said that early in 2014, the Fire Department and the town will organize informational firewise meetings for residents.

Committee reports

In the mayor's report, McDonald said that private parties will now be able to rent the Palmer Lake Town Hall for events where they would like to bring in their own alcohol. No alcohol can be sold, nor can admission be charged for these events, Town Attorney Larry Gaddis said. These events will be subject to more regulations and a higher deposit than for regular renters, since it will require a special event liquor license.

McDonald also said that the Haunted Lake event was a success and raised \$650 toward the Awake Palmer Lake Committee. She said she's been asked many questions about how this money will be used. Funds raised by Awake Palmer Lake and the Restaurant Association all go into one account to be saved to use as matching funds when the committee applies for grant money to improve the lake and its environs.

Trustee Mike Patrizi turned the Parks and Recreation report over to residents John and Christie Ramshur who have installed a new railroad-themed disc golf course around the lakebed. Ramshur said the Pikes Peak Flying Disc Golf Club designed the course and donated \$1,000 to help build it, with the cooperation of the Awake Palmer Lake Committee. The town paid for warning signs for pedestrians on the Santa Fe Trail. In the spring, the committee will look for people or businesses to sponsor a sign with a map of the course.

Water Trustee Michael Maddox said Water Supervisor Steve Orcutt has finished fixing leaks in the town's water distribution lines. Average water use for October was 140,000 gallons per day, dropping significantly since the summer months.

Fire Trustee Rich Kuehster said that in October there were 30 calls, for a total of 342 for the year to date, with 1,857 volunteer hours and 562 hours of training. The department will fill a full-time position in December.

Kuehster showed the trustees one of the 19 sets of new firefighting gear (helmets, jackets, pants, boots, gloves, etc.) donated to the department by Honeywell Corp. (www.ocn.me/v13n11.htm#pltc).

Honeywell employees from around the world made donations through the Honeywell Humanitarian Relief Fund to support the Colorado Springs community in the aftermath of both major wildfires. Donations include \$255,000 in Honeywell Personal Protective Equipment to six volunteer fire departments and direct cash donations to six additional fire companies. The equipment—Honeywell gloves, boots, and hoods and Morning Pride turnout gear and helmets—will go to volunteer fire departments in Cascade, Crystal Park, Palmer Lake, Simla, Ellicott, and Calhan. The cash donations will be directed to El Paso



Above: Palmer Lake Volunteer Fire Department Chief John Vincent and Fire Trustee Rich Kuehster showed the trustees one set of the new bunker gear donated by employees of Honeywell. Photo by Lisa Hatfield.