

“We have been hard at work to help ourselves, but now we are going to ask you for help,” Humes said.

Humes asked the council to support a ballot measure that would raise levies by eight mills. Five mills of the eight are needed to replace a levy that will sunset at the end of 2015, so the actual increase is only three mills, according to Humes. A one mill increase equals a \$100 tax increase on each \$100,000 of the assessed value of a house.

To emphasize the value to the community the local Fire Department provides, Humes introduced a mother and daughter, Robin and Grace Leigh, who told of Grace’s allergic reaction to food she ate at a pot luck, which caused her to have difficulty breathing. The Palmer Lake Fire Department reached her in three minutes, which she viewed as life-saving.

Humes discussed the possibility of the Town of Palmer Lake giving up its dedicated Fire Department and joining the Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD). Based on her discussions with TLMFPD Fire Chief Chris Truty, this would cost Palmer Lake residents 11.5 mills for fire protection alone, and the five mills that will sunset would still need to be replaced, Humes said. Also, Palmer Lake residents would be voting along with a much larger number of Monument voters, and would lose some of the power to make their own decisions.

Questioned by the audience on how the money would be spent should the mill levy increase be approved, Humes noted that the fire station, which was built in the 1930s, is no longer up to code and needs work, that the department is trying to add a modular building to be used as a residence, that the fire engine needs repairs, and that another brush truck is needed. Humes said that at present the department is underfunded, and that the increased revenue is needed to ensure the future of the department.

Following Humes’s presentation and a discussion of the wording of the ballot initiative, Ken Weiland spoke on behalf of the homeowners association of Forest View Estates. Weiland said Forest View residents receive their fire protection from TLMFPD, that they viewed the proposed mill levy increase as double taxation, and had decided not to support it unless language was added that specifically exempts them. If they were exempt they would support the measure, Weiland said.

The motion to approve the language of the ballot initiative was tabled by a unanimous vote.

**Economic development group presents vi-**

**sion for area**

Danette Lilja, president and chairperson of the Tri-Lakes Economic Development Corp. (Tri-Lakes EDC), outlined for the council her organization’s strategy to foster the climate for business in the Tri-Lakes area. Lilja said the Tri-Lakes EDC focuses on businesses categorized as primary employers, which she defined as those that earn more than 50 percent of their revenue from customers outside the region, such as DePuy Synthes and Sara’s Sausage. According to Lilja, primary employers bring money into the area and drive the growth of more local businesses, such as retail stores and restaurants.

Lilja said the Tri-Lakes EDC provides several programs to the area: a real estate inventory program that catalogs available sites for businesses, a development process program that develops best practices to address challenges to development that are unique to the Tri-Lakes area, and a primary employer outreach program that works to address the needs of primary employers. Additional information about the corporation can be found on its website ([www.trilakesedc.com](http://www.trilakesedc.com)).

Lilja pointed to factors her organization feels will contribute to growth in the Tri-Lakes area: the recent designation of land along Highway 105 including Palmer Lake as an enterprise zone, which provides tax benefits to businesses that relocate there for the next 10 years, and the widening of I-25. She pointed to Castle Rock as an example of a community whose economy had developed as a result of widening I-25. She stated that bedroom communities such as Palmer Lake do not tend to thrive.

Lilja’s assessment of bedroom communities provoked a comment from Banta, who said: “I moved here because I liked it was a bedroom community.” Banta said he believed some residents would be willing to increase their taxes to retain the undeveloped character of the community. Lilja ended by remarking that change is inevitable, and communities must decide whether they will embrace and control it, or spend their energy fighting it.

Mayor Nikki McDonald presented a resolution in support of the enterprise zone. The resolution passed with votes from Economic Development Trustee Judith Harrington, Police Trustee Bob Grado, and Water Trustee Mitchell Davis. Trustee Banta voted no because he felt he had not had enough time to analyze the resolution.

**Eagle Scout proposes octoball court for park**

Trustee Banta introduced Logan Bochoch of Boy Scout Troop 9 in Monument. Bochoch, who is working on an Eagle Scout community service project, proposed the addition of an octoball court to the Palmer Lake Recreational Area, and asked the council for support. The council unanimously tabled the request so that they have time to select the best location for the court.

**Council reappoints Planning Commission and grants business license**

A motion to reappoint all members of the Planning Commission was unanimously approved by the council.

A business license was given to Eddie Wooters to sell disc golf equipment as Throw Colorado LLC.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

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The next meeting will be at 6 p.m. Aug. 13 at Town Hall, 42 Valley Crescent. Meetings are normally held on the second Thursday of the month. Information: 481-2953.

James Howald can be reached at [jameshowald@ocn.me](mailto:jameshowald@ocn.me).

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