



Date: January 21, 2026

To: **The Palmer Lake Board of Trustees**

Through: Glen Smith, Interim Town Administrator, Town of Palmer Lake (TOPL)

From: Barb Cole, Consulting Planners, Community Matters Institute

CC: Erica Romero, Town Clerk, Town of Palmer Lake
Scott Krob, Town Attorney

Re: **Interim Town Planner**

Summary

Interim Town Administrator requested that we provide the following information to the Board of Trustees:

1. Role of the Interim Contract Town Planner
2. CMI's role in building capacity for the governance of land use matters

Role of the Interim Town Planner

The tasks performed by the interim town planner are highly dependent upon the skill set of the Town Administrator. Typically, contract Town Planners perform those roles that require technical expertise that is beyond the skill set of most Town Administrators or are so time-consuming that the Town Administrator or Town Clerk cannot perform the required duties.

Most small towns that we have served since the early 80's do not have a lot of development applications. They choose to hire a contract Town Planner because the cost to review new land use applications is borne by the applicant rather than strain small town budgets. In addition, contract Town Planners allow towns to pay for only for the hours or services they need, and small towns receive a higher level of expertise than if a full time planner were hired.

In addition to reviewing development applications, the Contract Town Planner is sometimes asked to undertake smaller related tasks. In Palmer Lake, this has included development review application forms and checklists as an example, or updating land use specific land use regulations at the request of the Town Administrator or sometimes the Planning Commission.



CMI's role in building capacity for the governance of land use matters

- In 2022, CMI responded to a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the drafting and adoption of the Community Master Plan (aka required Comprehensive Plan.)
- In 2023, again through an RFP process, CMI was hired to undertake the rewrite of both Title 16- Subdivision and Title 17- Zoning. Both codes were first adopted in 1970 and 1973 with very few amendments.
- The above services were secured by a specific contract for the above services and are separate and apart from the monthly requests by the Town Administrator.

Who is Community Matters Institute (CMI)?

- CMI is a not-for-profit 501 (c) 3 and Colorado Charity. To that end, we report to a Board of Directors and, per our bylaws, charge hourly rates significantly below the average rate for professional firms. The three professionals comprising the Institute have decades of experience in both land use matters and economic development.
- As a not-for-profit, we also donate time and expertise to our clients and those seeking what one Board member calls 'Coaching from the Sidelines.'
- Since the early 1980's, Community Matters Inc. and now Community Matters Institute have provided contract services to over 75 Colorado communities, many in El Paso County.
- The now closed corporation and the not-for-profit have worked for many years for the following El Paso communities:
 - Town of Woodland Park
 - Town of Green Mountain Falls
 - City of Colorado Springs
 - City of Fountain
 - Town of Monument
 - City of Manitou Springs
- As noted in the contract before you, CMI has agreed to continue our role until a new Town Administrator is on board. At that time, both parties will assess the needs of the Town.