



Friends of Carefree, there was no Executive Session this month! The regular Council meeting was held at 5PM.

Before we provide the usual council meeting recap we'd like to give you a brief summary from the 3 Budget Workshops that were held in April. The new Fiscal Year (2017) begins July 1st. The proposed FY17 Budget, to be tentatively approved at this meeting, will be \$6.2M. Projected Revenue from all sources is \$6,214,728. About 54% of that is expected from local sales tax. The remaining \$2.9M is obtained from State Shared Revenue and local fees. Expenses are projected to be \$6,213,270. **The good news is that the new \$6.2M budget will include about \$150K for median revegetation!** There is very little in capital or other expenses. However the Town is actually expecting less income from Sales Taxes compared to the present fiscal year.

Our Observations of the Bicycle Lane Project

As you have probably observed, the ADOT Bicycle Lane Project is winding down, to the relief of merchants and residents alike. Temporary lane and side line stripping is essentially done. The surface treatment must 'cure' for several weeks before the permanent stripping is applied. You may also have noticed that the bicycle lanes are not the uniform 5 feet wide we were originally told was the Federal requirement. In fact, many sections are only 3 or 4 feet wide, with some near the town core actually about 2 feet wide. This is *good news* since traffic lanes will not be as dramatically affected (narrowed) as they might have been had 5 foot wide bicycle lanes been implemented. Unfortunately sections of our medians did take a beating, so narrowed now that mature tree limbs have been hit and broken off by large trucks riding in the left lanes especially east of the town core. Other sections of the medians were shortened, some disappeared entirely. How less desertscape and more blacktop enhances our 'Village' life remains a mystery to us.

Sections of the road surface coatings appear to be unevenly applied but the town administrator has stated that he is not aware of any aspect that does not comply with the ADOT (project manager for our bicycle lanes) quality assurance procedures. By contrast, the section of Tom Darlington from Carefree Highway to the Carefree town boundary appears to have been held to higher standards by Scottsdale, since they are responsible for that section of the roadway and used no Federal funds. Interestingly, no bicycle lanes were provided. We suspect that when you take free money from the government you live with their quality standards.

Town Council Meeting, May 3, 2016 at 5:00PM

The Council meeting was the 2nd expeditious affair this year lasting just 40 minutes.

Items 1 - 7, Consent Agenda: All items were related to routine town business (meeting minutes, bills, financial reports, event permits, etc.), Approved 7 - 0.

The Mayor requested that Item 11 be taken out of order.

Item 11, Spirit of Carefree Award: This annual award is presented to an individual who demonstrates broad community involvement and initiative to help make Carefree a better community for its residents. Carefree resident and commercial property owner Harry Vardakis was presented with the 2015 award. Local artist Peggy Pettigrew Stewart created the beautiful award and described its meaning and significance. Harry was gracious as he humbly accepted the award. Photos can be viewed on our [Photos](#) page.

Item 8, Call to the Public: No one spoke.

Item 9, Current Events: The Mayor asked the town administrator to provide an update on the Bicycle Lane Project. Mr. Neiss stated that the slurry sealing has been completed and the final stripping should be done in a few weeks.

Vice Mayor Crane mentioned that a significant Bashas' remodeling project will begin in July and should be completed in November. The renovation will include Starbucks, a new look, and new features including grills to prepare hot dogs and burgers.

The Mayor asked Gina (Marketing) to provide an update on Ray Villafane's activities. Ray will be here from May 15th - 25th to create another large sand sculpture, in the amphitheater, area which is hoped will last through the summer. The theme for this and future works will remain a secret for now.

Gateway footer construction is expected to begin next week. The steel fabrication is underway with orders placed. *[You may have noticed the 26 new faux gas lights are now operational, many currently illuminating vacant properties.]*

The Mayor mentioned that information and candidate packets for the upcoming Town Council election(s) could be found on the Town website, or in Town Hall.

Item 10, Second Reading of the Carefree Privilege Tax Code: The 'Privilege' Tax is better known to most of us as the Sales Tax. As a result of changes to the State Model City Tax Codes, Carefree 2012-2014 Tax Code amendments need to be adopted. Mr. Neiss stated that this is essentially a housekeeping measure.
Approved, 7 - 0.

Item 12, Town Council Chambers & Meeting Space rental: With the current lease in the Post Office building expiring July 31st, and the 33 Easy Street building unavailable for at least a year, the Holland Community Center (34250 N. 60th Street) has become the preferred option for rental space. Although not in Carefree, it addresses all the requirements outlined by the town administrator which the other locations cannot provide on a consistent basis. Rent is to be \$4,000 per year and can result in a saving of almost \$40,000 compared to a lease extension on the current space.
Approved, 7 - 0.

Item 13, Carefree FY17 Town Budget: After 3 budget workshops the Council has tentatively adopted the 2017 budget. The bottom line number is now set (\$6.2M) and cannot be changed, although individual line items can be changed or moved. A

Special Meeting will be held on June 7th, just prior to the regular Council meeting, in order to complete the process and formerly adopt the new budget. Approved, 7 - 0.

[This was yet another meeting during which we endured the 'Carefree does not have a Property Tax' reminder from the town administrator. I cannot recall one instance when the former, 25+ years, town administrator lamented over a lack of local Property Taxes or even mentioned the subject.]

During the budget workshops Mr. Neiss lectured that the midpoint value of a Carefree home is \$535,000. In Scottsdale, the local property tax on that value is \$3,175, and in Phoenix it is \$2,925. These taxes are in addition to the County and School District taxes levied on Carefree, Scottsdale, and Phoenix. Carefree does not impose a local Property Tax. What Mr. Neiss continually fails to realize, or acknowledge, is that no Property Tax in Carefree was by design - the founding fathers he frequently references (when it suits him) wanted it that way. It is also one of the reasons many residents chose/choose to live here. No Property Taxes and small government are the envy of smart communities all across the country. To our knowledge, Mr. Neiss does not live in Carefree.]

Item 14, Town Council Updates: The Mayor mentioned that the Liberty/BMSC comprehensive agreement is on track and will be taken up by the ACC in June. The agreement is expected to be approved.

Mr. Neiss advised that the Planning and Zoning Commission will take up the matter of setting commercial building height at 30 feet during their meeting next week (5/9). Once they agree to town staff recommendations they are expected to forward the recommendations to the Council for consideration and approval in June.

Councilman Farrar humorously mentioned that May 4th is birthday.
Happy Birthday Grandpa Mike!

Item 15, Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Jim Van Allen and John Traynor

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