



Friends of Carefree, this edition is intended to bring you up to date on two town meetings and a Facebook hosted forum, called *Carefree Infamous Voter Forum*, moderated by Cave Creek resident Star Thornton. As interesting or enticing as that last item may seem, recent experience has proved otherwise. Keep reading.

As we get closer to the Property Tax election in May, yes, ***that is exactly what it is, a Property Tax election***, we continue to see the extent to which our Scottsdale-resident town administrator is willing to go to get his Property tax. I'm fairly sure he still needed approval from the mayor to hire the numerous consultants he has brought on board to put lipstick on this pig. Both should be embarrassed, because everyone knows, "you can't put lipstick on a pig." Can you guess how many consultants you can hire to give you the answers you want, using other people's money? I suspect you know that the correct answer is, 'as many as it takes.' So, if you believe the election is actually about something other than a Property Tax, you have been snagged by the old Carefree standby, 'The Fear Factor'. Don't base your vote on the Property Tax because of fabricated fear. But do think about the people trying to sell you that fear. Should they represent you?

Part 1 - Last edition I urged you to attend the General Plan meeting on February 1st. Many of us did attend that meeting. The pleasant surprise was that the meeting merely focused on a very high-level overview of the '*process*' of creating a General Plan, not the details, and not the several hour ordeal the February council meeting subsequently became. You can review the information from what was labeled Community Workshop #1 [here](#). You can visit the Town's General Plan Update page [here](#). Keep in mind it is **Your General Plan**.

In fairness, the presentation and brief Q&A were very well done, a credit to the Baker Group representative and the attendees. My major takeaway from that meeting was that you [residents] will have

the opportunity to vote on the proposed Carefree General Plan on the **November 2024** election ballot. If you don't approve that plan, they must fix it and let you vote again, as many times as it takes to win Your approval!

Part 2 - There were two hot topics during the February 7th council meeting. The first was a presentation by Jim Ford, Director of Community Risk Reduction in Cave Creek. Mr. Ford, a relatively recent hire, was asked to present the council with his experiences selecting, and then then moving Cave Creek from Rural Metro Fire/EMS to Daisy Mountain Automatic aid. It was a long and laborious 2 hours, recounting mostly a one-sided perspective of that transition. The council loved it and asked a number of leading questions to which they already had their own answers. **Note to council members and staff: the microphones are there for a good reason, use them.** A resident, Mr. Nelson, asked why it was so one sided and why Rural Metro had not been given an opportunity to present their perspective to the council (and public) at this meeting. He also made comments regarding the Carefree town administrator's \$200K salary. Some of his remarks seemed to be muted. For some inexplicable reason the council chamber's sound system occasionally had volume issues that evening, almost as if the system was periodically turned off or turned down. I'm told other parts of the meeting recording were unintelligible as well - possibly due to "a glitch". **Note to staff: Check everything before a meeting, especially the sound system, to avoid future glitches.**

Chief Soule, a Rural Metro [R/M] senior Fire Chief, may have submitted a permission to speak slip, so he eventually had the opportunity to provide a slightly different picture than Mr. Ford had painted, *each time* Mr. Ford appeared to be finished. Chief Soule has served for 38 years with R/M and is their Regional Director for Central Arizona Operations. If it were not such a serious subject it would have been humorous to watch Mr. Ford jumped back up after the R/M chief left the podium. There were a few back and forth turns at that podium. Full disclosure, you should be aware that Mr. Ford was hired by Cave Creek for \$170,000 per year to oversee Daisy Mountain Fire, even though they signed a 25 year contract which

included a Daisy Mountain Chief for Cave Creek. That made me wonder what the proposed Carefree Property Tax would really cover. The absolutely last thing we need is more highly paid staff, especially those potentially paid thanks to an unnecessary Property Tax. That seems to be reminiscent of the totally unnecessary, and bogus, Peterson/Geiger water project that created a 32.4 Million debt for Carefree. Yes, that number from the Water Company Audit keeps changing; it was reduced from \$37 Million due to a late update from the auditor. Council member and Property Tax proponent Sheila Amoroso is correct about one thing, it was not a \$37 Million water project debt, it was only a \$32.4 Million water project debt. Eventually we may get way down to the number Shelia likes to quote, incorrectly.

The second major agenda item was selection of the 7 Planning & Zoning commissioners, from a field of 17! Another false narrative which has been used by town administrations in at least 3 or 4 instances over the years, is that we needed 4 year council and mayor terms in office because there are not enough volunteers to serve. Judging from the applicants for the P&Z, hogwash would be the kindest response I would give that ridiculous claim.

During his introduction of that agenda item, the mayor stated that each candidate would be given 2 minutes to introduce themselves. Candidates had already been pre-screened by at least one, if not more, council members. Thankfully, not all 17 candidates were present. The process got off to a bit of a rocky start when the first candidate seemed to reach back to childhood during his introduction. Thankfully, several minutes later the mayor once again jumped in with a polite notice to speed things up.

Getting through the remainder of the candidates, who were present and prepared to speak, went more quickly. It was evident that some candidates were far more qualified than others. Finally, after a second attempt by the town clerk to tally an accurate vote count from 7 council members, the winners were announced. They were Tom Cross, Chairperson, Mary Roberts, Vice Chairperson, Peter Burns,

Commissioner, Karen Dahlman, Commissioner, Susie Dymoke, Commissioner, Ralph Ferro, Commissioner, and Sharon P. Smith, Commissioner.

It was no surprise that certain individuals were pre-ordained to be on the P&Z. Several of what seemed to be less qualified candidates were winners. Interestingly, Mary Roberts was not only a winner but also selected to be Vice Chair, with no time previously served. She is a friend of Les Peterson, a frequent golfing buddy of council member Kroyer, and was the cooperative president of the North Boulders HOA back in 2018 when the mayor/town first established a sweetheart deal to take open space from that community. After numerous legal battles, the huge [*unnecessary*] water tank now occupies the contested land. One can only hope that it will serve as a memorial, an enduring reminder for Boulders residents of those responsible. It should also serve as a warning about government overreach for all Carefree residents.

Coincidentally, Ms. Roberts is/was rumored to be intimately involved with the "Carefree Unity" publication – that probably made her very popular with the hand-picked council left behind by Peterson. And, the P&Z seat may not yet be the end of the 'thank you'. We will have to see if the *new* mayor has integrity when the time comes. Does the old adage, "*It's not what you know, but who you know*" come to mind? It seems to fit here, in Carefree.

Part 3 – The 'Carefree Infamous Voter Forum'. In my opinion, it is not a place for constructive information exchanges. After being told by several Carefree friends that I, and a few others, were the subject of unsavory comments by a few of the trolls that haunt that forum, I decided to check for myself. [*FYI - Internet trolls, or online bullies, deliberately try to offend, cause trouble or directly attack people by posting derogatory comments on Facebook posts, blogs, on forums, and elsewhere on social media.*]

My review of numerous posts, particularly by Lisa Rinde and Jim Northcutt revealed a history of attacking individuals, like myself, who did not visit or frequent the forum. They were safe from the scrutiny of those they attacked, and from being fact-checked on the topics

they crafted to suit their biased purposes. Lisa hides behind the screen name Lisa Zzee. Jim even sent a missive to the Sonoran News to take shots at a Carefree resident who was brave enough to send a letter to SN exposing the obvious shortcomings of Carefree town council members. He opined on their lack of knowledge regarding subject matters they were expected to intelligently address – that made him a target of a westside troll.

The relationship of the two individuals I mentioned above, with certain residents of the Sentinel Rock community, became obvious from their posts and personal attacks. I'm not sure why the moderator of the forum [had] allowed most of those posts to remain online for as long as they had been, but a personal connection to one or more of those specific Carefree posters may be a factor. I don't know for sure, but I do know that my comments regarding the activities of Lisa and Jim got wiped out within minutes of my posting them. Was my post pleasant? No. Did it contain profanity? No. It was simply an honest and appropriate response to those who attack others with impunity. That is more than I can say for the likes of Lisa and Jim. I saved my comments and may yet repeat them here, in a future edition.

Interestingly, shortly after the moderator wiped out my rebuttal comments, Lisa obviously took down her posts, removing all evidence of her malfeasance on the forum, along with Jim's responses – **poof!** Further, it appears Jim has been a bad boy on FB; see this post from moderator Star Thornton on February 5th: "Our friend Jim Northcutt has been put in FB jail for a month. I will be posting for him until his sentence is up." Isn't that a nice gesture on the part of an unbiased moderator? I posted a second item, but this time I saved my post **and all the responses** before my final post which obviously hit a nerve with the moderator. I called her out for essentially bullying responders regarding a question she posted. Her responses always contained the words like these, "that does not answer my question." She claimed she wanted facts, not opinions, yet I stated that her question had been asked and answered, several times. **Poof!**

The above was a public service message for *Carefree residents*. It was intended to give you a clear picture of what you are dealing with by posting on that forum. Many on the westside of Carefree, with the support of Les Peterson and Tony Geiger, put us in serious debt [32.4MILLION] for nothing but ego. A few post trash about others online and are in favor of a Property Tax so that Carefree can join the misery Cave Creek residents will face in the not too distant future. Bill Basore wrote on that forum, that those Carefree residents [water-wanters] should have formed an improvement district and assumed the debt they alone would benefit from. Carefree would have had far more discretionary funds to address other resident needs. There are probably many smart people on that forum, but those are not the nasty ones.

Thanks for reading. There is not a boring month in our two neighboring towns.

I, and others will continue to urge you to vote NO on the Property Tax in May. The town narrative is a false narrative, based on manufactured fear and half-truths. If the mayor speaks to your community, with or without his council assistants, that is what you will hear – their false narrative. Keep listening to ‘hear the rest of the story’, or contact me. There are many others who have uncovered the rest of the story. Keep your eyes on www.KeepCarefreeTaxFree.com

Please remember to Say no, **now and in May**, to this despicable effort to change the character of Carefree, forever.

Property taxes are the unchained beast of bureaucrats who grow more and more comfortable and dependent on spending Other People’s Money. If you have had enough of that, say no.

“Choose wisely Grasshopper”

And there you have it, for now.

Respectfully submitted by John Traynor

Notice: In addition to reporting *facts*, this Newsletter will contain the author's perspective on topics or events affecting Carefree residents. That perspective may not be popular with the mayor, council members, staff, town attorney, a certain blogger, or her sycophantic followers. The fact is, I don't care what they think.

If we lived in a perfect world, we would need but one newspaper.

God Bless America.

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Carefree, what life should be!

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“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.”

Attribution not verified; Not JFK and Not Edmund Burke. I attribute it to Common Sense!