



Friends of Carefree, this special edition is fair warning that the future look, feel, and entire character of Carefree is hanging in the balance. **Your attention is needed.** The overdue General Plan is being unwrapped on Wednesday, February 1, at 5PM in the Carefree Council Chambers. Developed under the direction of a town administrator who does not live in Carefree.

In fact, this town administrator has chosen, on at least two occasions, to live in Scottsdale, his most recent purchase a \$1.5M home further south and east in Scottsdale than his prior Scottsdale home. He, his recent hires, and a former mayor, are the driving forces behind the movement toward what Carefree will be in the future. Hired guns were once again retained to continue pushing a vision of Carefree. Presumably, they have a vision of what Carefree should be that suits the town administrator.

In 1955, Tom Darlington and K.T. Palmer decided it was time to acquire land for a future town they had conceived. They purchased a 400-acre goat farm and merged it with 2,200 acres of the surrounding land. According to an AZ Family news article on the pair, “the property had abundant water and rolling hills filled with abundant desert beauty.”

Unlike recent development plans, they set down guidelines “that protected mountainsides from being built upon, and development was kept in harmony with the natural desert landscape to best preserve the vistas.” Our town administrator routinely suggests he knows what the developers/founders wanted. He has no clue. He wasn’t even born yet, but he claims to know what they were thinking.

This same individual wants a Property Tax. Darlington and Palmer never considered such a thing. They fought Scottsdale to keep Carefree independent, the jewel they contemplated. Yes, times change, but not always for the better, but forever. For over 38 years the Town of Carefree has thrived without a Property tax, a Hampton Inn, or a luxury resort. However, because of recent poor judgement,

a totally unnecessary water project, budget increases, enormous debt (37.4 million according to accredited auditors), and a distorted Scottsdale centric vision, Carefree faces a forever character alteration.

Why did you move here? I assume you did not come here for more of Scottsdale, else you would be living where the Carefree town administrator lives. Do not permit fear or tales of impending disaster to affect your common sense and good judgement.

Don't let someone else's vision of Carefree confuse you or woo you. You came here for a reason; **you wanted better than Scottsdale or Phoenix, and then you found it in Carefree. Keep it that way.**

They will be telling you 'the better' *they want you to choose.* **Reject it and reject any Property Tax. "Keep Carefree Tax free."** These issues are just two of the significant issues facing ALL Carefree voters in at least a generation. Future generations will judge us harshly if we fail to preserve Carefree as the jewel Darlington and Palmer conceived, and the jewel we discovered and love.

I urged you to attend the meeting on February 1st. I then urge you to vote NO on the Property Tax in May (much more on this in the weeks and months ahead). The town narrative is a false narrative, based on fear and half-truths. If the mayor speaks to your community, that is what you will hear. Keep listening to hear the rest of the story, or contact me. There are many others who have dug out the rest of the story. Keep your eyes on www.KeepCarefreeTaxFree.com

What follows is information I have just received from a reader, a very savvy resident who helps from time to time. Rather than attempt to rewrite their words, I provide them here for your consideration. I sincerely thank that individual and look forward to more input going forward. **[Highlighting and coloration is mine.]**

It is the start of a New Year and time to reflect on 2022. In 2022, the water transition took center stage in Carefree - unquestionable the most controversial and expensive project ever attempted by Carefree. As a consequence of this project, **Carefree residents are obligated to repay a \$37.4 Million debt (Heinfeld Meech December 1, 2022 Audit).**

Many people questioned the cost/benefit of this massive undertaking. In reflection, the reasons given to justify the water transition never materialized and Carefree is left poorer and vulnerable to the vagaries of neighboring towns who have already cut off water supplies to surrounding towns that have historically relied on their support (example Scottsdale and Rio Verde Foothills).

In an available soundbite, **Mayor Les Peterson claims Cave Creek Water violated Federal Safe Drinking Water standards. [He must loath these pesky soundbites he has left behind.]**

[Regardless of what the ex-mayor, and council member Geiger have said, history tells a different story, and the truth. Why? See below.]

Reason 1. Toxic Cave Creek water

FALSE: Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) gave an interview with Foothills Focus (March 17, 2021) to correct the false allegations Mayor Peterson made against Cave Creek. Trevor Baggione, ADEQ Water Quality Division Director, stated **"Cave Creek Water has NEVER violated Federal Safe Drinking Water Standards"**, nor has Cave Creek ever had a maintenance operation violation (another false claim made by Mayor Peterson).

Cave Creek water has always been safe to drink; which is why **Carefree is currently constructing a new water connection at Bella Vista and Cave Creek Road that will enable Cave Creek treated water to be delivered directly into the Carefree Water system servicing all Carefree residents including those 500 residents we are paying \$37.4 Million to transition off Cave Creek water.**

Reason 2. Drought rationing of Cave Creek's limited and unreliable water supply would cause Carefree residents to face devaluation of their homes.

Council Member Tony Geiger's next door neighbor wrote, "Now, unless (Carefree) protects our interests, we face the real possibility that

when we try and sell our home in the future we will suffer significant devaluation of our investment due to perceived as well as real water issues that should trouble any perspective home buyer. “ *[Monetary motivation, not water quality drove their movement.]*”

FALSE: On December 6, 2022 Carefree implemented Stage 2 Drought Restrictions asking Carefree residents to reduce water usage by 10%. Cave Creek has yet to implement Stage 1 restrictions. Cave Creek is also in the process of adding a major new water line from Phoenix. This new water line will be able to supply 1.4 Million gallons per day of treated water to Cave Creek. On only a few rare high peak water use days, this new line can supply the entirety of Cave Creek - hard to find a more reliable back up supply than that.

On the other hand, **Carefree Water HAS NO WATER TREATMENT FACILITIES.** We rely exclusively on neighboring towns to treat ALL our CAP water before we can even drink it. And even with the implementation of Stage 2 drought restrictions (residents are asked to cut our water usage by 10% and only water on certain days), **Carefree continues to pursue a 175 room resort on the corner of Tom Darlington and Carefree Highway. This area only has a water allotment for between 6 and 10 homes, NOT nearly enough for a 175 room resort.**

Reason 3. Representation

Representation is perhaps the most flimsy of all the manufactured reasons Carefree used to manipulate residents into paying one of the highest water rates in all of Arizona.

Four members of Carefree's seven member Town Council were on the Cave Creek Water system. Hardly a lack of representation. And as ADEQ stated; ADEQ are the authorities and stewards of safe water in Arizona and not one resident in Carefree ever contacted us (ADEQ) to complain about Cave Creek water nor have any of the Carefree Town Council Members reached out to us with their concerns. [BOOM!]

WHAT CAN CAREFREE RESIDENTS DO?

The truth will always come out in the end. Lies are just a temporary delay of that inevitability.

It may be too late to change the course of the water transition, but it should serve as a warning to Carefree residents. **We have reason to**

question other claims the Town Council is making. Prior to the last election, the current council was pro-mutual aid and Rural Metro. Post election, they are now making statements to the effect residents are in mortal danger if we don't vote for a property tax to support automatic aid. **And unlike the water transition where *residents were denied a vote*, Carefree is legally obligated to put a property tax to a vote of residents.** It may be smart to proceed with automatic aid, **but not without first taking a hard look at the out of control spending that has been going on in Carefree.**

Wednesday, February 1 (Carefree Council Chambers 5:00pm - 6:30pm) will be the first opportunity residents can participate in the next General Plan. A General Plan establishes the direction for future growth and character of a community. It is a resident's opportunity to decide whether their town becomes overwhelmed by Hampton Inn style developments or keeps the Sonoran Desert beauty through park lands and protected open spaces. If you care about what Carefree looks like in the future, then you must attend these meetings and make your voice heard.

I resume...

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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“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!