



Friends of Carefree, this month there was a Water Company Board meeting, a Special Council meeting to approve the FY16-17 Budget, and then the routine Council meeting.

General News: The Primary Election for Carefree Mayor and Town Council is scheduled for Tuesday, August 30, 2016. Ballots will be mailed on August 3rd. Prior to the filing deadline of June 1st, Council members Gearhart, Miller, & Price chose not to seek reelection at this time. The remaining candidates are as follows:

Mayor

Les Peterson – Mayor

There are 6 Town Council seats to be elected

John Crane, incumbent

Mike Farrar, incumbent

Michael Krahe

Cheryl Kroyer

Gene Orrico, incumbent

Jim Van Allen

As you may know, or have just read, Jim Van Allen has registered as a candidate in the upcoming election for Town Council. Jim is a former member of the town council who had to step down prior to completing his full term. Jim will write a short article in July about his qualifications and his goals for the future on the council.

Jim being Jim, he feels that it would be inappropriate for him, while serving the town in an official capacity, to participate in blogging or sending out email/newsletters regarding town activities. He was especially concerned about a recent email blast sent out by a current council member who may have inappropriately used the town's mailing list. In order to distance himself from even a hint of conflict in relation to our mutual endeavor, if elected, Jim will cease his participation in CFM effective with his taking the oath of office. I'll miss his input and council but I realize more residents and merchants will benefit from his being on our Town Council. I wish him the best.

It was suggested, by long tenured councilman Bob Coady that we might want to consider resurrecting the 'Question of the Month'. As we have stated in the past we do not publish 'letters from readers' for many very good reasons. When appropriate, or necessary, we have brought certain matters to the attention of the mayor, but we do not disclose the source without the author's permission. Publishing a 'Question of the Month' might be an interesting addition, so we'll give it a try starting later in this issue.

Water Company Board Meeting, June 7, 2016 at 4:00PM

The most significant topic during this board meeting was approval of the Water Company FY16-17 Budget and the new Water Rate Schedule. The following meeting highlights are courtesy of Jim Van Allen:

- 1) Rates will increase by 2% for both the base meter charge as well as water charge;
- 2) Salaries will increase by 2.5%;
- 3) No 'new' hydrants will be installed for the next 2 years. Instead, 4 old hydrants which are deteriorating will be replaced each year.
- 4) There are no water quality or quantity issues of concern for next 3-4 years;
- 5) It could be 10 years before the 4 inch pipes up north are replaced with the 6 inch pipes needed for installation of fire hydrants;
- 6) It would cost \$ 2.9 million to upgrade the pipes and that money will have to come from borrowing. Delaying the pay back to the Town of older loans is a possibility acknowledged by the Mayor;
- 7) Greg Crossman, Water Company General Manager, is starting to work on a 10 year plan.

Special Council Meeting, June 7, 2016 at 4:45PM

This Special meeting was held for discussion and approval of the Town Budget for FY16-17. After brief discussion the budget was approved 7 - 0. Adjourned at 4:55PM.

Town Council Meeting, June 7, 2016 at 5:00PM

Items 1 - 4, Consent Agenda: All items were related to routine town business (meeting minutes, bills, financial reports, event permits, etc.), Approved 7 - 0.

Item 5, Call to the Public: Jim Van Allen spoke about his very recent experience with the Kiwanis Splash Pad. *[As you probably recall both Jim and I were opposed to the Town spending, what was originally estimated to be over \$300K, for a Splash Pad. It was considered an 'economic development' expense, intended to increase the town's sales tax revenue.]* Jim began his comments by stating that he was opposed to the splash pad and saw no 'economic' value' in it. However on Monday his wife brought their two grand kids to the splash pad and he went over to watch. What he saw were grandparents from the Boulders, who were raving about the fun their 2 grand kids were having and that they had been there 3 days in a row. They never had anything to do with the kids before. There were two ladies with their 2 toddlers having a blast. Then another lady with one toddler came. This all occurred within 2 hours.

All of the folks (his wife included) brought water or juice and snacks. His wife had taken their grandchildren to two other splash pads which were very crowded and had a lot of older children. He said his wife liked ours much better.

He said he was wrong to fight the splash pad, as it is a draw for both families and grandparents. And like the Pumpkin festival and elephant *[sand sculpture]* it creates activity in downtown Carefree. These things will bring about repeat visits. He added that maybe in the future we can have stores to cater to the needs of these visitors, like ice cream, inexpensive hot dogs, etc. etc.

He said that, if we had to pay for it and then expected to collect lots more in additional sales tax because of it, then he still would be opposed to it. So he thanks Kiwanis for their

donation which paid for the construction of the Splash Pad. From an economic development perspective, he doesn't hear the ringing of cash registers.

No one else spoke.

Item 6, Current Events: The Mayor asked Gina Kaegi (Marketing Director) if she had any updates on Ray Villafane's activities with the Sand sculptures. Boy, did she ever! Ray had completed a sand sculpture in the Sanderson Lincoln Amphitheater. The sculpture of an elephant playing chess against a mouse has had widespread, even global recognition. She mentioned that there had been over 3.6 million views on Facebook and that other social media sites were all carrying information and photos, bringing lots of attention to Carefree. After further discussion the question was raised regarding how long these sculptures will last, being mostly exposed to the summer elements. Gina explained that although the Elephant's location was partially protected from the sun, wind and Monsoon rains will eventually have a substantial effect. It has been sprayed with a glue-like treatment which will hopefully prolong the inevitable.

Item 7, Valley of the Sun YMCA presentation: Sr. Executive Director Katie Smetana walked us through a comprehensive presentation, and short video, of the many facets of the Y. She covered various events, and partnerships with Carefree. The facility has been open six years, has about 1,000 visitors per day with over 9,000 members. There are 520 memberships with Carefree PO Box addresses, and 1,600 seniors receive subsidies through various sources. The Y works with Carefree on a number of activities which have included field trips to the Gardens, special events with Ray Villafane, and they now offer Yoga in the Gardens on Mondays (fall through spring).

Item 8, Funding for Median Landscaping near the town core: The town administrator was seeking approval to enter into a contract with Desert Foothills Landscape for the sum of \$99,707. A 25% deposit would be paid from the current year's budget (ending Jun 30th). There is \$150,000 for landscaping in the new fiscal year budget. The project area is to include the sections of Tom Darlington from Stagecoach Pass to Cave Creek Road, and on Cave Creek Road from Scopa Trail to Mule Train. The project will begin in June and continue through the summer, with the goal of providing "a sense of entry at the Gateways". *[I distinctly remember hearing that the Gateways were to provide a sense of entry, an alert that visitors had arrived in Carefree]* There is no irrigation at our medians. Revegetation will focus on low water plants, there will be no trees. There were a few questions from the council members, and then Jim Van Allen was permitted to speak.

Jim reminded everyone that town paid studies going back several years, especially the Baker Group "Revitalization Master Plan", refer to the Carefree as a 'Village'. Jim said that cactus, rocks, boulders, and the lack of trees or other greenery are not very Village-like. Jim cited the proliferation of asphalt, rocks, and lack of trees as contrary to that Village feel. From Bloody Basin on the east around to Bloody Basin on the south the only place we have *any* nice trees are at the two roundabouts, that's it. On Tom Darlington in front of the Bashas' center, all asphalt. *[The intersection of Tom Darlington and Cave Creek road is now more asphalt than ever, and not a very appealing village 'Welcome to Carefree'.]* He asked that the council wait until July to approve any contract. The Mayor said they were not inclined to wait, and suggested Jim wrap up. Councilman Miller suggested that Jim meet with Gary Neiss to continue the dialog. *[Jim is expecting to meet with Gary and Vice Mayor Crane next week. For the record, the point of speaking at a public meeting is so that the public is aware of a different point of view, not just the council/staff perspective.]*

The council then voted to approve the contract, 7 – 0.

Item 9, Building Height Text Amendment: *[Since August of last year the P&Z has, through a series of at least 4 meetings, considered the issue of building heights in Carefree, especially for the commercial properties. If you have followed these newsletters you know the issues discussed as well as those raised by said discussions. In the end, the P&Z put forth a more conservative proposal for the text amendment than the town administrator and town planner initially set out to implement. Hopefully town staff got the message. This is not Scottsdale, Phoenix or anywhere else – it is Carefree, it is unique, and that’s why people choose to live here.]*

The Council approved the amendment to the Zoning Ordinance, proposed by the P&Z, which will raise commercial building height from the present 24 feet to 30 feet. The amendment also clarifies/simplifies how residential building height is measured. *[We sincerely hope that the form based zoning advocated by staff, which would allow for significantly higher structures, will rest in peace.]* Approved 7 – 0.

Item 10, Amendment to Protect Gardens: This 1st reading of the proposed amendment(s) to town code outlines the restrictions sought to prohibit the riding of bicycles and “vehicles propelled by human power” on the walls, seats, furniture, amphitheater area, sidewalks or other features within the Town Center Gardens. The current language only prohibits skateboards and scooters. Jim Van Allen asked who would enforce the new codes and what the penalties would entail. Gary Neiss responded that the town Code Enforcement Officer and MCSO would enforce the codes. Section 7-5 of the Town Code addresses penalties.

Approved 7 – 0.

Item 11, Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Compliance: MS4 for short The federal government now requires municipalities to monitor the quality of storm sewer runoff to minimize the impact of pollutants affecting major washes. The Council approved a contract with Engineering and Environmental Consultants, Inc. (ECC) to ensure compliance with this federal mandate. The cost was set not to exceed \$25,000 for this phase. As ADEQ rules are formulated additional compliance activities may become necessary.

Approved 7 – 0.

Item 12, Current Events and Updates: Councilwoman Price reported that the stone material will be added to the Gateways next week and the arches and lighting should be done in mid-July.

The new bike lanes are open and in use. *[It seems that some stripping remains to be done].* Councilman Gearhart commented that he has personally used them and pronounced them to be safe and a great experience. *[We wonder how our residents feel about the finished product and if they feel safer.]*

The Easy Street Condo project may break ground in mid-July, if they succeed in reaching the 25% sales commitment level.

Item 13, Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:35PM.

Question of the Month: Now that the Bicycle Lane Project is wrapping up, do you feel it was a good investment and a valuable undertaking for Carefree?

Respectfully submitted by Jim Van Allen and John Traynor

Don't forget to visit CarefreeFutureMatters.com and forward this to your friends and neighbors so that they may subscribe for themselves.

If you wish to **Subscribe** to this Newsletter [Click here](#)
or
If you wish to **Unsubscribe**, simply [Click here to Unsubscribe](#)

Carefree, what life should be!

Copyright ©2015-2016, CarefreeFutureMatters.com - All rights reserved