

Dear Members,

On August 11, 2021, President Denise Garland and Secretary Donna Snyder met with Chris Poirer via Zoom. The focus of the meeting was to discuss Pima County code enforcement. The following is a recap of the meeting.

Notes from meeting with **Chris Poirer**, Deputy Director, **Pima County Development Services**
Chris.Poirier@pima.gov

(520) 724-6596

Other important contacts: **Dan Ice**, Chief Building Officer and **Tom Drzagowski**, Chief Zoning Inspector. (Go to <https://webcms.pima.gov/cms/One.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=63389> for their contact information)

Chris explained that 4 years ago code enforcement was transferred to the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Previously when a violation complaint was filed, 30 days was given by Development Services to comply or show progress. Second step was to issue a citation. Third step was a summons to the property owner to appear before a third party hearing officer. Fourth step was to send the case to the County Attorney to sue and send the offender to court to appear before a judge. Fines and jail time were possible.

Now with the Department of Environmental Quality handling complaints, there is no hearing officer. First step is to give an opportunity to correct (30 days). Second step is to send a Notice of Violation. If there's no compliance after 30 days, the complaint can be turned over to the County Attorneys. There is always a backlog of complaints and there could be a delay of up to 6 months. **Jackie Ronstadt** (724-9726) is the compliance manager for the Department of Environmental Quality. She is working to better prioritize issues coming into their office.

If neighbors suspect there is illegal activity, such as grading desert landscape without a permit or building or making changes to a building without a permit, it is best to check to see if a permit has been given.

<https://permits.pima.gov/acaproduct/>

The takeaway --

Should you have a complaint, it is advisable to send a copy of the complaint to our District 5 Supervisor, Adelita Grijalva. Keith Bagwell, a member of Supervisor Grijalva's team, has worked for District 5 since 2002 and has years of experience in dealing with environmental concerns. A complaint sponsored by the Supervisor's office regarding an issue could carry more weight and get a speedier response. It also puts a buffer between you and the property owner you are complaining about. You can also contact **Dan Ice** and **Tom Drzagowski** along with **Chris Poirer** directly.

In Pima County there is no limit to the number of excess vehicles that can be kept on a property as long as they are registered to the owner of the property, are operable, and not associated with commercial use or being sold from the property. Note that a homeowners association can establish rules regarding the number of vehicles kept on the property.

The GPANA Board will be working closely with our partner community groups with the guidance of Supervisor Grijalva's office to explore

- 1) Establishing a 24-hour phone number residents can call to report illegal grading of the Sonoran Desert in progress so appropriate personnel can respond
- 2) Strongly encouraging the Department of Environmental Quality to go back to using a hearing officer (since in the past this process required property owner violators to comply in 90 days).
- 3) How we can establish and have enforced an ordinance to screen excessive vehicles on a person's property that are reducing property values and quality of life (similar to City of Tucson's Preservation Code).