



Friends of Carefree, it may not yet be official but welcome to Spring!
The more things change in Carefree the more they remain the same. Read on...

Town Council Meeting, March 6, 2018, 5:00PM, at 33 Easy Street:

Items 1 - 6 Consent Agenda: These items were all related to routine town business (meeting minutes, bills, financial reports, event permits, etc.). Hearing no request to hold any item for discussion, the Mayor called for a motion and subsequent vote.
Approved, 7 - 0.

Item 7, Call to the Public: Resident Tom Fielder addressed the Council again, regarding traffic speed along Cave Creek Road just north of Carefree Highway, south of Sentinel Rock. He asked that additional radar speed signs be purchased to help control speeding along that section of the roadway. The mayor said the town will look into it.

Item 8, Current Events: 'There is a new Sheriff in Town' - well, not exactly.

The Mayor introduced Captain Rich Johnson, the new MCSO Commander assigned to Carefree. He was highly recommended by Sheriff Penzone, the actual new Sheriff of Maricopa County. The captain outlined his 16-year career with MCSO, which included a stint with Internal Affairs. He then introduced a new traffic deputy for Carefree, JJ Cosme, who had previously served in Carefree. *[While the new Captain and traffic Deputy seemed to have a pleasant sense of humor and easy manner, I wouldn't suggest trying to talk yourself out of one of those increasing number of citations that have been issued recently!]*

Councilman Crane mentioned the next in a series of Garden seminars that will take place this Saturday, from 9:30 until noon at the 33 easy Street location and will feature JoAnn Sanchez discussing 'Desert Medicinal Plants' *[Presumably the legal variety. The customary \$5.00 (or more) donation will be appreciated.]* Per the Town website, "Ms. Sanchez has been a community herbalist since 1979. Now in her 20th year as an educator of botanical medicine, she is adjunct faculty at the Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine, teaching, consulting and supervising the largest plant medicine garden in the Valley."

Item 9, Presentation on, and approval of, the Easy Street North Development

Agreement: *[Before moving into the captioned topic, some background regarding the substantially larger Easy Street **South** parcel, that was approved for development of 135 'Luxury Apartments' at the August 29, 2017 council meeting is in order. I suspect that not many Carefree residents will be surprised to learn that the project is essentially a scrub. Deceased Council member Jim Van Allen was the lone council member to vote against that project, and the only member to ask the tough questions. That "big, ugly dirt lot" will remain as is for the immediate future. It now displays a For Sale sign.]*

Town Administrator Neiss provided an overview of the original Development Agreement for the North parcel (adjacent to the Post Office building) which a Council approved, over a decade ago, when Mr. Ed Lewis was the potential developer. That parcel has remained undeveloped, though Mr. Lewis had retained ownership. The concessions made at that time

allowed a 37-foot-tall structure with a 6-foot perimeter parapet to hide the mechanical equipment on the roof, for a total height of 43 feet. According to the new Development Agreement presented to the Council, the new Luxury Condo Structure (The Residence at Sundial Circle) will maintain those same height restrictions. If/when this project is developed it will be the tallest building in Town Center, presumably by 13 feet.

Mr. Lawrence Gabriele, of Azil Development, LLC, then provided an overview of the North project and shed some light on the demise of the South project, stating that essentially 'market conditions' would not support that proposed development. The new proposal for the North parcel will entail 50 Luxury Condos on 3 levels, with an average size of 3,000sf, underground parking and some extended additional parking around the perimeter of the structure. There is no provision for commercial space. All parking will be contained on the project site. He mentioned that Mr. Lewis did not want to sell the land, but decided it was time to develop.

Mr Gabriele then introduced L.A. Architectural Designer Justin Dewitt who proceeded to provide additional details and the conceptual design of the project. New concrete materials will be used for the more contemporary structure(s), in contrast to the Sonoran style and materials originally intended by Mr. Lewis. *[See the photo of the preliminary design below].* The concrete slab project will employ glass extensively to facilitate views for the mostly outward facing units with some wood-like materials to soften the appearance in certain areas. Amenities will be available on the 1st level and a pool on the 2nd level with views of the SunDial.

After several general design questions were posed by various Council members, and addressed by Mr. Dewitt, Council member Kroyer asked Mr. Gabriele about the confusing switch from Luxury Condos, to large Luxury Apartments, and now back to Luxury Condos and why that was going to work now. *[The question of why this Luxury Condo concept will succeed, when Mr. Lewis was unable to get his to succeed after years of trying should have been on every council members mind, and perhaps it was.]* The response was essentially the same - changing 'Market Conditions' and 'Market Demand'. A year or two ago the financial community required 25 presales to approve financing, but now 10 will get it done. The people in the know, and the financial community, believe the market is open to Luxury Condos - "there is a very hot market right now for large Luxury Condos." Several more questions were raised, even one suggesting that the new 'Contemporary' design didn't seem to fit into the Town Center or blend in with other buildings.

[I thought that was an excellent observation. As you travel around the valley, whether into Phoenix, Scottsdale, or anywhere else, no doubt you have noticed the many look-alike stacked condo/apartment structures popping up everywhere. Do you think that sort of 'me too' economic development is right for Carefree? I took the following screen shot of the preliminary design image during the presentation. The second image below it was included in the Council packet material for this agenda item. The preliminary design photo and related materials were prepared by Humphreys & Partners for this presentation.]



Preliminary Design Concept



Preliminary Site Plan

When asked by Councilman Orrico when this project would get underway, Mr. Gabriele stated that ground-breaking was planned for September. The councilman then asked, "2018?" - the answer was September 2018. Council member Kroyer asked about comps and price points. Mr. Gabriele said there were numerous comps this time and outlined some of those development projects. The planned condos will be mostly 3 bedrooms, with some 2-bedroom units and will range from just below \$1M to \$1.3, \$1.4, or \$1.5M.

With little further discussion, the Agreement was approved 7 - 0.

[It's Groundhog Day, again.]

Item 10, Presentation & Recap of the Christmas Festival: Prior to the presentation the Mayor asked Captain Johnson to provide MCSO's perspective on the parade and safety. MCSO concerns for safety, especially at night, related to the numbers of people in town for the event(s), and the significant increase in on-road parking, both along Cave Creek Road and Tom Darlington, as far as a mile away. Both roadways are very dark and therefore people walking along the roadways in the dark are at greater risk of not being seen. Captain Johnson commented that the daytime Christmas Parade significantly improved the safety for visitors. He also added that lost kids are a bigger concern during nighttime hours.

Marketing Director Gina Kaegi provided a slide presentation and recap of the recent festival. Once again, she said the festival was very successful. She addressed a number of slides which highlighted festival achievements and things learned in the now extended 3-week format, with daytime parade.

Chamber of Commerce President Patty Villeneuve provided a recap of Chamber's accomplishments and assistance to the Carefree Christmas Festival over the last decade. She said that the Chamber has been the unheralded organizer of the Christmas Parade and has contributed thousands of hours to its success. Ms. Villeneuve advised that because of the Chamber's growth, expanding activities, and limited resources, it will move to a support role for the parade rather than organizer going forward. The Mayor thanked Mrs. Villeneuve, the Directors, and volunteers at the Chamber for their outstanding efforts over the years.

I'll post both the Christmas Festival presentation and the Pumpkin Festival update from last month; the links are below:

[Christmas Festival Recap- 2017](#)

[Pumpkin Festival Recap - 2017](#)

Item 11, Executive Session: The Council voted to enter Executive Session.

Item 12, Adjournment: The Public meeting ended at 7:02PM and was followed by an Executive Session. The actual adjournment time is unknown as are the topics.

In general, you can reach all Council members by email; Council@Carefree.org and Mayor Les Peterson at Mayor@Carefree.org

Respectfully submitted by John Traynor

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