



**Friends of Carefree**, we hope you had at least one opportunity to visit the Enchanted Pumpkin Garden over the past two weeks, hopefully more than once! It was truly an exceptional event.

*Once again special thanks are due Ray Villafane, as well as to Gina Kaegi, Carefree Marketing Director, and all the volunteers for their hard work and commitment to the Town of Carefree and this event.*

**Water Company Board Meeting, November 1, 2016 at 5:00PM** – A brief summary:

- 1- No Financial Audit issues; the last few years the audit has been perfect.
- 2- New 'Eye on Water Portal System' approved; customers can track daily water use, receive warnings of heavy use (possible leaks), and more. 9 of 10 pilot users had positive feedback. There will be some cost to the Town and the residents who wish to use the system... more on that later.
- 3- No water supply issues. Carefree should be OK for the next few years.

**Town Council Meeting, November 1, 2016 at 6:00PM** – My apologies for incorrectly indicating on our website that the Council meeting would be held at its usual time of 5PM. This month's meeting was scheduled for 6PM because of the Water Company meeting at 5PM. Old habits are hard to break.

**Items 1 - 5, Consent Agenda:** All items were related to routine town business (meeting minutes, bills, financial reports, event permits, etc.). Vice Mayor Crane asked to hold Agenda Item 5 for discussion. All other Items were approved 7 - 0.

**Item 6, Call to the Public:** Lyn Hitchon commented on the success of the Enchanted Pumpkin Garden event and thanked all those involved.

Mike Pedreira thanked Melissa Price, Glenn Miller, and the remainder of the Council for all they have done for the town. He also thanked Rural/Metro for what they do, saying that they came to the rescue many times. He added that his wife likes the building, he thinks it's okay.

Darlene Goodman followed up on her letter to the Mayor and Council regarding her thoughts and ideas for a dog park. She feels that Carefree and Cave Creek should come together to furnish a dog park.

**Item 7, Recognition of outgoing Council members:** Mayor Peterson began his recognition of Council members Bob Gearhart, Glenn Miller, and Melissa Price by saying the Town owed them a debt of gratitude for their service and tremendous efforts over the past years. In turn he addressed each of them individually and presented each with a plaque. **[The new Council members, Cheryl Kroyer, Michael Krahe and Jim Van Allen, will be sworn in and seated at the December 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.]**

**Item 8, Current Events:** Mayor Peterson said the town is now gearing up for the various Art Festivals and the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Carefree Christmas Festival, adding that the just completed Pumpkin Festival was a huge success with attendance estimates as high as 60,000. Vice Mayor Crane spoke about the upcoming Veterans Day event on Friday, November 11<sup>th</sup> and Councilman Orrico mentioned the Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup> from 7 to 11AM.

**Item 9, Review of the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year Audit:** The audit was conducted by the firm of Hinton Burdick, PLLC. Town Administrator Neiss provided an overview of the Town's financial position which led into a summary of the audit results by a representative of the audit firm (via telephone). During the fiscal year ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, Carefree had invested over \$950,000 in Town Center Improvements and marketing and added almost \$30,000 into the reserves. Hinton Burdick's Independent Auditors' Report stated that in their opinion, "the Town of Carefree complied, in all material respects, with the requirements... for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016. There were no significant findings noted from either the Town or the Water Company audits." In reference to Court operations, the auditors noted, ". . . the court is in compliance, to the extent possible, with the Minimum Accounting Standards for Arizona Courts . . ." This is the 5th year in a row with a perfect score for the Court.

Councilman Farrar inquired about the audit note on Separation of Duties. Small municipalities, as well as many small businesses, do not have the financial resources to support staff depth sufficient to accommodate complete separation of duties. The auditors found that Carefree had adequate controls in place and therefore the item was not considered a significant finding. Council voted 7 - 0 to accept the audit.

**Item 10, Public Hearing on a Zoning Text Amendment:** This item, forwarded by the P&Z Commission, is intended to bring the Town Carefree into compliance with SB1350. Senate Bill 1350 restricted local towns and municipalities from regulating the use of vacation rentals or short term rentals within their municipal boundaries.

HOAs which have 3<sup>rd</sup> party agreements (CC&Rs) to restrict short term rentals within their association are not affected by SB1350 **[at this time. Future Case Law could alter that exclusion.]** After discussion the Council voted, 7 - 0, to remove previous Town restrictions thus facilitating compliance with SB1350. **[All HOAs are encouraged to review their existing CC&Rs so that there is a clear understanding of how SB1350 will or will not impact their membership. You are further encouraged to investigate the use of the phrase 'Residential use' which may be the key to preventing short-term 'business' rentals. Most HOAs have a requirement that either 2/3<sup>rds</sup> or 3/4<sup>ths</sup> of their membership must approve any changes to those CC&Rs.]**

**Item 12, Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7PM.

**Last Month's Question: *Are you an advocate for Carefree?*** [Perhaps the great October weather distracted from mundane chores, such as responding to the QOM! Not many responses were received but we thank those who that took the time to share their thoughts. We are publishing two of the more detailed responses received because they capture the essence of the others. We suspect that some will take issue with the content, but it is what it is - no editing (except for font standardization and minor punctuation), no fabrication, no stretching the truth. I/we wish that differing points of view were submitted because we

enjoy constructive debate but sadly there was none. Perhaps the November QOM will generate a lively mix of opinion. Also, please feel free to submit suggestions for future QOMs.]

One respondent wrote, "I can only speak for my wife and myself. We have advocated for Carefree long before we established residency here in 1994. In fact, prior to our settling in Carefree we were 20 plus year residents in north Scottsdale but would drive our old Corvette to Carefree on weekends to enjoy food, wine and the town ambience. Perhaps that is why we love the town enough to speak out periodically against some of the decisions our town council makes that seem to run contrary to what many people sought when they moved to Carefree re lifestyle and ambience.

We do not argue with those who maintain that Carefree needs to keep pace with growth, changing needs, etc. However some of the recent decisions such as the splash pad, the arches, etc., justified as changes that will bring additional business to Carefree, fly in the face of reality. The reality is that Carefree demographics do not support a splash pad meant for children. A lighted arch or arches will not motivate the Scottsdale or the North Phoenix population to buy locally. Those dollars would have been better spent on publicizing the virtues of Carefree as a destination, a retreat from the urban hustle and bustle, a place unlike any other, etc. People come to Carefree to relax, enjoy the climate, the geographic diversity, the small town feel. So why insist on changing the eclectic nature of Carefree into another suburb of Phoenix or worse a geographic appendage of Scottsdale. How does any of this relate your question? Well, we (my wife and I) advocate for Carefree as a place that is substantially different than the surrounding cities. That becomes harder based on Council decisions made on behalf of the community. So let's be mindful that we are not on a path to destroy the very things that do differentiate Carefree from other localities and that make Carefree the unique community it is and should continue to be.

One final postscript— my wife and I, [REDACTED] are faced with this question, why Carefree over Scottsdale, etc. on a daily basis from our friends, clients, acquaintances, professional colleagues who are considering relocation to the metro Phoenix area. Therefore the question you pose is of particular significance to us.

Another respondent wrote, "We used to love Carefree when we bought our lot in 1995. Carefree was a quiet town with a beautiful environment, little traffic, dark night skies. This is all in the past. It started to go downhill when former councils decided to govern Carefree like a business. Now we have too much traffic. A quiet walk to the post office is almost impossible. The noise is horrible. (Of course most of it comes from Cave Creek but our noise ordinance is useless. Is the ordinance still in place?) Light pollution is getting worse. Even the wildlife is no longer as abundant as it was.

Why are we luring in all those visitors? Why do we need all the money so we can spend it on consultants, artificial grass, water wasting features, artificial snow, ugly pompous archways, etc? Years ago the Town supported institutions for the residents like the library (most of the patrons at DFL are from Carefree.) Now we have to accommodate all the visitors.

We remember vivid council meetings where residents would speak up. Nobody speaks any longer because one has to be afraid of being summoned to Town hall or get insulted by council members. (At least that is what we heard.)

This is no longer the town to crow about. We are not the only ones with this feeling.

**November Question of the Month:** We know you visited the Gardens during the 2-week Pumpkin Festival. *What did you like best and/or least about the Enchanted Pumpkin Garden Festival? What, if anything, should we do different next year? Should we charge a 'modest' \$5.00 per couple entry fee... kids and Carefree residents free?? Please vote on this item.*

We do receive good suggestions for future questions. Please feel free to keep 'em coming!

Let us hear from you.

Respectfully submitted by Jim Van Allen and John Traynor

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