



Friends of Carefree, this is a slight departure from the normal Newsletters in that it deals with a meeting of the Planning & Zoning Commission. Important matters caught our attention which we feel you should know about.

P & Z Meeting, October 19, 2015, 5:00PM

Present: Chair Al Mascha; Vice-Chair Michael Krahe; Commissioners Tom Cross; Dan Davee; Lyn Hitchon; Dick Tatlow; Town Administrator Gary Neiss; Town Engineer Greg Crossman; Town Planner Stacey Bridge-Denzak; Planning Clerk Bev Peterson. Commissioner Scott Sperl was absent.

Items 1, Minutes of the September 14, 2015: Approved 5 - 0.

Items 2, 3, & 4 Keystone Homes: These 3 agenda items all related to the 'Eastwood' Project, to be located just west of Pima on Cave Creek Road, adjacent to the Pima Norte Garden Office site. The first item called for an amendment to the Carefree General Plan, while the remaining two were requests for rezoning. Currently a small portion of the 9.5 acre site is zoned for Garden Office (GO) and the remainder for Low Density Residential (LDR - 1 unit per acre). Approval of the requests would result in rezoning the entire parcel as Medium Density Residential (MDR - up to 9 units per acre).

Unlike any prior P & Z meeting within memory, this meeting was just about packed, predominantly with residents from Sky Ranch. There were many speakers from the public, all of whom raised concerns regarding density (builder plans 4.2 homes per acre, several acres are not eligible for building), traffic, proximity (setback) of homes to Cave Creek Road, potential issues with Liberty (BMSC) interconnect, and other zoning detail issues. Surrounding parcels, excluding Pima Norte, are all zoned LDR including the two large parcels (40 + 40 acres) to the west of 'Eastwood'. There was concern that rezoning for Eastwood would create a precedent that could result in rezoning of those two larger parcels for higher density development.

Approved, 5-0

[Since the requests were all approved, it is possible this topic will be presented to the Town Council at the November 10th meeting for their discussion and likely approval. After the vote on #4 everyone from the public left, except Jim Van Allen.]

Item 5, Discussion on increasing Building height in Carefree: The Town Administrator and Town Planner presented the need to revise maximum heights in town zoning codes. They proposed that in the commercial areas, *outside of the Town*

Center, building height be increased to 30 feet, from the present 24 feet. Ms. Hitchon then mentioned the need to allow even higher buildings within the town center to accommodate the potential of a Hotel on the Lewis North parcel. Mr. Neiss praised a couple of buildings in Scottsdale that were 7 stories high but had a terrace look with landscaping on patio setbacks. He gave the committee a document recommending the commission consider a new height of **70 feet** *within the town Center*. Mr. Lewis, for comparison, has either 46 or 48 feet (they couldn't remember which) for the condo project on his other parcel.

Mr Van Allen was permitted to speak on this topic. He advised the folks on the committee to expect standing room only at any meeting in which they would vote on approving 70 foot building height in Carefree. He went on to say that such a change to the General Plan would be a "**significant**" alteration of that Plan and would need to be approved by the voters. Highlighting his background in the Hotel industry and referencing Homewood Suits and Residence Inn as two examples, he gave the commission his insight into the idea of a hotel on that 2 acre site. What might work would be 2 stories high like the two businesses he cited. Nobody asked Jim any questions.

Item 6, Announcements: None noted.

Item 7, Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7PM. Jim noted that this was the longest meeting in years and by far the most attendance ever.

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Respectfully submitted by Jim Van Allen and John Traynor

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