



Friends of Carefree, this edition will cover a few notable items from the recent council meetings along with a notice from the non-profit 'Carefree Park', my comments to the council during the 10/3 meeting regarding the proposed **Economic Development Plan**, and a few emails I have received on sensitive topics.

Note to several council members (you know who you are):

Hopefully, and unlike last time, filling the vacant P&Z Commission seat will reflect the wishes of residents and will afford representation for 80% of resident voters who essentially voted '***no confidence***' in the May 16th special election. Eroding more voter confidence by flagrantly disregarding the message they sent, which '*you deny*', will only create more division despite your hollow claims to represent all residents.

Moving on, the October 3rd council meeting was a long one, but a good one. Pushing back 'Call to the Public' just prior to adjournment meant that those wishing to speak on a topic *not on the agenda* had to be patient and committed. Most residents who did speak early in the meeting addressed the **Economic Development Plan (EDP)**, Agenda item #7. Once again, and perhaps for the 3rd public meeting, none spoke in favor of the plan.

Both before and after public comments, the council had spirited discussions regarding the **Economic Development Director's** opening remarks and his resubmitted plan. His plan contained no obvious changes, except for the incorrect mayor's name being corrected, since his last attempt to obtain approval.

Thanks to council member Hatcher's insightful questions and observations, solid support from the mayor, and residents' input the

outcome was refreshing and was based on logic and common sense. There were more than enough reasons to have that plan rewritten, **which was the outcome of this agenda item by unanimous vote of the council.** The most significant reason was removal of the resort development on the NW corner of Tom Darlington and Carefree Highway. The \$1.2M signage plan and circulation plan both need a thorough edit, if not outright removal. There was an unmistakably clear directive that the top priority for the Economic Development Director (EDD) should be a full court press to get developers interested and working on plans for development of the NE corner of Carefree Highway and Cave Creek Road. The town administrator should have been riding herd on this for the past several years. What was he doing other than pushing for a Property Tax? No more sitting back and waiting for someone to show up on their doorstep. And hopefully, no more excuses for why nothing positive and financially beneficial has occurred at that location for over 5 years. In the private sector, heads would have rolled long ago.

Note to the TA: It is long past time to get the message – residents *[not only me]*, want to know why we are paying you an enormous compensation package, with so little return on our investment. Focus, and focus the staff that reports to you. You heard the priority, now get to work.

All the resident comments on the EDP were spot on. If you wish to view the video of that section, please follow this link which will take you directly to the [start of comments](#).

The following text is essentially my comments to the council during discussion of Agenda item #7:

The proposed **Economic Development Plan** contains components which have been contested by residents. If approved, the value of that privately owned property *[on the NW Corner of TD & CF HWY]* would significantly increase in value without a reliable or believable financial benefit in terms of sales tax for Carefree. Additionally, the resort development, as proposed in the EDP, would have a substantial impact on water consumption compared to the allotment for a handful of 5-acre residential lots. We are living in the midst of a historic drought, yet some in Carefree town government, and the prior iteration, choose to turn a blind eye to the consequences of a resort. Financial arrangements among ‘friends’ are fine *so long as they are legal and do not impact the public good or knowingly avoid oversight*. This situation is a precise example of why General Plan Amendments, Development Agreements, and Special Planning Areas (SPAs) *should be tightly restricted and open for complete public scrutiny*. Voters have no say in the use of, or special treatment of, property at the corner of Tom Darlington and Carefree Highway – that is despicable.

Note to the Economic Development Director and other staff: spreading the cost of signs over 2 budget years does not lower the \$1.2M price tag previously discussed; some this year and more next year is still \$1.2M, not counting consulting cost previously incurred, or any additional.

The **Economic Development Plan is s a big deal** because it has the potential to allow spending freely, not necessarily spending wisely, on changes to our town which are not necessarily needed or essential and have no guarantee to generate a single dollar of revenue. Nobody has shown any return on investment for this ‘stuff’, including the new circulation component in the **Plan**.

Residents should continue to ask, ‘why is all the focus on a resort at the NW Corner, when the most lucrative and promising parcel of revenue generating real estate *[NE Corner of CF HWY & CCR]* has gone undeveloped for so many

years? We need honest answers, not excuses. Excuses are like fleas, there are more every day.

This & That...

Please remember that the final *draft of the General Plan* is available as of 10/1 and will be open for public review and comment until 12/1. Because of the method used to 'guide you' to the draft and to the comment form, you must take a long way around and [go here](#).

Note to staff: Please make things more straightforward and easier for residents.

I will repeat the following from the prior edition of this newsletter: This is *our* General Plan, *the residents*, not the council's, not the P&Z's, and certainly not the staff's. They work for residents, not the other way around. Highly qualified and savvy resident volunteers will continue examining that plan in great detail and will communicate with you regarding any deviation from comments and suggestions provided by you during the process. Our guide, Matt Klyszeiko of the Baker Group, has professionally guided the process through some difficult situations with integrity. He probably already has a place in Heaven!

The many residents whose opinions and preferences have been callously dismissed by her certainly did not miss seeing Council person Cheryl Kroyer this time around. She was thankfully absent, as was Council person Vince D'Aliesio. Cheryl either remains in a state of irrational denial or is extremely perplexed by the process of resident participation in *their* General Plan, evidenced by her performance in the September council meeting. Council member Sheila Amoroso performed a close second. In one of her monologues, Sheila flatly stated that her primary role as a council member was to provide services. She probably does not remember there is no mention of any such thing in her oath of office. It pains

me to remember their collective attempt to discredit our efforts on the General Plan and to challenge the paid experts. Cheryl still doesn't get that her opinion simply counts as just one of a much larger Carefree population. She continues to dispute the findings of the Baker Group experts, who the town has engaged on several occasions and pays for their expertise in such matters. If Cheryl is not going to accept expert opinions or respect residents, why should anyone afford her any further attention? Her fast and loose play with the truth is a matter of public record.

Please do not overlook reading **the attached notice** from '**Carefree Park**', a **501(c3)**. The non-profit is hosting an 'Informational Presentation' on Saturday, October 21st at 3:00 pm in the Sanderson Pavilion in The Carefree Gardens. This is great community work!

Before closing this edition, I want to share *a few inciteful notes I have received*. No, doubters, I did not write them or pick the subject matter. I'll let you consider their merit. While they may touch on sensitive subjects, for some, those subjects need to be aired. If our town government is to be truly *transparent* (an oft used term in town hall) it needs to welcome scrutiny as well as the praise it desires.

#1 – Water & Debt Worrie\$

To CFM: Every time I read comments or letters to the Editor, I am baffled that no one else seems to have really considered the most obvious answer to the incredible 35 Million Dollar debt forced on us by a favored few, led by several conflicted Town officials unswayed by that obvious conflict and personally benefitting from it besides.

Assess those who benefitted from that debt, not the ones who didn't.

Town officials mishandled the water situation from day one when they purchased a soon to be defunct water company for several times their own appraised value, then financed it in the most expensive manner without considering obvious alternatives. The peak blunder of this entire fiasco was

that had the then privately owned water company failed it would have been taken over by the AZ Corp Commission, and the Town as the favored bidder could have owned it for pennies on the dollar. Then as now the alternatives chosen seemed to have other benefits. Why was this done ?

Follow the Money.

We have the opportunity to solve our Town's biggest liability, 35 Million Dollars of debt. Instead of investigating that possibility our doubly overpaid staff is chasing signs we don't need, rerouting traffic we don't need rerouted, and resorts we don't need built, all in an alleged quest of possible future sales tax gain. Even if the NEC development happens and is successful after 40 years of Town deliberately stalling, the annual sales tax gain would add up to a fraction of today's debt hanging around the necks of those who gained nothing from that debt and were deliberately frozen out of even having a chance to vote it down. Why ?

Town officials that personally planned to benefit by it from the beginning actually got to approve it with no input from those expected to pay their bill. Carefree's established pattern continues, with the same result, most Carefree residents lose, a favored few win. Why ?

Follow the Money.

#2 Regarding a Special Planning Area (SPA) on Tom Darlington

To CFM: Wow - good thing we don't pay the economic development director by the word, or do we? If dung were electricity his might light up Carefree. His analysis totally leaves out voter approval, instead they get deliberately left out. Remember Peterson's famous on-the-record comment that there should be no vote on his water plan because it would never pass? What kind of leaders or staff deliberately go around their constituents ?

Steve [\[the EDD\]](#) has backed off his recent essays on certain revitalization projects once confronted with the facts that he couldn't counter. This is typically the case when people hear the truth about why some properties are not renovated. As more people know the truth the negative opinion shifts rapidly to where it belongs. Most of today's residents just don't know the backstories as to how Carefree got into its current condition. Certain properties get blamed for some of it until the truth comes out. Also ignored is the fact that those properties have been feeding tax money into Carefree

government for 40 years while that government has done it's best to stifle success. They haven't done that either.

Unfortunately, truth is not something that often originates from Town Hall anymore, as we discovered with the recent pile of garbage they tried to force on us in the recent popery tax election that backfired in their faces. Sadly, for all of us, over the past decade or so, our Town government has grown into an adversary. The more officials are trained by our TA, the more lies are generated and the more adversarial it becomes, to the point where every issue becomes more of a secret or crisis.

The SPA is nothing more than another effort to do an end run around the people. Is it really a surprise that the owner of the 21 acres didn't object to the Town agreeing to increase the value of his property 10 or 20 times over ? Just another coincidence ?

All this talk about Carefree's declining finances gets deeper by the day. With 17M in the bank our TA told us we needed a property tax. Then he told us we needed to pay 40M for a water system change that turned out to be totally unnecessary. What a coincidence though that water lines now go so close to the SPA, creating the biggest landowner/developer subsidy Carefree has ever seen, a subsidy for something that the residents don't want or need. There were about 7 Town officials living in the affected area that planned to benefit from it so an Improvement District was never considered. Not one Carefree official had the integrity to declare a conflict of interest or recuse themselves from voting for it. Now Carefree citizens who got nothing from it are drowning in debt while the water flows through different pipes. That debt belongs to those who demanded it not the others it was forced on. Transfer of that debt to those beneficiaries would totally erase Carefree's supposed current financial issues.

Now that 35 - 40M expense is being used by our TA to trumpet the need for more revenue. If there were such a thing as an inverted pyramid scheme this is it. Incur a huge debt to pay for something we don't need, then create more stuff we don't need to pay the debt. Meanwhile...follow the money....a property owner hits the land lottery, the yet to be named developer has a

free water line spitting distance from where he needs water and Carefree is forced into another lousy deal, all for what ?

We are being groomed for a different fate on the NE Corner [CFH/CCR] with another Special Planning Area. There are way too many of those same Carefree officials and influencers on its borders, those nimbys have stopped development of the most obvious commercial corner in the North County for 40 years. This property is our major entryway on our busiest intersection where Carefree can both shine and thrive. Instead its a dust bowl.

Steve [the EDD], says buildout is the cause of fiscal problems, then says how more people create the need for more services, and that creates the need for more revenue. Meanwhile Town Hall is overloaded with excess employees making double the national average while leading the residents into debt upon debt. When a person gets into a hole the first thing they should do is stop digging. Our TA buys more shovels. Carefree residents are being played.

The General Plan needs several changes starting with no Special Planning Areas or text amendments, more requirements for citizen votes on major changes like zoning or large expenditures. Carefree voters have proven they will recognize dung when they see it, but they need to see it.

Carefree residents are not fools, but we are being taken, both by those we elect and those they overpay.

And there you have it, for now.

Respectfully submitted by John Traynor

Notice: In addition to reporting *facts*, this Newsletter will contain the author's perspective on topics or events affecting Carefree residents. That perspective may not be popular with the mayor, council members, staff, town attorney, or Facebook Trolls. The fact is, I don't care what they think.

If we lived in a perfect world, we would need but one newspaper.

God Bless America.

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Carefree, what life should be!

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“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.”

Attribution not verified; Not JFK and Not Edmund Burke. Possibly philosopher John Stuart Mill, 1867.

I attribute it to Common Sense!