



**Friends of Carefree**, regrettably I need to inform you of an ugly and thoroughly distasteful assault on the will of voters, to start to the 2018 mayoral election campaign. This newsletter will be somewhat brief, with more to follow after the June council meeting. Unfortunately, I was incorrect about "things remaining the same in Carefree". This town administration has reached a new low. The Vice Mayor suing the Town, insider deals, and pre-trial financial arrangements between the plaintiff and at least one defendant all suggests that Carefree is perhaps sliding toward the political swamp that has permeated our nation's capital for decades. All for what? A non-paid volunteer job! Please read on, it's worse than you can imagine.

### Desecration of Term Limits, Character, and Self-respect in Carefree

In 2009, voters had turned thumbs down on 4-year terms and staggered terms, both obvious power grabs. That set the stage for Term Limits. Dating back to last summer, I became aware that the Mayor and Town Administrator were pursuing some way around the voter-initiated Term Limits Proposition first approved by a substantial margin in the 2011 Election. They worried that term limits would prevent the current Vice Mayor, John Crane, from running for reelection and sought the aid of town attorney Michael Wright. The wheels of injustice began to turn.

In mid-April I learned of a conversation between Council members Crane and Farrar, both subject to Term Limits. Earlier in the month Crane asked Farrar to join him in a lawsuit against the town to overturn Term Limits. Farrar declined. Once again, *before* entering an Executive Session, Crane asked Farrar to join the suit and once again Farrar declined. Presumably that Executive Session, given the timing and content of Superior Court documents now publicly available, was related to the proposed lawsuit.

For the record, and especially for the administration's inspired doubters and hand-fed prolific blogger, those conversations were not privileged and not subject to the confidentiality afforded the all too frequent Executive Sessions scheduled by the mayor. For now, I'll skip ahead to some of the truly disturbing and, in my opinion, unethical details of the lawsuit filed by John Crane against the Town of Carefree, the mayor, all council members, and Maricopa County Supervisors as defendants. The latter were thrown in for effect, even though they (through their attorney) made a representation of neutrality on the particulars of the lawsuit.

Bottom line, on May 21st a Superior Court Judge ordered an injunction in favor of Crane, primarily based on the assertion by Crane's attorney [not disputed or argued against by the town's attorney] that Carefree's Term Limits Ordinance was *invalid* because the State Legislature has not empowered certain municipalities with the right to impose such limits. The State, and certain larger municipalities do have Term Limits [Thank God]. Mind you, the Carefree voters approved Term limits years ago, but not until a favored son would become ineligible for the upcoming election did a review or challenge of Term Limits occur. By the way, who drafted the Term Limits Ordinance, and its revision, in 2016-01? [much more later.]

I have obtained all Superior Court documents related to the Crane Complaint # CVC2018-006012 prepared April 19th and subsequently recorded in Superior Court on April 20, 2018. All pleadings and support statements are included. Shockingly, I could find no evidence to suggest that Carefree defendants received notice of the suit, notice to appear, or notice of representation by Michael Wright, who serves as Carefree Town Attorney at the pleasure of the mayor. Sounds like a major conflict of interest to me. The uninformed defendants did not have the opportunity to appear or testify. For the sake of discussion, I used the term uninformed, although I believe the basics of the plan were probably known to many defendants, or possibly discussed during an Executive Session. I also say, "probably known" because our often-touted town 'transparency' is frequently very foggy.

To put it politely [and with great restraint on my part, so far], John Crane, the mayor, a council majority, and members of the town staff have effectively thumbed their nose at Carefree voters, at least the majority of savvy voters who were insightful enough to support Term Limits. The very reason voters approved Term Limits was to minimize the possibility of a power grab and stranglehold by a select few, just recently demonstrated. Since the last election there have been several probable instances of mayoral overreach, those to be explored in future editions. Without Term Limits voters have only one recourse to remove problematic public office holders; perhaps this time will be the charm.

The final Court ruling was handed down Wednesday [the final date for candidate filings], I believe, so I'll obtain a copy of that documentation as well. Did I mention that the Judge allowed only 2 two days for opposing arguments? Odd, considering that the defendants were never served with particulars of the suit filed against them - at least not all received notice, one way or the other. Anyway, I hope to upload much of the relevant information, including a supporting brief filed by Lyn Hitchon, which is no surprise considering that she is spoon-fed information from the town administrator and then has her material edited by none other than the Plaintiff, Vice Mayor Crane. [Yes, this has been confirmed, directly by the mayor, though he may choose to deny it or claim the edits are merely intended to assure the accuracy of an unofficial town publication. [Yeah, right.]. No matter, it is known. Former Councilman Jim Van Allen often brought this up and kept documentation of his discussions with the mayor and town administrator; he was a great and methodical record keeper. I even have a copy, from Jim, of an unofficial email sent to his personal account by the mayor which forbid Jim from attending a meeting between myself, the mayor, and town administrator. You have to really crave that nonpaying job, like John Crane and Les Peterson, in order to file a lawsuit to overturn the will of voters. As Yogi said back in 1973, "it aint' over til it's over."

God Bless America, and Carefree too.

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In general, you can reach all Council members by email; [Council@Carefree.org](mailto:Council@Carefree.org) and Mayor Les Peterson at [Mayor@Carefree.org](mailto:Mayor@Carefree.org)

Respectfully submitted by John Traynor

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