KEEPING THE NEIGHBORHOOD INFORMED!

TRI-NEWS
CENTRAL
J-6 Mescal Skyline

"ROAD TO NO WHERE" - DOES NOT STATISFY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSIONERS

On Wed. June 10th, an Engineer for J-6 Ranch (Easter Mountain) presented the developer's opinion to the Planning and Zoning Commissioners - the off site access from Highway 90 to the forest service boundary in the Whetstones met the criteria of Condition 4 of the Board of Supervisors rezoning requirements from October 2011. The representative went on to express that "forest access" was a condition of the Final Plat approval and did not need to be met at this Tentative Plat stage for Lots 1-42 of the 278 home subdivision.
Representatives from the Cochise County Attorney's Office, Arizona Game and Fish, and the National Forest Service were on hand to provide the historical context and efforts to date to work with the developer to plan reasonable access and connectivity to forest roads. Wayne Keyes, NFS, explained the developer's proposal for access off Highway 90 met the forest boundary at an inventoried roadless area to where only the President of the United States could authorize a new road for the public to enter the forest - hence, a road to nowhere.

P & Z Commissioners voted 6-1 AGAINST a favorable recommendation to the Board of Supervisors for approving the Tentative Plat and delaying a solution to the access issue until the Final Plat stage.

At the beginning of the Commissioners' Meeting during the Call to the Public, a representative from CDO and Cochise Trails Association thanked the Commissioners for their support of Public Access to Public Lands in their recommendations to the Comprehensive Plan. CDO also recognized the past efforts of County Staff during the Forest Service Travel Management Process to keep Forest System Roads open on the northface of the Whetstones until legal access could be established.

FINAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ADOPTED WITHOUT ADDED POLICIES PROTECTING RURAL CHARACTER

The May 19th Minutes of the Board of Supervisors meeting do not adequately reflect the Planning and Zoning Commissioners comments regarding their recommendations toward the Comprehensive Plan and the BOS response to the Commissioners review.

The BOS minutes state - "(Beverly Wilson) noted that the Board had made changes at the first public hearing on March 24, 2015, and per statute had to send those changes back to the Planning & Zoning Commission for review. She said that the commission did review it and did not suggest any changes and sent it back to the Board for your approval."

On the contrary, CDO representatives attended the P & Z Meeting and witnessed first hand the Commissoners' reactions to these changes made by the Board:
1) the removal of 5 policies protecting rural charachter,
2) changing "should" to "shall" in policies stating how the federal goverment will interface with the county, and
3) the addition of a policy that the federal government should consider "OHV" uses in travel management plans.

The Commissioners unanimously voted to send a message back to the BOS that they had spent much time deliberating on their original recommendations, they had listened to the public, and they firmly stood behind their original recommendations to the Board.

CDO representatives also attended the subsequent BOS Meeting on May 19th and re-presented information, samples of Comprehensive Plans that show the County does have the authority to guide where business and wireless communication towers locate, etc. - containing information contradictory to what P & Z Staff provided the Board when they voted to remove the rural character policies. The Board Chair, Pat Call, made it very clear that he just wanted the Comprehensive Plan finalized, Supervisor English said there was not time to research the information, and Supervisor Searle commented he could go either way if his colleagues wanted to have a discussion related to presented information.

With little other discussion, the BOS adopted their original changes to the final Comprehensive Plan that will guide how the County will grow for the next ten years.

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DID THE J-6 PRESCRIPTIVE BURN WORK AS PLANNED?

Arizona State Forestry responded quickly to questions from CDO. Gene Beaudoin, Regional Forester, stated:

"Our main objective of reducing the fine fuel and small woody fuel was accomplished. We did not reach the 80% burned as we had hoped, but by daylight we had at least 60%. It showed as a great mosaic burn, leaving many unburned islands which will really benefit the wildlife in the area and begin to establish an "uneven" aged stand of vegetation, which is something that we desire. As for next steps, we will monitor the area with the option of burning again in the future."

The burn was forecasted to come into prescription on Wed. evening June 3rd. Briefing was held at 7 P.M. at the Mescal Fire Station on J6 Ranch Road. It was delayed approximately 1 hour due to winds not being in prescription and the "Holding Group" requesting additional hose lays be in place.

Mescal-J6 Chief Moran overseeing burn. Photos by Myra Moreno, ASF. MORE PICTURES!

Mescal-J6 F.D., Arizona State Forestry, Sundance Fire and Rescue, Benson Fire Dept., and Globe Fire Department provided the following resources:

Six Type-6 Brush Engines
Three Water Tenders
Three 20-person hand crews
One Mark-3 water pump
One 5000 gallon pumpkin(water tank)
Ten Overhead personnel

Forester Beaudoin wanted to personally thank " the Mescal J-6 District Board for their confidence and support towards Arizona State Forestry in accomplishing the burn and to the Mescal J-6 Fire Department chief and firefighters for their help and participation in completing the burn. But most importantly, I want to think the Mescal/J-6 community members for their patience and support towards all of us participating in the J6 Prescribed Fire."