

### **Mayor's Monthly Update: July 2020**

The new buildings being constructed downtown by Pinal County are coming along nicely. The Pinal County Justice Building, which will be a five story new build, with a bridge over to the Superior County Court and the Pinal County Development Services, with an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) being built behind the Historic County Courthouse are both welcome additions to our Town. These facilities will bring new government jobs to our community.

Recently, I had a resident reach out and ask about Territory Square Project. As we all know, we are a growing community and want everyone to be informed on plans being put into action. The Territory Square area is located along the south side of the Gila River between the Plant Road alignment and Arizona 79. The project aims for major development on the river corridor, linking the old part of town with newer areas to the north. This award winning plan was recognized by Arizona Society of Landscape Architects (AZASLA) in 2015. As each part of this project moves forward, it is so rewarding to see the plan brought to life. Goals include accessible regional retail, larger scale commercial office space and higher-density residential on the east; a mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly section in the middle; and farm fields with retail areas on the west end. Also, rather than a levee or dike, the plan calls for "cut and fill." Some 229 acres will be left in the flood zone for a riverfront park within the total project of 623 acres. In a recent council meeting, the following positive progress was favorable voted upon and will be moving forward.

As a council, we provided a challenge and an opportunity for staff about six months ago to get a request for proposals on the street for a development partner in Territory Square. In a recent announcement, Town Manager Brent Billingsley reported, "We received an excellent proposal from MODUS." Owner Ed Gorman "is very well-known nationwide for zero-impact development and is seen as a pioneer in that particular field," Billingsley said. The first phase is planned for 112 units, but that could change because we're early in this process. It would be built on 10 acres that are out of the flood plain. The second phase would be an additional 220 housing units on land that is currently still in the flood plain. "Through a public-private partnership, the town would work with the development team to take land out of the flood plain and bring public improvements, including utilities and transportation infrastructure, to that site for a successful development," Town Manager Brent Billingsley reported. MODUS has bid approximately \$43,000 per acre for the town's land. The town will reinvest the proceeds into the land, taking more of this area in the north end plan out of the flood plain. Our town has invested millions of dollars over the years in infrastructure and planning to make the property ready for such a development. The proposed first-phase concept is for a single-family rental community with single-story detached and semi-attached homes.

There will be a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom units, each with a private back yard and pet doors. There will be 112 units in all, with 42 being one-bedrooms, 59 two-bedrooms and 11 three-bedrooms, according to MODUS.

Also in the arena of economic development, a major sports training complex in the northern town limits with fields, courts, lodging, retail stores and family entertainment has been proposed. Grinder

Sports Group Inc.'s 350-acre project will require a Major General Plan Amendment and annexation into the town limits. It will be "designed to provide a catalyst and mind-body inspiration motivating athletes to become Olympians and professional athletes," according to the application to the town. This is really exciting; this is something we've been working on and talking about for quite some time now, so it's great to see it brought before us. Grinder Sports Group plans to build "a world-class training and academic educational destination" for aspiring athletes in baseball, softball, soccer, lacrosse, basketball, volleyball, tennis, football, pickle ball, field hockey and track. There will also be a fully equipped medical and rehabilitation facility for athletes' short- and long-term needs. Plans include 30 baseball fields, a baseball stadium with up to 5,000 seats, a softball/youth baseball stadium, 20 collegiate-size soccer and multiuse fields, 12 basketball and volleyball courts, 10 tennis courts, a fitness center and other facilities. Grinder Sports is also planning housing, a satellite college campus, a charter school campus and family entertainment center with miniature golf, bowling, paintball, movie theater, hotels, restaurants and retail and office space. Grinder expects the direct creation of more than 2,000 jobs. There are also plans for a state-of-the-art e-sports venue. According to Wikipedia, e-sports often refer to organized, multiplayer video game competitions, particularly among professional players, individually or as teams.

The complex will be 350 acres on two sites, both of which are currently farm land. One is bounded by the northwest corner of Felix and Bella Vista roads and the southeast corner of Judd and Cooper roads. The other site is bounded by the northeastern corner of Judd and Felix roads and southeast corner of Magma and Cooper roads.

As always, there are great things happening in Florence, AZ. We have the best community and people! Stay safe and enjoy. 😊

Sincerely,

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