

Henry Willis Position Paper - 1

Concerning Issues of Importance to the Future of Wickenburg

Community Center Over 850 voters signed a petition that would have placed this decision in the hands of the voters with a view toward budgeting funds for keeping the current Center building at its current location, where it would be restored or rebuilt and operated by the Town. I have been and continue to be a strong supporter of this action. Unfortunately, a clear decision to restore this building has not been made by the Council in time for funds to be placed in this year's budget.

Matrix General Plan Consultants hired by our Town have repeatedly demonstrated a tendency to use "cut and paste" in the development of their proposals. That is, taking ideas and concepts from other – almost exclusively urban and high-density – communities and dropping them into their plans for our small (low density) rural western community, with the expectation that we will just have to accept them because of the time and money that has been spent in the process.

One of my many concerns is an apparent flaw in the design process: they failed to capture information about residency and town citizenship from survey respondents. I was also told that it doesn't actually matter whether respondents are Wickenburg residents or not, because the Town staff wanted to hear from people outside of Wickenburg – who might move here at some future date!

Recognizing my bias over the general lack of scientific rigor, I requested the opinion of a certified town planner who has worked with Matrix leadership and has held them in very high regard. He found that this draft has many deficiencies: (1) there is no Database of information, (2) there is no Glossary of definitions, and (3) there are few references, citations, or footnotes to clarify the sources of the limited number of data points that were used or claimed. In our opinion, this document is an essay – rather than a plan based on data and verifiable evidence. We suspect the survey and subsequent meetings have served to collect, identify and extract key words and phrases used by respondents and attendees, which were then used and crafted into concept responses in order to create the appearance of findings and recommendations.

New Hotel on the Hill This new structure placed increased water and wastewater infrastructure requirements on our Town water system, and no evidence has been made public that our Town staff made any attempt to offset these costs by negotiating or requiring financial compensation from the developer.

This is another example of the need for more deliberation by the Council and higher caliber work by the Town staff, specifically including a much higher emphasis on negotiating to obtain concessions that off-set rather than add to the costs paid by taxpayers when new developers come bearing their gifts.