

Wellik-Gorman Project 208 Apartments Saguaro & West Wickenburg Way

This project is an example of destructive development and it should not have been recommended by Town Staff - who knew the zoning was not clear, who were aware of Ordinance 785 and its stipulations and who dissembled, obfuscated, and generally misled several members of the Council, not to mention most of the public.

The IGA should never have been proposed, reconsidered, or subsequently approved. This complex is much too large for Wickenburg – and certainly too large to be shoehorned into the Saguaro and W. Wickenburg Way location. The Pueblo Cassandra neighbors are completely justified in their objections and in their disappointment in those who allowed this to get this far.

Most of the claims, promises and assurances are chimerical – and it would be a mistake to accept them. The names and descriptions continue to morph from workforce, to low-income, to affordable, and now to median – but none of that will hold up to the decisions and determinations by the federal government – which issued the funding and holds the real power. If built, the consequences will greatly overwhelm both the neighbors and the Town. And as we have seen over time, the unexamined and unanticipated costs and negative outcomes will eventually fall on the local taxpayers and residents.

I've attempted to clarify the meaning of "workforce housing" previously, but in short – it is housing owned or contracted by employers for their employees. This housing is not and cannot be restricted to just the employed, much less to employees of local Wickenburg businesses. And promises were made to at least one outside business.

At the recent Council meeting we were treated to comments about the median income and median housing prices. Well, that's interesting, but not actually relevant. The costs of everything have risen, including housing. And not just in Wickenburg or here in Arizona. What is more relevant is that there is no profit in building cheap housing – unless, of course, you can score big government subsidies and find a town with gullible staff and officials.

I am very disappointed in the Wellik Foundation and in the Arizona Community Foundation. First, for not keeping with Vi Wellik's values and for even considering this concept. And second, for their bullying behavior in issuing threats of legal action if they don't get their way. Now it appears the Court will have to resolve the issue. But all of this could have been avoided with competent staff work and honest disclosure and recommendations.

Normally, I try to focus on issues and avoid personalities, but at this point I'm going to make an exception.

Voting for candidates because they are members of the same social club or service organization or who might endorse one of your issues – without taking a hard look at their voting records and actual performance in office, is taking a serious risk. So is failing to examine the positions – or all the issues some candidates ignore and the positions they never seem to take. These two approaches to voting have played a large role in getting us to this point. Those votes have consequences, and we are seeing them in this very issue:

We have some "Go Along to Get Along" folks who just "Rubber Stamp" whatever the staff proposes and then declare, "OOPS" when problems arise.

And we have those who double down and tell you "it was really good for you" and that "you people" just need to "get over it."