



48412 N. Black Canyon HWY, #299, New River, AZ 85087

Wednesday, July 30th, 2008

Rachel Applegate
Maricopa County Planning & Development
501 N. 44th Street, Suite 200
Phoenix AZ 85008

Dear Ms. Applegate,

I only recently became aware of the Gavilan Peak Estates development proposal (cases # S2008015 and Z2008073). When I spoke with Terri Hogan a week ago I was told that the status of this project was “in progress.” After speaking with the New River Desert Hills Community Association, which opposes the project, I investigated further. Based on information available on the MCP&D website, it seems that significant progress has already been made. I know that when a formal application is filed, I’ll have a public venue for input. But since this project is on the table, I’d like to take this opportunity to provide advance input on behalf of the Desert Foothills Astronomy Club (www.dfacaz.org), many of whose members live within visual range of this project.

DFAC is concerned about the additional light pollution from 70 homes located above the visual horizon for most of New River. Area residents truly value the beauty of our dark night sky. We were pleased to find that no streetlights or up-lighting are part of their plan. They say they will comply with current lighting ordinances, but that is short of ideal. The IDA (International Darksky Association) provides more stringent guidelines for lighting. I have suggested to them that, for whatever residential porch and yard lighting is employed, they use LPS (low pressure sodium vapor) lighting rather than incandescent or halogen lights. I also suggested that all outside lighting fixtures be *fully shielded*, even if below the statutory 150 watt limit (Maricopa County Zoning Ordinance Section 1112). We both know this is unlikely to happen. So the end result will be increased light pollution in this previously astronomy-friendly area.

DFAC is committed to preserving our dark sky throughout the north Valley. We unanimously recommend that their zoning change request from R43 to R1-35 be denied, unless they comply with IDA guidelines (www.darksky.org). I appreciate the opportunity to provide this input. I’m sure we’ll talk again soon. Thank you for listening.

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