

Thank You!



To all area citizens for your tremendous support and overwhelming response to the imminent threat of golf course closure. We are rapidly moving forward in our efforts to preserve our property values, quality of life, future prosperity and core identity as a community. There is still much work to be done to achieve our goal of making our community self sufficient and stable.

Building an active and vibrant sense of community centered around our golf course/park-like area is essential in this effort. The result will be an overall appearance and function throughout the Sunsites community that will be better than ever and will benefit all area residents.

We will continue to provide prompt updates to all as we make strides in taking control of our destiny.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Please realize, your community is in need of help from every single individual.

PLEASE HELP IN WHATEVER WAY YOU CAN.

GHOST TOWN TRAIL NEWS October 2008

Saving Golf Course is Vital to Community

By Naaman Nickell

Here we go again! And again! Shadow Mountain Golf Course has narrowly avoided closure twice in the past few weeks. Now the specter looms again, and the last good chance to save it—and the value it adds to the community—may well lay with the entire community.

Why should you care? Well, if you live on a golf course lot—as my wife and I do—or if you like to play golf—as I do—the answer should be obvious. The golf course is just one of the reasons we chose Sunsites. We like the friendliness, the feeling of belonging, the climate, the people. We also love to watch the ducks, herons and wide variety of other birds that visit the pond just across the fairway from our house.

You don't live on the golf course? You don't play golf? Well, perhaps you are one of those residents who finds the golf course a wonderful place to walk your dog—always, of course, picking up after it. Or you like to get your exercise walking or jogging around the golf course. Or you enjoy walking around the pond watching the fish—and there are some interesting ones in the pond on No. 2—or feeding the ducks. Or maybe doing a little birding. So, the golf course is not just for golfers. There is the possibility that if the golf course becomes profitable, it would be feasible to add amenities that would appeal to non-golfers.

But the bigger point may well be the significance of the golf course to home values. I have no doubt that if the golf course were closed for a significant length of time—months, or years, say—our house's market value would drop sharply. Buyers generally do not get excited about a house with a back yard that adjoins an overgrown fairway with dying trees and a dried up pond across the way.

Market value of surrounding property would take a hit if the golf course were to be shut down. It was suggested at the September 15 meeting the decline generally could be 20 to 30 percent. This on top of the already faltering real estate market. And it would not be just golf course houses and lots that would be hurt. It is likely there would be a ripple effect throughout the community. It's worth noting there were some at the meeting who expressed skepticism about the extent of the impact on home values and on the general importance of the golf course to the community.

I think there is another consideration about the importance of the golf course: For better or worse, Sunsites has an identity as a golf community and has had almost from the beginning. At first there was a nine-hole par 3 course that also served as a center of social activity. Subsequently, a full length nine-hole course was added and then the second full-length nine holes. Unfortunately, the par 3 course fell by the wayside. Certainly, golf was one of the early focuses of advertising by the original developer. However, things never quite developed the way the developer hoped, although it left a golf legacy that we are dealing with today. How we deal with it will have a lot to do with what Sunsites looks like a year, three years, five years or 10 years from now. It may be better or it may be worse, but it won't be the same.

Thus the call at the September meeting for community support - while negotiations are conducted with the owner of the golf course - with the goal making it a community golf course. How that would transpire is what the negotiations are about. The direct community support, for a six-month period, would include voluntary financial commitments, volunteering of time and talents to help run the golf course and just volunteering to support the effort with encouragement and optimism. Agreement for moving ahead was signaled with a show of hands by the vast majority in attendance. Approximately, 175 community members attended the meeting.

It was suggested the commitment be \$50 a month per household and \$200 a month per business. It's up to each of you to decide if that's doable, and if you want to participate. The money will be used for operating expenses during the six-month period as financial requirements for continuing operations are determined. By the end of the six months I suspect there will be a much clearer picture of whether and how a next step will be taken.

A well-maintained, well-managed, self-sustaining golf course is vital to a positive vision for Sunsites. You may not agree, but don't just ignore this plea for community support. Involve yourself. Ask questions. Challenge assumptions. Make suggestions.

\$\$\$ Monetary
Donations % Great
Western Bank
in Sunsites
 **Volunteering**
Time, Energy
& Assistance

**Submit Your Ideas,
Suggestions
& Solutions**

By Mail: PO Box 793
Pearce, AZ 85625
Email: GoSunsites@aol.com
Online: SunsitesGolf.com
& Blog

**ENJOY
SUNSTITES!**

A small graphic of a golf club (driver) on a green mat with a golf ball and a pair of white gloves.