

Q & A with Dave

By Dave Pearson
Peoria City Councilman

Question: *Getting into and out of the Wal-Mart/ Sam's Club shopping center off of 83rd Avenue south of Union Hills is dangerous. I know this is located in Glendale but can't you do something?*

Answer: No one disagrees with you, least of all police and paramedics. Glendale reports that underground hardware is already in place for a traffic signal and that planning is complete. Meanwhile, they are "looking" for construction funds.

So what's the holdup? The answer is politics. The priorities of Peoria residents are not necessarily the budget priorities of Glendale. Most people understand this political dynamic. It is part of the natural give and take of negotiations between two governments. Given time and savvy leadership the two neighboring communities can usually work out any problem.

Unfortunately, the relationship between Peoria's mayor and Glendale Mayor Elaine Scruggs is as chilly as a wintry morning. Mayor Bob Barrett has decided to personally and aggressively champion the Tohono O'odham casino proposed near Glendale's prime entertainment district. Scruggs and the rest of the Glendale City Council hate the idea. Meanwhile, Mayor Barrett pursues an "in your face" promotion of the casino. The Peoria City Council has distanced itself from the Mayor's views. He does not speak for the city on this issue.

Regardless how you personally feel about gambling or this casino project, Mayor Barrett's personal campaign has soured the two cities' political relationship. Casino money even bankrolled his trip to Washington D.C. to support the Tribe. (Perfectly legal as long as he declares the gift.) This was an obvious slap at Mayor Scruggs and U.S. Rep. Trent Franks. Sources say the congressman is "perplexed" (political speak for... *really ticked off*) at the Mayor's meddling.

Barrett claims the Valley needs any casino jobs it can get. More jobs is good for the economy -- no question. But this particular casino project doesn't directly affect Peoria's economy and its future won't be determined by our Mayor's divisive lobbying. Unfortunately, his personal agenda is a roadblock to solving the traffic light issue on 83rd Ave. It is not in the best interests of Peoria to be a part of this brouhaha between the Tribe and Glendale. His well known animosity toward the Glendale mayor has unnecessarily put the two cities at odds.

I have a positive working relationship with Mayor Scruggs and will try my best to intercede on your behalf. Only time will tell whether this can begin to melt the ice berg caused by Mayor Barrett's shortsighted personal agenda. I'll keep you posted.

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