

NORTHEAST VALLEY NEWS

Z9 THURSDAY, MAY 5, 2011 1 | 1

Council approves zoning for Atalon community

By Edward Gately

The Republic | azcentral.com

The Scottsdale City Council approved rezoning requests Tuesday to allow a master-planned community with smaller lots at the southwestern corner of 118th Street and Pinnacle Vista Drive.

However, Councilman Bob Littlefield voted against the measures, saying the proposal is part of an ongoing zoning trend that will "radically" change the face of Scottsdale, both north and south. All other council members voted for the request.

The master-planned community, named Atalon, would include 33 homes on 62 acres and be surrounded by 19 acres of open space. It would provide a 150-foot buffer along 118th Street and adjacent homes. The applicant is LVA Design Studios.

The council approved rezoning the 62 acres to allow for 70,000-square-foot lots, down from 190,000-square-foot lots. The 19 acres was rezoned from residential to open space.

John Berry, an attorney representing the applicant, said the requested density is

half of what is specified in the voter-approved general plan and half that of adjacent neighbors. The proposal includes more open space than currently required, he said.

He also said the rezoning is consistent with the Dynamite Foothills Character Area Plan.

"This is a very good land-use plan," Berry said.

In January, the Planning Commission received an earful from a small, but vocal group of homeowners before it unanimously recommended council approval of the rezoning requests. The protesters criticized the proposed increase in density, saying it will mean more rooftops and buildings blocking the desert view.

No one spoke in opposition before the council.

Robert Cappel, a board member of the Greater Pinnacle Peak Association, said his organization has concerns about how the trend of approving "up-zoning requests" will affect the city's infrastructure. The non-profit organization is dedicated to the preservation of the natural environ-

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ROBERT CAPPEL

Greater Pinnacle Peak Assn. board member

ment and quality of life in open desert areas around northern Scottsdale.

"It seems to be one is getting approved after the other, and I don't think the city has fully looked at what the impact of all these new residences are on the city's infrastructure," he said. "And if they have to build new sewer lines, new roads, new electric lines, it's going to cost the taxpayers a lot of money."

Cappel also questioned where the city is going to get the water to support new developments such as Atalon.

"There's only so much water that comes in here, there are no new sources," he said.

"I want to make sure that they fully understand the impacts on the city's infrastructure and that they have a plan in place to make sure they can supply water to all the residences in the future."

Littlefield said that while this project is no more offensive than others that have come before, it is part of an ongoing trend of proposals headed to the council that will alter the city away from what's wanted by the residents.

However, council members Ron McCullagh and Dennis Robbins disagreed with Littlefield's assessment. Calling Atalon a radical change is "wrong," Robbins said.

"This to me is precisely what the residents said they wanted here," McCullagh said.

Now that the rezoning has been approved, the owner will proceed with platting the acreage and then will begin marketing it, Berry said.

"It can take nine to 12 months to get property platted before it's ready for sale, so even in the best-case scenario, it's quite a while before anything can happen on the property," he said.