

"1961--SCHOA TACKLES NEW PROBLEMS!"

The Sun City Home Owners Association of 1961 confronted far different problems from today. Complaints for violations of age-restrictions, messy yards, illegal RV parking, improper sheds, or businesses operating in homes were rare. SCHOA's community involvement centered around big problems and big concepts like no street lights or fire hydrants, concerns over poor fire protection, smelly, unhealthy open sewer ponds, high rates for sewer and water services, school taxes but no schools, and whether Sun City should incorporate and have its own government.

In 1961, nearly everyone paid the voluntary \$2 membership fees to SCHOA. Large numbers attended Board meetings, and the four quarterly meetings attracted overflow crowds. A frequent topic was concern for the lack of street lights. Picture Sun City in 1961 with the area between Grand Ave. and Peoria Ave. totally dark at night. Street lights were not on the "Master Plan" for the Del E. Webb Company, and historical records make no explanation of why.

SCHOA was still in its infancy and had no experience acting as a community advocate. Nevertheless, SCHOA officials offered to act as an intermediary between residents and Arizona Public Service. (A.P.S.) SCHOA arranged a public meeting with A.P.S. officials. The power company estimated a cost to install lights would run \$11/household for above ground lines and \$20/household for buried electrical lines. Additionally, residences would pay for the electricity used and would be billed as part of the annual property tax.

After lengthy discussion, there was resident consensus that any decision be put on hold until it was determined if Sun City would follow Youngtown's lead and incorporate and become a city. The belief was that a city could negotiate a better price from a public utility like A.P.S. SCHOA told residents the incorporation decision was likely 3-4 years away. Arizona cities got most of their yearly revenue in the form of state shared sales and other taxes, with the amount linked to each city's last U.S. Census numbers. In 1960 the Census Report totaled Sun City's populations as zero. Sun City could request a new count but not until January 1965. By then it was estimated Sun City's population would exceed 10,000. The earliest Sun City could be ready to vote on incorporation would be December 1964.

There is a surprising end for this story. Next time!

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