

Citizen Comments by Local Residents regarding “OPEN HOUSE” Session on Rezoning Proposal

Shane Madsen, the owner of property parcels 298-26-014A, 208-26-023B and 208-26-023D along Ocotillo Road, is seeking rezoning of those parcels to Heavy Industrial. The owner invited residents to attend an “Open House” session at the noted property wherein the intended usage and need for rezoning would be explained. Several representatives of our group participated in that session on Saturday, April 13, 2024.

Mr. Madsen may attempt to cite the Open House session as evidence that important concerns and needs of we local residents have been addressed to some degree of satisfaction. That is not the case – at all. Instead, the presentation and discussion at the session only heightened our concerns about rezoning.

Please note the following key points:

1. Mr. Shane Madsen, the owner of the properties, did not attend or participate in the Open House session. His assigned spokesperson was gentlemanly and spoke from an obviously limited script.
2. That spokesperson was unable to explain whether or not Mr. Madsen knows about our citizen concerns, or what Mr. Madsen thinks or intends to do about particular concerns. He indicated that all discussion would be reported to Mr. Madsen.
3. In reply to our numerous inquiries about intended and/or possible uses of the property under Heavy Industrial zoning, the spokesperson repeatedly noted some “required” permitting steps as sufficient response to our concerns. In other words, his replies came across as: “When Mr. Madsen succeeds in rezoning this place to Heavy Industrial, he will then still have to go through the process for obtaining use permits for any kind of industrial operation to be conducted”. That canned script was not at all responsive to the usage concerns raised by the resident citizens present.
4. When Mr. Madsen’s spokesperson was asked for details about the electronic waste recycling listed in the permit application; when asked if Sierra Mining has been in compliance with all RU4 zoning since purchasing the property; and when asked about the biomass fire at Mr. Madsen’s Sierra Mining in Tucson, which has been smoldering since 2010 and continues to smolder to this day, he did not answer any of those inquiries. One participant notes that the spokesperson and an associate both lied in response to his question about the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan for current site operations.
5. One or two attendees, not from our immediate local area, made comments about past or current civic activities/contributions on the part of Mr. Madsen. Apparently these were intended to place Mr. Madsen in some positive light with regard to his rezoning proposal. We noted that community support would always be appreciated, but any such activities have nothing to do with the rezoning proposal. Those can not allay our serious concerns about improper land use, pollution, degradation and – very importantly - devaluation of our residential properties, which are major investments on our part.
6. Near the end of the session, a participant observed that rejection of the rezoning proposal is not at all based on the personality of the owner, but wholly on past and recent experience with activities at that site, and the fundamental future threat. Because of the need to avoid the pernicious effects of industrial activities in our neighborhood, and especially the degradation and devaluation of lovely residential properties in this RU4 zone, a clear analogy was stated: “When facing a serious disease that can bring known devastating outcomes, our most effective action is to counteract the threat at base level to eliminate causal and damaging factors – as early as possible – to avoid the ongoing, and ongoing, battles for survival that can ensue”.