

JIM LANE MY TURN



Put the Desert Discovery Center in public's hands

The only way to guarantee a public vote on the Desert Discovery Center at the McDowell Sonoran Preserve, or elsewhere, is to amend the Scottsdale City Charter. And that's exactly what I am proposing.

I am calling for an amendment to the Scottsdale City Charter, which would require a public vote on any project at the McDowell Sonoran Preserve costing more than \$5 million or \$1 more than the most expensive trailhead. Others may have suggestions to improve this language but my goal is clear; any major changes or projects impacting the preserve must go to the voters. No loopholes.

Amend charter to send to vote

Over the years, plans for the DDC have gotten more exotic. One proposal calls for a facility of more than 70,000 square-feet. I don't support that, and I believe if it went to a vote of the public this proposal would be rejected.

But there is no way to guarantee a public vote on this issue now or in the future unless the Scottsdale City Charter is amended.

My opponent, Bob Littlefield, ridicules this idea even though he now claims to be against the DDC. He would rather use the issue to score political points.

That's the problem.

Right now, there can't be a vote on the DDC because nothing has been proposed. But when the issue comes before the council in the future, the public would get its say if the Scottsdale City Charter is amended.

This plan removes the politics

The charter amendment has an added benefit because it protects the preserve now and in the future. It's a safe bet that another Bob Littlefield will come along and try to turn the McDowell Sonoran Preserve into a political football.

The McDowell Sonoran Preserve is Scottsdale's Grand Canyon. I made it my mission to get our preserve lands purchased and to increase our purchasing power by using more than \$86 million of available state funds in the process.

The only threat to the preserve, greater than an outsized DDC, are outsized political egos who would rather exploit the preserve for political gain than truly work to protect it. This issue has now moved beyond the DDC and should encompass any major changes now and in the future.

With an amendment to the Scottsdale City Charter, we can intercept the politics and guarantee the public's final say now and forever.

Jim Lane was first elected as Scottsdale mayor in 2008 and seeks a third term in the November election. His campaign website is www.lane4Scottsdale2016.com.



A September 2010 study included designs for a Discovery Center in Scottsdale, including this image of potential desert pavilions.

SCOTTSDALE