

Friday, August 13, 2004

SuperCenter appeals decision on lighting code

By Philip Franchine

GREEN VALLEY--Developers of a planned Wal-Mart SuperCenter have filed an appeal with the town of Sahuarita after being turned down in a request to use more than twice as much outdoor lighting as is permitted by town code.

The appeal is likely to go before the Town Council at its next regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, Aug. 23, though the agenda for that meeting has not yet been set.

Highway Corners, a consortium that includes Diamond Ventures and Wal-Mart, has been approved for a 41-acre expansion of the Bashas'/Wal-Mart Plaza, is seeking approval to use 110,000 lumens per acre of outdoor lighting.

Town code permits 48,000 lumens per acre. A lumen is a measure of light emitted from a fixture.

The Sahuarita Planning and Zoning Commission on Aug. 2 failed to approve the Highway Corners request, as commissioners voted 3-3 with one abstention.

Town planning staff made no recommendation at that meeting, saying requests for modification are done on a case-by-case basis and commissioners must decide whether each application merits an exception to town code.

Highway Corners has argued that the increased lighting is needed to provide safety in remote parking lots.

The request has been opposed by the Fred Lawrence Whipple Observatory and others who argue there is no proven connection between safety and the requested lighting level.

The planned shopping center is called Madera Marketplace and will include a Bank of America, Walgreens drug store, Wells Fargo bank and a tire dealer, among others who have signed leases.