

City Talk, May 9, 2024

Tony Schiaveto

Senior Code Enforcement Officer

One of the many things Sedona has to offer is its beautiful views, especially at night with clear skies and bright stars. One of the safeguards to protect those views is that the City of Sedona is a Dark Sky community. As a Dark Sky Community, Sedona strives to limit outdoor lighting to only what is necessary so as to decrease light pollution.

When it comes to Dark Sky lighting, one of the details many residents may not be aware of, and which can cause frustration, is existing lighting that is “Legal-Nonconforming”. This means that lighting fixtures that were in place prior to the Dark Sky guidelines are exempt from a code violation. Although Code Enforcement can still send a “courtesy letter”, there is no enforcement that can be done. However, this will all change in 2028 when, in accordance with our City Code, these fixtures will no longer be exempt.

The goal for Community Development and Code Enforcement is to encourage residents to start changing those lights now, ahead of the 2028 deadline. Not only does this prevent future enforcement action, but it also preserves the Sedona night skies for everyone’s benefit and enjoyment.

The National Park Service (2024) lists many benefits of being a Dark Sky community such as enhancing neighborhood aesthetics, reducing the impact to wildlife, and saving energy with cost efficient bulbs. By acting now and not waiting for 2028 we can ensure Sedona maintains its pristine appearance that attracts people from across the world.

In 2012 Sedona made it a priority to become a coveted member of the International Dark Sky Community. By 2014 the City Council approved the City of Sedona International Dark Sky Community Policy for maintaining Dark Sky designation by the IDA and became the eighth location worldwide to be named as such.

It is our hope that, through education and word of mouth, the remaining non-conforming lighting will be replaced before the 2028 deadline. For information on Dark Sky lighting requirements, please go to [sedona.municipal.codes](https://www.sedona.gov/codes) and type “dark sky” into the search bar. This will provide the requirements and provide illustrations on what is allowed.

On another topic, it is the time of year when weeds begin to flourish after a season with abundant precipitation. We encourage residents to be preemptive in yard maintenance as the weeds and uncultivated growth can quickly get out of hand and not only be an eye sore but a fire hazard as well.

Please be aware that city code 8.10.020 states that weeds, tall grass, uncultivated shrubs or growth (whether growing or otherwise) higher than 12 inches, is in violation of city code (City of Sedona, 2024). In 2023, Code Enforcement investigated and resolved 54 complaints of weeds and uncultivated growth.

For additional information please contact Code Enforcement at (928) 203-5175 or 5116. To report a violation, call the Code Enforcement hotline at (928) 203-5000.