

The Fountain Hills Dark Sky Association strongly believes that achieving International Dark Sky Community designation from the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) was a positive distinction for Fountain Hills and is one more reason why people might wish to call Fountain Hills home. Furthermore, when the construction of the [International Dark Sky Discovery Center](#) is completed, Fountain Hills will become an astrotourism hub just a short distance from the urban center of the Phoenix Metro area.

THE PROCESS FOR GETTING DESIGNATION

Step one to obtain the prestigious designation of Dark Sky Community was to update the Town's outdoor lighting ordinance so that it met the requirements of IDA. After the FH Dark Sky Association worked for over a year with Town staff, communicated regularly with Town leaders, and presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Town Council supported these efforts by unanimously approving updated sign and lighting ordinances on November 3, 2016.

Fortunately, the existing ordinances already had a number of dark sky-friendly regulations, such as shielding requirements, brightness and light trespass limitations, and limits on hours of operation. However, the updated ordinances addressed new technologies that limit Correlated Color Temperature (CCT) to 3000K (Kelvin) or less, limit lumen density for commercial and multi-family properties, and limit electronic message boards to a brightness of 100 nits.

Step two was to meet the other IDA requirements for Dark Sky Community designation. Those requirements resulted in the following plan of action for 2017:

1. Provide awareness and education to community
 - a. Give presentations to various community groups
 - b. Develop a Fountain Hills Dark Sky website
 - c. Develop Dark Sky awareness brochure or flyer
2. Obtain broad support from a wide range of community organizations
 - a. Seek supporting letters from organizations to include in application
3. Provide examples of 10 projects that conform to updated ordinance
 - a. Any project going forward, or that occurred within the last 2 years with a lighting plan that conforms to the updated ordinance, qualifies
 - b. Identify any non-conforming lighting whose owner voluntarily updates lighting to conform to new ordinance

4. Offer at least two dark sky awareness events per year
5. Maintain an annual sky brightness measurement program
6. Show municipal support by having the Town:
 - a. Conform to the updated ordinance within five years
 - b. Provide information either through flyers, public service announcements, or information on Town website
7. Obtain letter of nomination support signed by the Mayor and Town Manager to be included with application.
8. Submit comprehensive application to IDA that includes documentation of the above, along with Town history, map of community, copy of updated lighting ordinance, an IDA member nomination letter and any other information deemed helpful.

After all the above was completed by the Fountain Hills Dark Sky Association and the application is submitted to IDA, their governing Board reviewed the information and determined designation of "International Dark Sky Community" would be granted to Fountain Hills. This occurred on January 8, 20218.