



## Executive Summary

Estero Council of Community Leaders Meeting

August 9, 2013

**Burt Saunders and Daphnie Bercher**

**Gray/Robinson Attorneys at Law**

Burt Saunders, attorney with Gray/Robinson Law Firm, is working for the ECCL on the charter required for the incorporation process. He and his associate Daphnie Bercher presented the membership with the many details involved with the incorporation process.

The Feasibility Study must be completed this month so that it can be submitted to the Legislature by **September 2**. The Local & Federal Affairs Committee then prepares an analysis of the study for use by the legislators.

Between **October** and **December**, the local bill will be drafted, submitted and voted on by the Lee County Delegation.

(Editor's Note: The Lee County Delegation is comprised of Senators Garrett Richter and Lizbeth Benaquisto; Representatives Matt Caldwell, Ray Rodrigues, Heather Fitzenhagen and Dane Eagle. Rep. Rodrigues has agreed to file a bill for Estero cityhood during the next legislative session.)

The Florida Legislative session begins on **March 4, 2014**. Once the Local Bill is passed, the Special Act will direct the Lee County Commission to place the incorporation referendum on the ballot.

By **July 7, 2014**, the resolution adopted by Lee County Commission must be submitted to the Lee County Supervisor of Elections.

**November 4, 2014**, is the date of the General Election when Estero voters can determine whether or not they want Estero to become a city.

Regarding the two mile "buffer" between municipalities, Saunders stated that the Legislature has waived this rule in the past.

### **Estero Fire Rescue District – Chief Scott Vanderbrook**

The incorporation process will have no effect on the Fire District. The boundaries and the services will be the same. The millage rate also will remain the same, which at 2.18 is lower than neighboring fire districts. Next year will be their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary so they will be hosting a lot of events for the community.

### **Governmental Relations Director – John Goodrich**

The Bonita Springs' voluntary annexation hearing for the WCI property located in Estero was held on August 7; the second and final hearing will be on August 21. That will complete the process and this property will then become part of the City of Bonita Springs.

The involuntary annexation, involving the Estero residents of Pelican Landing and The Colony, will come later. Post cards will be sent to the registered voters on Dec. 27; ballots mailed on Feb. 4, and the ballots will be tallied on Feb 25 and will become effective on March 10. Don Eslick and Jack Lienesch will be speaking to these residents about the advantages of remaining in Estero.

There will be two volunteer "community captains" meetings, one on **Wednesday, Sept 11** and a second on **Monday, Sept. 16**, both at **9 a.m.** The meetings will be held at the Estero Recreation Center. We need to complete the community workshops by November 1, 2013.

### **Charter – Roger Strelow**

The Charter spells out the form of government of a municipality. The most popular trend is what is called the council/manager system. You have a council, with a mayor, and a city manager appointed by the council. The charter provides the city the power to run the city within certain guidelines. It addresses the length of terms, the number of council members and a variety of other issues. We're looking at models from around the country.

### **Communications Director – Marilyn Edwards**

The ECCL web site, at [www.esterofl.org](http://www.esterofl.org), has a new section devoted to the Incorporation Referendum. There are links which provide:

- **petitions** – This link allows you to sign the petition on-line or print it out and use it gather more signatures in your community. Thousands of signatures will be needed to demonstrate to our State Delegation that the community wants the opportunity to be able to vote on whether or not to incorporate. You don't have to be a Florida registered voter to sign the petition, just a property owner or renter. Each spouse should sign individually. Business owners may sign as well.
- **sample community resolution** - The ECCL is asking all Estero community boards to formalize support for a resolution which we can present to legislators along with our petitions. There is a sample resolution on the web site which you may use or write your own.
- **schedule a workshop** – The ECCL hopes to provide informational workshops in all Estero communities so that residents may gain a better understanding of everything that is involved with the incorporation process. You may fill out your workshop request on-line or print a workshop request.
- **Contribute** - There is a link where you may use your PayPal account or it provides information on where to send your check made out to the ECCL. We have determined that it will cost \$75,000 to achieve the goal of a November 2014 referendum. This includes legal, consulting, and surveyor fees, as well as costs for printing and electronic communications. Since our dues only amount to less than \$12,000, additional funds are critical to supporting this referendum.

There is much more information on this site, including a place to direct any questions you may have. These web pages will be updated as new information becomes available.

### **Environment Director - Phil Douglas**

The Florida Land and Legacy Campaign is ongoing. Please continue to gather petitions for this important matter.

The Edison Farms property went into bankruptcy and its title is in the hands of a financial consortium composed of banks and insurance companies. There is an opportunity for Conservation 2020 to buy that land, which is the second most environmentally valuable property in Florida. There is a proposal by at least one of the Lee County Commissioners to take the current 2020 millage rate, either partially or entirely, and put it toward the general fund. Everyone should send an email to the County Commissioners encouraging them to not divert any of the 2020 funds.

The final zoning hearing for the “Martini Glass” property, located at the eastern end of Coconut Road, will be conducted by the Board of County Commissioners on August 19. The Lee County Hearing Examiner already recommended approval, which would remove the right-of-way for an overpass over I-75 and allow up to 200 multi-family units on that property.

### **Community Planning Director – Roger Strelow**

The Estero Community Plan is being updated and emphasizes sustainability and transportation issues. There will be an emphasis on more “mixed use” areas, with increased density in appropriate areas in the commercial corridors. If the hospital is approved, we could get an expansion of medical office buildings in these areas. You may learn more about the Plan by attending the Estero Community Planning Panel meetings.

We’ve worked with the County identifying areas which were not in compliance with Estero’s signage regulations. The County took action immediately. They are starting an education process with new owners, along with enforcement.

### **Transportation Director – Jim Boesch**

The US 41 construction project, from Corkscrew Road north to San Carlos, is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2013.

We had been told that the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) was going to take away the \$10 million funded to extend the entrances onto I-75 from Corkscrew Road. We met with the director of the Metropolitan Planning Organization last week and he said the money is still available. He is going to work with us to get this project back on FDOT’s agenda. The design has been completed.

Construction will start on Sept. 1 on the right turn lane from Williams Road going south onto US 41. This is scheduled to take 90 days to complete.

We’re still working with Lee Department of Transportation regarding a right turn lane on Estero Parkway going south onto Three Oaks Parkway. The design is completed, but funding is not available at this time.

### **Chairman Emeritus – Don Eslick**

The attorneys working with Lee Memorial on their appeal to build an 80-bed hospital in Estero say there is a 50-50 chance they will be successful. The trial, which will occur in Tallahassee, will take place the week of November 4.

We can help by having our community boards develop letters that would describe how their communities have increased in population over the past few years, examples of how long it takes to get medical treatment, etc. It's the job of the community to be able to present local information that augments the professionals. Lee Memorial is spending about \$500,000 on this appeal.

Part of the community planning update was to hire nationally recognized consultants to address the commercially zoned vacant properties along US41 and up and down Corkscrew Road. We have a little over 1,000 acres that are vacant. The consultants will be looking at how to reposition the development of these lands. Their report, which is near completion, will be shared in a two-day workshop with the ECCL, Estero Community Planning Panel, Estero Design Review Committee, land owners, FGCU and all the partners that would be involved in this process. You may go to the ECCL web site to read more under Issues/Community Development Challenges.

We're continuing to strengthen our relationship with FGCU. There are two large developments near the university that impact them and impact us.

The first is the rezoning of the Miromar Lakes property, moving the commercial zoning down to the south end of their property, north of Grandezza. That would have a large impact on the roadway network east of I-75 as well as impacts on the surrounding communities.

The other is the Alico property, about 5,000 acres of land east of the university. We'll be meeting next week with all the affected residential communities, including Grandezza, Stoneybrook, Wildcat Run, Bella Terra and the owners of two properties that have not yet been developed. These communities are working with the university, the County and the state highway department to determine the best outcome for all these communities east of I-75.

**Next meeting: Friday, September 13, 2013, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, Estero Community Park.**

For more information about the ECCL, ECPP and EDRC go to [www.esterofl.org](http://www.esterofl.org).

**Marilyn Edwards, Communications Director**