



Executive Summary

Estero Council of Community Leaders Meeting

April 12, 2013

Suzanne Bradach, Director,

Special Projects, Lee Memorial Health System (LMHS)

Suzanne stated that LMHS has received over 2100 letters of support for their hospital, representing just about every community in the Bonita Springs/Estero area, including elected officials.

LMHS bought land adjacent to the Bonita Community Health Center in 2006 but, due to the economy, had scaled back. When Health Management Associates (HMA) filed their letter of intent, LMHS knew that if they didn't apply and HMA was granted a hospital in the Alico Road corridor, the chances of LMHS developing their facility would be diminished.

About a year ago, they hired a consultant to assess all of their health care facilities as well as the demographics of the area. It was determined that, by the year 2018, one-third of the county's population will be in south Lee County. In addition, the growth in the over 65 age group will grow exponentially, so there is a more intense need for a hospital in this area.

HMA and NCH Healthcare System have until May 2 to object to the LMHS application.

On **Tuesday, April 23**, residents will have the opportunity to state their support for the hospital at a public hearing at Hodges University, from **9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.** Hodges University is located at 4501 Colonial Boulevard in Fort Myers.

Bonita Springs Report – Hon. Steve McIntosh

Bonita Springs has resolved the Homeless Shelter issue by moving the distance between residences and schools from a shelter to 1,000 feet instead of 500 feet. The ordinance allows 30 beds in the shelter. The Council agreed to a \$60,000 study of the Bonita Springs' Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource area. The Council knows it is sensitive land, so there needs to be a plan.

Estero Fire Rescue District – Chief Scott Vanderbrook

There was an 8 percent increase in the call volume this season. Several promotions were presented recently including battalion chiefs, officers and engineers. These are not new positions, but replacements for those who had left the organization. Our firefighters will be competing again in the Fight for Air Climb in downtown Ft. Myers. The Estero Fire & Rescue has won it the last 2 years in a row. Two firefighters will participate in the Brotherhood Ride, a 9-day bicycle ride from Estero to Tennessee in honor of fallen firefighters and policemen. Estero Fire Commissioners competed in the chili cook-off last week and received the People's Choice Award.

Community Planning – Roger Strelow

The update on the Estero Community Plan is well underway. Members of the ECCL, Estero Community Planning Panel and Estero Design Review Committee attended a two-day workshop conducted by a professional planner to address the commercial corridor along both Corkscrew Road and US41.

At the joint meeting of the Lee and Collier County Metropolitan Planning Organizations, they agreed to send a letter to Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) asking that FGCU reconsider their decision to no longer jointly fund the LeeTran Route 60 bus. This is the bus service that takes students to and from the campus.

The ECCL and others pointed out that, by providing free, large parking garages, there is no financial incentive for students to use mass transit. The University of Florida incentivizes student use of mass transit by charging each student a transit fee. In return, students can use the local transit system without any ride-by-ride charge simply by showing his/her student ID.

Transportation – Jim Boesch

Construction has started on the turn into the post office on Three Oaks Parkway. It should take about 60 days to complete that project. The Williams Road project has been sent out for bids; that work is the addition of a right turn lane from Williams Road onto south US41. That project should be completed before October. The Florida Department of Transportation Director Jimmy Limbaugh has left, so they're looking for a replacement. Lee County has one of the highest fatality rates for bicyclists, so they are planning to conduct a bike safety program. The widening of US41 from Corkscrew Road north is now scheduled to be completed this fall.

Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass - Guest

He's working to keep the LeeTran route 60 open, FGCU funding that route, and increasing that traffic flow. He also submitted a letter in support of the Lee Memorial Hospital in south Lee County. When asked about taking money earmarked for Conservation 20/20 to supplement the County's general fund, Commissioner Pendergrass stated he does not think that would be legal and he does not support that. He stated he would support Conservation 20/20 funds being placed in a trust fund so that they can only be used for Conservation 20/20.

Chairman Emeritus – Don Eslick

We'd like to have about 50 people testify on behalf of the hospital at the April 23 hearing. There is probably no other opportunity in the next 20-30 years with as much potential to change the complexion of the community in terms of economic development. It will start with the \$81 million hospital, but the whole area will develop in terms of a medical complex.

The Estero Community Improvement Foundation (ECIF) has been meeting with the Southwest Florida Community Foundation leadership. We're trying to establish a relationship which will allow ECIF to receive major donations so that, in the future, resources will be available to supplement whatever governmental bodies might be here.

There are approximately 1500 acres of vacant lands along our major thoroughfares which have been zoned for retail uses; however, the demand isn't going to be there so we've hired a consultant to help us understand where that demand is going to be in order to develop long-term plans in a way that doesn't depreciate what we have already. The process has begun to try to determine how much of that land should be rezoned and how we plan for that kind of change in the marketplace.

The Economic Development Steering Committee has been keeping in touch with all the economic development players in the community. We most recently heard from the person who heads the venture capital operation for the region. It's the only Angel Fund in the state of Florida; they have provided a couple million dollars to assist new companies. We've also heard from JumpStart; an entrepreneurial network system. One of the members of the board in Cleveland moved down here; he has been advocating for this support network where a group can start a new company and grow and diversify the economy. Not all of this will happen in Estero, but it will have an impact on Estero.

Chairman – Nick Batos

Phil Douglas, Environment Director, wanted to remind all those who are working on the Florida Water and Land Legacy Campaign to get the petitions in to him.

We sent out an email about the airport putting in the flight tracking system. If you think a plane is too low and making more noise than it should, you can go on the tracking system and it will tell you the plane that is going over your house, how high it is, the airline and all the pertinent information. It also will provide information on how to file a complaint right from the site. The web site is WWW.FLYLCPA.COM/WEBTRAK. We're going to try to schedule someone from the airport to give us a demonstration of the system.

The next meeting will be **Friday, May 10, 2013**, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the Estero Community Park. For further information, go to the ECCL web site <http://esterofl.org/>.

Marilyn Edwards, Communications Director