



The ECCL Report: January 2017

Executive Summary: *156th meeting of the Estero Council of Community Leaders*

Estero Fire Chief Scott Vanderbrook is asking Estero citizens to voice opposition to a local bill proposed by Rep. Matt Caldwell which could cost Estero taxpayers an estimated \$3.6 million. The bill is on the agenda for the Jan. 19 Lee County Legislative Delegation Meeting, beginning at 9 a.m. in the Nursing Building at Florida Southwestern State College.

Estero Fire Rescue commissioners passed a resolution to oppose the draft bill, which would create a consolidated Lee County Fire Control District. This bill would eliminate Estero's "home rule" and would require Estero taxpayers to pay higher taxes for fire service, therefore making Estero a "donor district."

Those wishing to voice an opinion about the proposed Fire District Consolidation bill should contact their state legislators and members of the Lee County Board of County Commissioners ([link to addresses](#)). For more information, see the [Fire District Report](#) section of the ECCL Report.

Estero Heart Walk

The inaugural Estero Heart Walk will be Sat., Feb. 18, at Estero Park. A goal has been set of raising \$75,000 for the American Heart Association. *Registration information may be found online at <http://esteroheartwalk.kintera.org>.*

Continue reading for more highlights from the January meeting, including the Comprehensive Plan, Village updates and committee reports. *The next ECCL meeting will be Friday, Feb. 10, from 10 a.m. to noon at Estero Community Park.*

VILLAGE OF ESTERO REPORT

Mayor Nick Batos gave a “State of the Village” update to the ECCL, touching upon the Village’s accomplishments in its first two years. Heading into year three, Estero’s budget surplus is approaching \$8 million.

“I think we met and exceeded all we said we would do,” Batos concluded.

Estero has made good on its promise to operate as “government lite,” with just six full-time employees.

“Whenever we can have part-time or contract services, we’re going to do that,” Batos said.



In the Community Development Department, a full-time compliance officer handles complaints, and a newly hired magistrate conducts hearings on compliance issues.

“We just want to maintain the appearances the community wants,” Batos said.

The Village currently is seeking citizen input on the development of a Comprehensive Plan, as required by state law. The Village also is starting its first major roadway project to improve Estero Parkway. Additionally, landscaping will be enhanced throughout the Village in the coming year. A traffic study is currently underway for the Village’s thoroughfares, as well as a stormwater study. Additionally, planning continues for Estero’s Village Center, Batos reported.

Council members Batos, Bill Ribble and Howard Levitan have no opposition for their seats on the council and will be reelected for districts 1 (Ribble), 2 (Levitan) and 6 (Batos), serving four-year terms. The council will elect a mayor for 2017-18 during its March 22 meeting. Batos encouraged Estero citizens to become involved so the candidate pool may be expanded in the future.

VILLAGE OF ESTERO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (DON ESLICK)

When Estero incorporated, the Village inherited Lee County’s Comprehensive Plan. The Village of Estero is required by Florida law to establish its own Comprehensive Plan by March 2018. This process has begun, and the first community planning workshop was

held Jan. 11. About 125 members of the public attended the workshop at Legacy Church. More opportunities for public input will be forthcoming with a Vision Workshop in February.



Estero's Comprehensive Plan will encompass future land use, transportation, housing, infrastructure, conservation, recreational space, intergovernmental coordination, capital improvements and public school facilities. Currently, data and analysis is being concentrated on future land use planning. This includes establishing land use categories within the Village and creating a Future Land Use Map. Annexation possibilities to the north and east of Estero's boundaries also will be explored.

Transportation considerations include roads, bike/pedestrian pathways, public transit, maintenance, evacuation routes and mobility. Mass transit proposals such as commuter rail also will be discussed as interconnectivity is explored.

The Comprehensive Plan timeline includes a series of community meetings from January through April. Then the plan will go before the Estero Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) and ultimately to Village Council for a vote this fall. A Comprehensive Plan is expected to be adopted by December 2017.

"Through participating in this process, you're going to have an influence on the future of Estero," said Don Eslick, ECCL Interim Chairman. See Eslick's presentation on the Comprehensive Plan [here](#).

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT (PETER CANGIALOSI)

There are currently four residential developments and two mines proposed within the Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource area (DR/GR) just east of Estero's boundaries. A fifth residential development is also proposed very near the DR/GR within Estero's boundaries. Despite opposition from the ECCL and several environmental organizations over the methodology used in a 2016 Mining Study, Lee County's Local Planning Agency (LPA) moved the study forward for adoption by the Lee County Board of County Commissioners. This study indicates new mines will be needed in Lee County by the year 2040.

Troyer Brothers is proposing to mine 907 acres. That application is scheduled to go before the LPA on Feb. 27. Old Corkscrew Plantation has been purchased by King Ranch and proposes to mine 1,837 acres. This application has been deemed insufficient at this time, but developer response is expected by March 21.



Construction has begun at the Place at Corkscrew (formerly Corkscrew Farms), which has been approved for

1,325 homes. The WildBlue development has been approved for 1,100 homes, but construction has not yet begun. Pepperland Ranch is proposing 700 homes, and a zoning hearing has been set for March 23. The application for Verdana (1,400 homes) was found insufficient for zoning, and developer response is expected in March. Corkscrew Crossing (565 homes) will go through the Village of Estero zoning process. Currently, that developer is working to resolve issues with the South Florida Water Management District for its wetlands permit. See the full Environmental Report [here](#), including a map of developments within the DR/GR.

Note: On approximately January 16, 2017, after our meeting, ECCL learned that the property known as Edison Farms, located east of I-75 and Coconut Road and south of the Stoneybrook gated community, was being advertised for sale. The Edison Farms location is shown in the full Environmental Report mentioned above. See the advertisement announcement [here](#).

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT (JIM TATOLES)

Residents of The Vines at Estero Country Club packed the house for the Jan. 10 Design Review Board meeting, which included a presentation by representatives of the Estero Town Center north of Walmart and its proposed Aldi grocery store. Residents voiced concerns about traffic, safety, security, noise and light pollution. Aldi is proposing a new entrance off of U.S. 41 within 90 feet of the existing Walmart entrance.



Estero North Point also presented its internal road and infrastructure plan for 100 acres north of Hertz. The developer has not yet proposed any specific uses for this development, which is within the Village Center.

In other development news, ABC Fine Wines and Spirits is planning to build a new store along U.S. 41 in front of Pelican Sound, immediately east of its present store in the shopping plaza there. Total Wine & More is proposing a store in Coconut Point Mall in the location previously occupied by Sports Authority. View the ECCL Community Development presentation [here](#).

TRANSPORTATION REPORT (BOB KING)

The Village successfully took over road maintenance responsibilities from Lee County on Jan. 7, according to the agreement between Village Council and Lee County Commissioners. A Village of Estero Transportation Study is currently being conducted by Kimley Horn. Lee County also is planning a traffic study of East Corkscrew Road, originally scheduled for completion by July 2017. The ECCL strongly believes zoning approval for all new projects in this area, including Pepperland Ranch, should be postponed until after the results of this traffic study have been made available.

The Interstate 75 interchange at Corkscrew Road is “rapidly becoming a disaster,” added ECCL Transportation Director Bob King. The ECCL is asking FDOT and the Federal Highway Administration to expedite improvements.

FIRE DISTRICT REPORT

The Estero and San Carlos Park fire districts are opposing a Fire District Consolidation bill which has been proposed by Florida Rep. Matt Caldwell. Estero Fire Chief Scott Vanderbrook told the ECCL, this bill, if passed, would result in Estero taxpayers making a \$3.6 million to \$4.1 million “donation” to other fire districts in Lee County. At the same time, Estero Fire would likely lose its favorable ISO rating of “2,” affecting homeowners’ insurance rates.

“Estero would be a donor district to some of the other districts who are not as financially sound,” Vanderbrook said.

Eight years ago, Estero, Bonita Springs and San Carlos Park fire districts commissioned a study on consolidation of fire services in South Lee County. The findings showed that it would not be cost effective; however, the effort resulted in many functions being consolidated, Vanderbrook noted. These include closest-unit response, shared prevention personnel and joint training efforts.

Consolidation among the 17 independent fire districts in Lee County would be unlikely to result in substantial cost savings or operational efficiency, according to an updated “Fire Consolidation Realities Report” released by consultant Brian R. Juntikka on Jan. 1, 2017. See the full, 100-page report [here](#).



In other fire district news, San Carlos Park Fire & Rescue saw an increase of 5.53 percent calls in 2016. A new engine will be put into service in February at Station 51 on Sanibel Boulevard, replacing a 15-year-old engine, reported Chief David Cambareri.

San Carlos Park is offering a free CPR/AED “Heart Saver” class on Feb. 14 in honor of Valentine’s Day. Call (239)267-7525 to register.

FINANCIAL REPORT (BOB LIENESCH)

The ECCL ended 2016 with a cash balance of \$15,279. Major expenses for 2016 were the DR/GR Defense (\$11,443), Communications/PR (\$7,288) and Operating expenses (\$9,946). The deficit for 2016 was \$18,677.

A “break even” budget is currently being finalized for 2017. Invoices for 2017 dues will be sent to each member community’s billing contact. Please respond to Linda Tecco-Roach’s request to confirm contacts for your community.

ECCL OFFICERS

At the meeting, present members elected the following individuals as 2017 officers for the ECCL:

Interim Chairman - Don Eslick

Finance Director - Bob Lienesch

Communications Director - Tom MacDonald

Transportation Director - Bob King

Community Planning Director - Jim Tatoes

Environmental Director - Pete Cangialosi

**Membership Director is expected to be filled at the next meeting. Those interested should contact Don Eslick at doneslick239@gmail.com.*

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