



## Executive Summary

Estero Council of Community Leaders Meeting

March 8, 2013

### **District 3 Lee County Commissioner Larry Kiker**

Commissioner Kiker stated that when he ran for election, he ran on economic growth and one of the things he featured in his talks was the reduction of impact fees.

He stated that Lee County currently is one of the top five most expensive places in Florida regarding impact fees. However, when Commissioner Manning proposed a two-year moratorium, none of the other commissioners would vote in favor of that.

Commissioner Kiker showed the membership a number of graphs, dating back to 2004-5 to the present, relating to the number of permits and impact fees paid during this timeframe. He stated that sustainable growth is about 5,000 permits at a fee of \$6,000 per unit; however the impact fees should be reduced to \$2,000 - \$2,500 until growth increases. The impact fees currently are \$12,500 per unit.

The commissioners instructed staff to work on an ordinance that would reduce the impact fees; the percentage of reduction will be determined at their next meeting at **9:30 a.m., Tuesday, March 12**, at the Old Lee County Court House, Fort Myers.

Commissioner Kiker also stated that the County is running a \$28 million deficit and the Commission needs to start looking at other revenue streams. As an example, Conservation 20/20 has \$70 million, with another \$30 million for maintenance, and those are unrestricted funds. He stated there are other kinds of revenue sources they need to review, including a 1 cent sales tax, in order to balance the budget.

### **Bonita Springs Report – Hon. Steve McIntosh**

Mayor Nelson and several council members went to Tallahassee to talk about a variety of issues including natural resources, making sure we can protect our waterways, as well as gambling. He stated that the contracts with the American tribes are due to expire and there may be some opportunity at that point to change the face of gambling

in Bonita Springs. He also invited everyone to attend the Bonita Blues Festival at Riverside Park this weekend.

### **Estero Fire Rescue District - Chairman Dick Schweers**

Crews will be out March 15, 16 and 17 for the annual Muscular Dystrophy Boot Drive. They're watching several House and Senate bills which may impact the way special districts operate in the state, from pension reform to oversight. The fire season is upon us and we all need to be on guard. A fully operational traffic light at US 41 and the Fire Station was turned down by FDOT but they're supposed to conduct a traffic study. Estero Fire Rescue will continue to fight for a light at that location. He also thanked the ECCL for their position on impact fees.

### **Environment – Phil Douglas**

Signed petitions for the Florida Water and Land Legacy campaign should be in by the end of April as that's when people start heading north. It's important that this amendment gets passed as this will put conservation funds into "restricted funds" which cannot be used for other purposes. Judy Beach, Jane Moran, Marilyn Edwards and Phil Douglas all have obtained over 100 signatures each to date.

Oakbrook Properties, which owns the Martini Glass Parcel between Copperleaf and Lighthouse Bay, plans to build 220 condominiums on that property.

### **Transportation – Jim Boesch**

The right turn from Williams Road onto US 41 was approved this week. Construction on this, as well as the turn into the post office on Three Oaks Parkway, should start later this spring. There is no funding available this year for the right turn from Estero Parkway onto Three Oaks Parkway.

The light fixtures along US 41, from Corkscrew Road to Broadway, will accommodate banners advertising special events in Estero. Each organization wanting to advertise their event will pay for the banners, as well as an installation fee. These banners should be available in 2014.

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

Lee Memorial Health System has filed an application for a permit to build an 80-bed hospital on the 30-plus acres they own behind the Bonita Community Health Center, south of Coconut Road. The full version of the application has to be filed before April 10, with the decision being made in June. The zoning currently allows a 24/7 ER; it will take about 9 months to rezone this property. If this hospital is approved in June,

construction should start in 2015, with completion sometime in 2016. The hospital will be expandable in the future to 200 rooms.

The ECCL will be providing a letter of support for this hospital for residents to sign. The letter will be available on the Brooks Concerned Citizens web site at [www.brooksconcernedcitizens.com](http://www.brooksconcernedcitizens.com).

The Estero Community Improvement Foundation has been working with the Conservancy of Southwest Florida's Foundation and with the Southwest Florida Community Foundation to allow people to take part of their estate and allocate it to the serve the local area. The Conservancy has provided language that tells how the money can be allocated and how it could be used, so that individuals could control how that money is spent.

The Economic Steering Committee is meeting next week with a representative of JumpStart, which is an entrepreneurial entity interested in starting a group in our area. In addition, there is a meeting scheduled with a representative of the Angel Fund, which is an investment organization for people interested in new business start-ups. Anyone interested in joining this committee is welcome.

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

The ECCL is working together with the Estero Community Planning Panel (ECP) updating the Estero Comprehensive Plan. The ECCL has identified a consultant who is experienced with Florida land use and specializes in incentive development. It is anticipated that this consultant will provide the ECCL with state of the art planning for incentivizing commercially zoned properties in Estero which have not yet been built.

Signage issues: Some temporary signage has gotten out of hand. This could be because some businesses may not be aware of the strict signage regulations in Estero. We're looking for a volunteer to visit those businesses to encourage them to remove the offensive signs; otherwise, these businesses will be reported to the County for enforcement. This has been discussed with the Estero Chamber of Commerce and the local real estate organizations.

### **Estero Community Planning Panel – Jack Lienesch**

The ECP and Estero Design Review Committee will be awarding Lowe's with the David Graham Award for Excellence in Development on Friday, March 15, as part of the spring meeting of the southwest Florida Urban Land Institute Program.

### **Chairman – Nick Batos**

Congratulations to John Goodrich who has been appointed by Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass to the special airport management committee. This is one of the most prestigious committees in Lee County and we're thankful he's taken on this position.

Impact Fees: The commissioners will be making a decision at their meeting on **Tuesday, March 12**. Anyone interested in stating their position on this issue should attend this meeting. The commissioners are looking at other sources of funding. While we can't continue to spend beyond our means, impact fees are specifically to pay for infrastructure caused by growth. Looking at other sources invariably means us; this would be either a sales tax or increased gas taxes or ad valorem taxes. Other sources means they're going to shift the expense from the builders, which are causing the growth, to the people who are living here and have already paid for impact fees. Our efforts to get letters sent through the Brooks Concerned Citizens' web site resulted in 700 emails to the commissioners on this issue.

The next meeting will be **Friday, April 12, 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**