

Executive Summary
Estero Council of Community Leaders Meeting
October 12, 2012

Motions

A motion was made and passed to appoint Bob Lienesch ECCL Treasurer, starting October 12, 2012. Chris Smith was presented a plaque acknowledging his seven years of service as Treasurer.

A motion was made and passed to have the ECCL sign a resolution in Ray Judah's honor. Nick Batos notified the membership that the ECCL Board had voted to have John Goodrich serve as the ECCL Vice President.

Bonita Springs Report – Hon. Steve McIntosh

The city of Bonita Springs has balanced their budget for the fifth year without a millage tax rate increase. There are over 100 volunteers working with the city, which helps keep costs down. St. Mathew's House is still an issue; a plan needs to be put in place to address homeless shelters.

Referendum Offering Slot Machine Gaming

Izzy Havenick, Naples-Ft. Myers Greyhound Racing & Poker, stated that Florida is the fourth largest gaming state in the country. He pointed out that gaming already is in place with the Florida Lottery, casinos in mall arcades and internet gambling and that Lee County Sheriff Scott supports the referendum. He also spoke about the economic impact of 500 full-time jobs which would be created as a result of gaming at his site.

Mark Andrews, "Casino No" stated that when slots come to town, everything changes. He referred to several studies, including a Harvard Medical School study, which addressed the negative side of gambling due to addictive personalities. He also stated that the Florida Association of Sheriffs is opposed to slot machine gaming.

If the referendum should pass in Lee County, it will go to the state Legislature for their action.

Estero Fire Rescue

Chief Scott reminded members that Daylight Saving Time ends on November 4. That is the time residents should change smoke detector batteries, as well as change times on their clocks. If residents have high ceilings and can't reach the smoke detectors, Estero Fire Rescue will change the batteries. For further information, go to <http://esterofire.org/>.

ECCL Bylaws

Roger Strelow addressed some of the changes under consideration to the ECCL bylaws. There will now be a larger group of board members instead of having two vice chairs; there will be a monthly “board meeting” to prepare agenda items for the monthly “member meeting”, and further amendments will require a vote by the membership. ECCL members were asked to email Roger any additional suggested changes, which will be brought back to the membership next month.

New ECCL Structure

John Goodrich distributed the revised ECCL organization chart and a list of County/Metropolitan Planning Organization agencies and committees in which the ECCL attempts to have representation; these were also linked in the meeting’s agenda. He asked Estero residents to contact him at johnbarbgoodrich@comcast.net if they are interested in serving on any of these committees.

Communications

Marilyn Edwards stated there are several approaches being taken to enhance communications. The first is the Executive Summary, which is emailed to ECCL representatives and those receiving the Estero Development Report. Representatives were asked to forward these summaries to their boards and others to help create a better understanding of the ECCL.

The second approach will be a new web page called “Estero Today”. This web page will feature the most current information about the ECCL and will allow for a two-way dialogue with residents. This will be described in more detail at a future meeting.

The ECCL website will be addressed in the future to make it more user-friendly.

News releases are issued for each of the ECCL meetings, as well as special projects.

Florida Water & Land Legacy Constitutional Amendment Petition Drive

Phil Douglas described this drive by a coalition of the state’s leading conservation organizations including the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, Audubon Florida, and Florida Wildlife Federation. They are launching a major constitutional amendment campaign for the November 2014 ballot.

This amendment would assure adequate funding dedicated solely to restoring critical natural areas like the Everglades and protecting Florida’s waters and lands. It would direct one-third of existing state revenues from real estate transactions (“doc stamps”) to fund restoration and conservation projects in Florida’s most critical water protection areas and lands.

Phil pointed out that this would be one of the ways we can be assured Edison Farms is protected.

One million signatures are required for this amendment to be placed on the ballot. Phil is asking for volunteers from each community to help in this petition drive. Contact Phil at pdindy@comcast.net.

Transportation Committee

Jim Boesch stated the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) approved \$1.2 million for lighting on US 41 from Corkscrew Road to San Carlos Blvd. A request also has been made for historic lighting for the Estero historic district, from Broadway south to Corkscrew Road. This lighting would be at an additional cost. There will be a meeting on Nov. 5 to review these costs.

On November 8, the FDOT Regional Director will conduct a follow-up meeting at the Park regarding a full working traffic light at US 41 and Sweetwater Ranch Road. Residents are welcome to attend.

Economic Development Committee

Bob Lienesch reported that the Bonita Springs Estero Economic Development Council supports the referendum for slots machine gaming.

ECCL Community Defense Fund

Nick Batos stated that all Estero communities should be contributing to a reserve fund that will provide resources to overcome threats to the quality of life and/or property values in all of our communities. Each community is asked to budget and escrow up to \$10 for each homeowner. Each "Community Defense Fund" will be controlled by the community's governing Board.

These defense funds may be spent only upon approval of an ECCL request by a majority vote of the Board and are for expenses of professionals (attorneys, planners, architects and engineers, consultants, scientists and other expert witnesses). The ECCL and its members will continue to support each effort on a voluntary basis.

For more information about the ECCL, go to <http://esterofl.org>.