

The ECCL Report: October 2017

Executive Summary: 164th meeting of the Estero Council of Community Leaders

The ECCL membership passed two resolutions during the October meeting to address concerns about traffic and safety along east Corkscrew Road. The first urges Village Council to fund a study to determine the safest, most cost effective and timely method to improve traffic conditions on east Corkscrew Road within the Village's boundaries. The second urges the Lee County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to delay approval of development proposals for properties along and impacting Corkscrew Road in the Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource area (DR/GR) until completion of the county's study on Corkscrew Road traffic, environmental issues and water resources. Completion of this study has been delayed, but the County has continued to approve new developments along this corridor.

The ECCL also is asking its membership to send letters to the Florida Greenways and Trails (FGAT) system in support of the Bonita-Estero Trail being restored as a Priority Trail. Additionally, the ECCL is asking members to circulate and sign petitions that, if sufficient in number, would permit the voters of Lee County to vote on a proposal in the 2018 General Election that would change the election of County Commissioners from partisan to non-partisan races.

The next ECCL meeting will be Friday, Nov. 10 , at 10 a.m. at South County Regional Library, 21100 Three Oaks Parkway.

VILLAGE REPORT - Vice Mayor Bill Ribble

The Village's inaugural Veterans Day celebration will be Nov. 11 at 11:30 a.m. at Estero Community Park. Earlier that day, there will be a breakfast at the Elks Club on Coconut Road starting at 8 a.m. (\$10, or free for veterans) with remarks by Councilman Nick Batos, Bonita Springs Mayor Peter Simmons and other dignitaries. The Village's celebration includes complimentary hotdogs and hamburgers.



Vice Mayor Ribble reminded the ECCL of its value to the Village as a clearinghouse for ideas and partner in communications, among other core values. He also invited ECCL members to contact him if they are interested in becoming mentors with FGCU's Entrepreneurship Program. To view Bill Ribble's presentation, [click here](#).

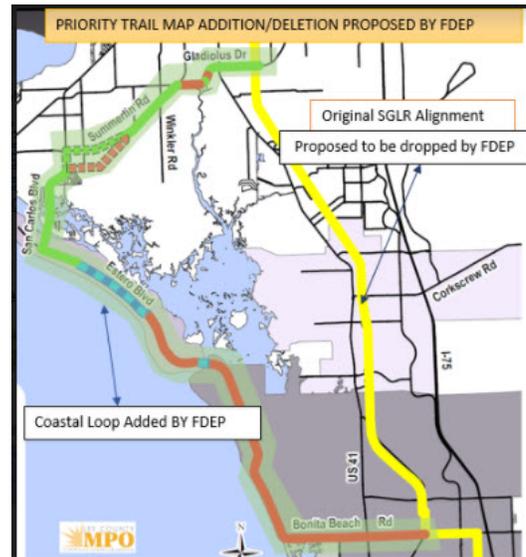
SUN TRAIL/ RAIL CORRIDOR - Nick Batos & Peter O’Flynn

The Florida SUNTrail Path Network was the subject of the first joint meeting between the Estero and Bonita Springs councils. This statewide system has been designed with regional connectors from coast to coast and throughout the state. The Florida legislature has committed about \$100 million to this system of bike and walking trails. The Gulf Coast connector runs from St. Petersburg to Naples. The Seminole Gulf Railway right of way could be used to connect Estero to this massive trail system.

“The councils collaboratively decided this should be a priority,” stated Bonita Councilman Peter O’Flynn.

However, the state has now made the Coastal Loop, which runs along Fort Myers Beach down to the Bonita Beach area, the main Gulf Coast connector. The Bonita-Estero Trail, which runs along the rail corridor through Estero, has been downgraded from a priority trail to an “opportunity trail.” The Coastal Loop bypasses Estero.

The ECCL is asking its members to send a letter to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Office of Greenways and Trails urging the state to restore the Bonita-Estero Trail to priority status. More information and a sample letter may be [found here](#).



EAST CORKSCREW ROAD - Bob King

ECCL Transportation Committee Chair Bob King presented information regarding interim measures to improve the safety and efficiency of traffic on east Corkscrew Road. The Village’s recent traffic study by Kimley Horn & Associates identified Corkscrew Road from Ben Hill Griffin Parkway east to the Village’s boundary as currently operating at 80-100 percent capacity during the p.m. peak traffic hour. Adding to future traffic problems, Lee County has recently approved construction of 2,325 dwelling units on east Corkscrew Road, in addition to 660 currently under construction in Corkscrew Shores. The county is reviewing applications for an additional 2,125 dwelling units just east of the Village. A proposed road widening included in the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan is not anticipated to be funded until 2026 at the earliest.

The ECCL voted to urge Village Council through resolution to commission a study to determine the safest and most cost effective method to improve safety and traffic on east Corkscrew Road within the Village’s boundaries. According to ECCL research, roundabouts could provide traffic calming at a cost much less than road widening and on a timetable much sooner than 9-14 years. The ECCL resolution may be [viewed here](#).

LEE COUNTY CORKSCREW ROAD STUDY - Pete Cangialosi

The ECCL also passed a resolution urging the Lee County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to not approve any more developments located along and impacting Corkscrew Road in the DRGR area until such time as the County's comprehensive traffic, environmental, natural resource and wildlife study (*Environmental Enhancement and Preservation Communities Overlay Study*), conducted by AIM Engineering, has been completed, reviewed and evaluated by all parties.

A public presentation of study findings was scheduled for July but was canceled. The resolution also asks that the County provide preliminary results of the AIM Engineering study and schedule a public workshop.

The County has approved or is approving new developments along this corridor as listed below:

- Wild Blue - 1,100 units
- Place at Corkscrew - 1,325 units
- Pepperland Ranch - 700 units
- Verdana - 1,460 units
- Troyer Brothers Mine - 1,804 acres added to the Future Limerock Overlay; the landowner is currently seeking to mine 908 acres, potentially generating more than 1,000 truck trips per day.

The ECCL is urging the BOCC to postpone development review activities in this area, and to immediately reveal the findings of the AIM Engineering study to the public so that the impact on the affected communities can be taken into account. "We're trying to say, 'Slow down and review your study so you will have the knowledge you need to make good decisions before you act,'" said ECCL Environmental Committee Chair Pete Cangialosi. The resolution may be [viewed here](#).

HEALTHCARE COMMITTEE - Don Eslick

The ECCL is revitalizing its Healthcare Committee. As a founding member of the Healthy Lee Steering Committee, the ECCL needs to help the public learn more about the healthcare needs of our area identified in Lee Health's 2017 Community Health Needs Assessment and to help develop programs to address those needs. Secondly, the ECCL Healthcare Committee aims to support the Lee Health Coconut Point facility, now under construction, and to convince the State that an 80-bed hospital tower should be added in the future. View the Healthcare Committee [presentation here](#).

ESTERO ECONOMIC EXCELLENCE OUTREACH COUNCIL - Vince Modarelli

The ECCL has a history as a catalyst for economic development initiatives with its involvement in forming the Bonita Springs Estero Economic Development Council (BSEEDC) and the Catalyst Club with Lee County Economic Development Council (LCEDC). The newest initiative is the Estero Economic Excellence Outreach Council (EEEOC). Its mission is to engage talented and experienced businesspersons as mentors for students. The EEEOC plans to focus on three initiatives:

- Mentor support with the FGCU Institute for Entrepreneurship
- Elementary and secondary student career counseling and mentorship in partnership with the Lee County School District
- Village Center vision development and implementation in partnership with the Village of Estero

An informational presentation may be [viewed here.](#)

LEE VOTER FREEDOM - Dick Schweers & Jim Shields

The Estero Candidate Screening Committee has voted to support the Lee Voter Freedom initiative to circulate petitions necessary to put a referendum on the November 2018 ballot that, if approved by the voters, would change the election of Lee County Commissioners from partisan races to nonpartisan contests. This would make these elections nonpartisan like our Village Council, the Lee County School Board and the five other Lee County municipal elections. It is not a move by any political party. This would open the primary elections to all 430,000 registered voters in Lee County, up from the 180,000 now typically permitted to vote in partisan races. Lee Voter Freedom needs to collect 36,000 petitions by the end of February in order to put a referendum on the ballot, and the ECCL is committed to help this effort. Find more information and download the petition at [http://leevoterfreedom.com.](http://leevoterfreedom.com)



ESTERO FIRE RESCUE - Chief Scott Vanderbrook

In its 2017-18 budget, the Estero Fire Rescue District passed a millage rate of 2.13, a decrease from last year's rate of 2.15. The fire service has been active in Hurricane Irma cleanup efforts and started clearing Three Oaks Parkway of debris with heavy equipment immediately after the storm. All Estero fire stations sustained some damage, and repairs are underway. Flu shots are now available to Estero citizens at the Three Oaks Parkway station. EFR celebrated Commissioner Dick Schweers last month for his 20 years of service on the EFR board.

COMMUNITY PLANNING - Jim Tatooles

A self-storage facility is being finished along U.S. 41 in front of Fountain Lakes, and a medical building is near completion in front of Walmart. The ECCL is studying how other communities have developed successful town centers and is working with the Village to plan Estero's future town center. A chart of developments currently under review may be [viewed here](#). Current maps of developments under construction, developments under review, large vacant properties and more can be found on the EsteroToday.com [Community Planning page](#).



ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT - Pete Cangioli



A new mine is being proposed along east Corkscrew Road immediately east of the proposed Troyer Brothers mine. Old Corkscrew Plantation is requesting to rezone 4,205 acres to allow mining operation at a maximum depth of 110 feet. Blasting is proposed as part of the development activity. A zoning examiner hearing has been tentatively scheduled for Dec. 6. Anyone wishing to testify before the BOCC must speak at the zoning examiner hearing first.

In other news, Lee County has agreed to purchase the 3,922-acre Edison Farms property for \$42.5 million through its Conservation 20/20 Program. The deal must close by Dec. 28.

To view current Environmental Projects, [click here](#). *The next Environmental Committee meeting will be Oct. 18 at 1 p.m. at FineMark Bank.*

TRANSPORTATION - Bob King

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) representatives recently presented plans to the Village Council for interim improvements at the Interstate 75 interchange with Corkscrew Road. This includes adding an extra turn lane under the bridge for both northbound and southbound traffic. Additionally, a seven-foot, buffered bike lane will be built under the existing bridge. This \$4.9 million project is expected to be completed by June 2019. The interim improvements should bring the interchange to an acceptable level of service through 2029. To view current Transportation projects, [click here](#).

The next Transportation Committee meeting will be Oct. 19 at 9:30 a.m. at FineMark Bank.

ECCL BUDGET BALANCING - Jim Shields

Since 2012, membership dues have increased just one time. There is currently a need for greater resources. A balanced budget for 2018 requires increasing dues. The ECCL has reduced many controllable expenses and is pursuing other revenue sources. However, the increasing costs of our vastly improved communications necessitates dues increases in 2018 ranging from \$50 to \$100 per year, depending on how many doors are in each community. To see a chart of 2018 membership dues, [click here](#).

FINANCIAL REPORT - Bob Lienesch

Because last month's meeting was cancelled, this report covers finances for both August and September. Income includes \$1,000 from Lee Health for their 2017 Membership Dues. (As previously reported, all 32 dues-paying communities have paid their 2017 dues).

Expenses totaled \$3,195, mostly for our website and our electronic communications. Also included are professional fees for the creation of GIS maps for a better understanding of some critical issues in Estero. For the two months, we incurred a net expense of \$2,194.

On a year-to-date basis, we have income of \$93. That positive result will turn negative in the future months until we begin receiving dues payments for next year. We have \$15,372 in the bank at the end of September which is currently adequate for our needs. To view the ECCL Financial Report, [click here](#).