

JANUARY ECCL REPORT

The annual meeting of the Estero Council of Community Leaders took place in the Historic Art Hall of the Koreshan State Historic Site on January 8 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Due to a full agenda with several speakers, fire reports were not given.

Councilman Jim Boesch gave the village report.

Major transportation problems continue:

- On Corkscrew Road east of the overpass;
- The I-75 Intersection and its entrances and exits;
- Needed sidewalks on Estero Parkway, particularly with the arrival of Walmart;
- Speed limit reduction from 55 to 50 on US 41; and
- LED lights on US 41 from San Carlos Park to south of Coconut Road.

Another of Boesch's concerns is protecting the DR/GR (i.e., the water supply for the county) now that CR 951 is off the recently adopted MPO 2040 Plan.

Commissioner John Manning was instrumental in getting CR 951 out of the 2040 Plan. A thank-you meet and greet is planned Jan. 29 from 5 to 7 p.m. at Bonita Elks and the public is invited and encouraged to attend.

The Village Staff will begin to occupy the newly renovated Village Hall at 9401 Corkscrew Palms Circle about March 1st.

ECCL officers were elected.

As is customary, the ECCL's existing Board Members serve as the nominating committee for the annual election of officers. They recently met and all four of the sitting



A near-capacity crowd filled the Historic Art Hall at the Koreshan State Historic Site Jan. 8.

Board Members agreed to continue for another year if elected by the membership at that same meeting, with Don Eslick continuing as Interim Chairman until another is willing to serve in his place. Two positions are vacant: Transportation Director and Membership Director. Continuing in their positions are Eslick, Director Emeritus; Bob Lienesch, Finance Director; Pete Cangialosi, Environmental Director; and Jim Tatooles, Community Planning Director.

Bob King, president of the Bella Terra's homeowner's association, expressed interest in becoming the ECCL Transportation Director. He is coming to the end of his term as HOA president and has worked on plenty of local transportation issues for Estero. Bob will meet with the Board in two weeks where Bob's nomination will be discussed.

Don Eslick explained that in lieu of a Communications Director, the ECCL had hired a media and public relations professional, Dayna Harpster, APR, on a part-time basis to head publicity efforts.

There being no nominations from the floor, Beverly MacNellis moved and John Wood seconded a motion to accept the slate of directors as nominated. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of the protection and cleanup of the Estero River.

April Olson of the Conservancy of Southwest Florida gave a Power Point presentation on the status of the river and how it can be safeguarded. [Click here to see the presentation.](#)

Genelle Grant of Happehatchee stressed that public access to the river is available on the spiritual center's property and it is committed to doing everything it can to keep it public and healthy.

The ECCL Effort to Defend the Density Reduction/ Groundwater Resource (DR/GR) Area

Don Eslick summarized the ECCL's involvement over the past decade to protect the Estero community from extensive mining along Corkscrew Road and its involvement in the County's recent update of the Comprehensive Plan for the DR/GR area.

Bill Spikowski, one of the County's DR/GR planning consultants, gave a Power Point Presentation on the plan and its proposed impact on the County's water supply, wildlife protection, environment and infrastructure needs. He showed maps of panther habitat, mines, water wells, flow ways and other features in the area of the DR/GR (created 25 years ago to protect drinking water, to protect against flooding, and to keep our rivers, streams and Estero Bay cleaner).

Ralf Brookes, the Lawyer for the ECCL and RGMC, summarized the purpose of the organizations' lawsuit.

As part of the state Growth Management Act of 1985, all counties and municipalities are required to adopt comprehensive plans. Subsequently, all development approvals in those jurisdictions must be consistent with their Comprehensive Plans. The ECCL and RGMC say that is not happening with recent Lee County's DR/GR development approvals. The lawsuit is now in the discovery phase where information is exchanged and issues brought out.

Matthew Schwartz, Executive Director of the South Florida Wildlands Association, gave a presentation on the impact on wildlife in the area.

The entire breeding population of panthers lives in Southwest Florida, with only 100 to 180 remaining. Forty-one (41) died this year, 30 of them by road kill. Further development in this area threatens the species.

Joseph Cameratta addressed the group.

The ECCL provided Joseph Cameratta, the developer of the proposed Corkscrew Farms development, and his staff time to describe all the plans he has developed for the project site in order to make it environmentally friendly.

Note: The ECCL has never questioned the developer's on-site efforts but initiated the lawsuit against Lee County because it has approved this development without ensuring that all the provisions of the DR/GR Comprehensive Plan are being satisfied throughout the DR/GR area.

Following the meeting, optional tours of the Koreshan Historic Site were conducted.

The ECCL was pleased to meet in this beautiful and historic site and for the presence and welcome of staff, including Manager Rick Argo.

Prepared by Dayna Harpster

Media and communications consultant to the ECCL

239-425-5124/ecclpr@gmail.com@gmail.com