



ECCL Report

Summary of Nov. 20, 2015 meeting

Estero Community Park, 1 to 3 p.m.

Membership:

Membership Chairperson Linda Tecco-Roach asked the community reps and alternates at each meeting to indicate if they are representatives or alternates or hold some other position. She also asked them to check that their contact information is up to date. Finally she announced that tent cards have been made for each community's representative and alternate and asked them to pick them up and place them on the table in front of their seats at all future meetings.

Following up on last month's discussion about how community representatives inform their neighborhoods: Two communities brought their newsletters in which they publish information from ECCL meetings. Reps should see or talk to Linda if they want ideas on how to communicate with their communities.

A representative of the Villages of Country Creek asked if an ECCL representative could speak at the community's annual meeting. Don Eslick reminded all that it's an obligation of the ECCL to be responsive to members and a speaker would be sent to any community wanting to learn more about the ECCL and its activities.

Village Council report: Council member Katy Errington

Ms. Errington introduced herself and told members some of her background. Loss of her son and her brother and the illness of her mother prompted her activism in different ways, and when she moved to Florida, she found her voice again, locally.

She is concerned about historic preservation, health care, access to the Estero River and other matters; "my computer does not stop pinging with people e-mailing me about fracking," she said. State Rep. Ray Rodrigues will be at the Village



Council meeting Monday (Nov. 23) at 10 a.m. to talk about the bill he's co-sponsoring that would not allow local governments to ban this type of petroleum and natural gas mining but rather leave those decisions to the state.

Village Manager: Steve Sarkozy

Sarkozy greeted the group and said, "My goal is to improve on what is already a success story" in Estero.

Estero Fire & Rescue: Dick Schweers

Parking outside the District Administration building is scant during meetings. Please don't block fire engines or ambulances, which make wide turns. The ordinance mandating new one- and two-story buildings to have new sprinkler systems doesn't take effect now until March 31.

San Carlos fire: No report.

Transportation: Don Eslick

Three items to note:

1. At the MPO meeting that morning, the Corkscrew-to-Alico proposed segment of CR951 was removed from the 2040 needs plan, a tentative but significant victory. A final vote will be taken at the MPO meeting Dec. 18, so it is important that we keep the pressure on.
2. The formerly removed plan to extend Three Oaks Parkway from Alico to Daniels was added back by the MPO Board that morning as well, also pending a Dec. 18 vote. Eslick urged all to thank the MPO board members for this, but is concerned that the 2040 Financially Feasible plan may be underfunded.
3. Attempts to ensure funding for the planning and design of the Corkscrew Road-I-75 Interchange in the FDOT Tentative Five-Year Work Plan may be working. A letter from the local FDOT office acknowledges receipt of many emails sent by the ECCL about this. As a result FDOT has begun to study the alternative approaches for improving this interchange so it can then begin to plan and design the project. A small step in the right direction.

DISCUSSION: TRANSPORTATION

JJ Basso, Grandezza: The community will be going to the Lee County Commission to urge Wild Blue to install a stoplight right away. He would like to hear a consensus among the involved communities. The County paid \$21.5 million in 2005 for the right-of-way for the 951 extension through the Grandezza community and at least one commissioner is holding out for that price today.

Ed Weil, Rookery Point: The community is very concerned about Estero Parkway. "It's difficult to get in and out of our place alive." Lots and lots of development in recent years and accidents and speeding are way up.

Doug Saxton, Cycling and Pedestrian concerns: Saxton screened a presentation outlining the benefits of a joint Bonita Springs-Estero bike-ped trail in the CSX right of way. He compared it to the Pinellas Trail in the Tampa area and the bike-and-walk-friendly areas of other cities.

FGCU is completing an inventory of all road and roadway landscaping in Estero for the Village. This project should be presented to the Village Council in January with public hearings and adoption to follow.

Answering a question about what to do about overgrown sidewalks, Saxton said anyone can and should go to the Lee County transportation website (www.leegov.com/dot), click on “Request for Action” on the left and fill out the form. This of course pertains to sidewalks that are the county’s responsibility.

Community Planning: Jim Tatooles

Eslick read a report from Tatooles, who was absent. In it, he urged preservation and improved access to the Estero River as a top priority and also efforts now underway to support the Estero arts community. Finally he described the ECCL’s joint efforts with several other Estero organizations to open up and increase community use of the Koreshan State Historic Site.

ECCL representative to the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee: Bob Lienesch

There have been successes already, said Lienesch, who thanked councilwoman Errington for her perseverance in getting this group going. Lee County Natural Resources staff members have toured the Estero segment of the Estero River and the South Florida Water Management District has agreed to review its condition. It hasn’t been cleaned up since 2000. The Conservancy is also helping with this project. The Happehatchee Center is forming a river task force. The Great Calusa Blueway has officially been extended to Happehatchee Center.

CONSERVATION 2020 LANDS: Nicole Johnson, Conservancy of Southwest Florida

The proposed new high school in south Lee County is still without a site. Recently, Lee County School Board and the Board of County Commissioners began entertaining the possibility of using a site in Pine Lake Preserve, which is in the Bonita Springs DRGR area. Using conservation land for a purpose not specified was considered a bad idea by everyone. Phil Douglas of Lighthouse Bay suggested the ECCL pass a resolution about this. JJ Basso moved, and Jerry Masters seconded, a motion to draw up a resolution supporting finding a Bonita Springs site for a new high school but opposing consideration of conservation lands for this purpose. The motion passed unanimously. Johnson and newly hired media and communications consultant Dayna Harpster will work to draft the resolution. Harpster was then introduced.

Finance: Bob Lienesch

Lienesch presented his report, noting that ECCL funds balance is about \$37,000. All but one community has paid 2015 dues.

Due to time constraints, discussion of the Emerging Role of the ECCL in light of village incorporation was tabled until the next meeting.

Next meeting: Dec. 14, 10 a.m. to noon at Estero Community Park.

Prepared by Dayna Harpster

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