

FEBRUARY ECCL REPORT

MEETING 2-12-16 at the Estero Community Park, 10 a.m. to noon

MEMBERSHIP: Welcome to new ECCL member, the Estero Art League. Representing the league at the meeting was Glenna Rohrback.

VILLAGE REPORT, COUNCILMAN BILL RIBBLE: Transportation issues continue to be one of the Village's top concerns. Council is hoping the Village can partner with the County to solve some of these issues, including road repairs and sidewalk placement.

The Needs Assessment Survey undertaken by the ECIF will continue to be examined.

Some residents have been asking about lowering the tax rate from .84 percent. That will be looked at when council starts the budget process in June.

Regarding the future Village Center: A meeting, called a peer review, will be held on March 8th, intended to bring together all parties, from property owners and developers to Village planners and Estero citizens. As a result of recent Village Council decisions the Village's planners Spikowski and Harry will be involved and another consultant will be providing the Village with another opinion.

Thanks to Estero Fire Rescue for hosting the Village in its building while new Village headquarters are being prepared. The community can expect to visit the new Village administration facilities after March 1st at 9401 Corkscrew Palms Circle.

Many Estero communities are concerned about WCI's plans to build four additional high-rises on land immediately adjacent to Estero Bay in Raptor Bay and recently annexed into Bonita Springs. The opposition is based upon the traffic increase on Coconut Road, the environmental sensitivity of the site and increased time that will be needed for storm evacuation.

VICKI OLSON spoke as organizer of the Coconut Road West Neighborhood Coalition, the residents living in the communities opposed to WCI's proposal.

MOTION: A motion was made by Phil Douglas and seconded by JJ Basso to support the efforts of the Village of Estero to protect its communities against the impact of intensive development on the north side of west Coconut Road recently annexed by the City of Bonita Springs. The motion passed unanimously.

ESTERO FIRE RESCUE: Chief Scott Vanderbrook reported that the District's call volume was its highest on record in January, an 11 percent increase since 2015. Corkscrew



Vicki Olson of the Coconut Road West Neighborhood Coalition addresses the ECCL.

Farms or any development out east will eventually necessitate building a new fire station to serve the area. Fire Rescue's five-year plan involves acquiring property in that area, erecting a structure to hold equipment, and then putting up a real building when it becomes necessary. Presumably impact fees from development would help fund it.

FINANCE: As of the end of January: Legal defense in January cost \$3,800; normal operating expenses, \$1,900; end of the month cash, \$28,000. Dues invoices for the year were just sent. Seven communities already paid, though, and that is appreciated.

NEW TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR BOB KING: Bob Lienesch made a motion and Jim Dodge seconded it to elect Bob King to the vacant post of ECCL Transportation Director. The motion passed unanimously.

CONSERVATION 2020: Rae Ann Wessel of the Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation summarized the 20-year history and status of the program. More information is available at www.leegov.com/conservation2020. This is important because the Lee County Board of County Commissioners would soon debate putting a referendum on continuation of the program on the November General Election ballot. The program uses tax money to buy environmentally sensitive land so it is conserved rather than developed.



Rae Ann Wessel of the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation gives an overview of the Conservation 2020 program to ECCL members.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Community Planning Director Jim Tatooles reported on a recent report by a corporate site selection firm that found Estero is among the most attractive corporate locations in the nation. The Village Council recently approved its first development application, a Volunteers of America (VOA) senior residential project on 23 acres on the north side of Corkscrew Road near Sandy Lane. The next step for the development is the Design Review Board. Other major developments currently under construction are: Autumn Leaves, a memory care facility; Courts of Estero, a rental community; The Reef, a student housing facility; a Marriott Suites extended stay hotel; a City Mattress store; and a couple small commercial buildings where First Watch is across street from Coconut Point.

IMPORTANT DATES UPCOMING:

Feb. 25, 6 to 8 p.m., County Charter Review Committee Hearing at the Estero Community Park. Two proposed changes are up for review. One involves the composition of the Lee County Board of County Commissioners. Amendments proposed:

1. The current BOCC arrangement in which the five commissioners are elected countywide would be replaced with a commission consisting of two members elected at large, countywide, and five who are elected by voters in their own districts.
2. Charter Review Committee members could send amendments directly to voters if 12 members vote to do so. If nine members or more agree but fewer than 12, the amendment would go to the BOCC to determine whether or not to pass it along for a vote.

Feb. 29, 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Lee Memorial Health System Healthy Life Center at Coconut Point, a lunch and tour for ECCL community representatives and alternates to learn what programs the center can bring into the neighborhoods.

The ECCL is partnering with Healthways, the managers of the Blue Zones project. One facet of the Blue Zones project is to encourage restaurants and clubs to prepare, serve and promote healthful food choices. The ECCL is also working with the chef-educator at Estero High School on this project. ECCL also continues to support LMHS's Healthy Lee project.



ECCL representatives and alternates at the Estero Community Park on Feb. 12

CHAIRMAN DON ESLICK gave an update on the DR/GR protection lawsuit. As this changes frequently, check www.esterotoday.com for developments.

KEVIN HILL of the Corkscrew Rural Residents Association (CRRA) spoke about the joint ECCL/ CRRA efforts to oppose many additional mines along east Corkscrew Road in the DR/GR. He summarized his neighbors' current view as follows: "Most of us are very glad that the ECCL is holding the county's feet to the fire to make sure that the Comprehensive Plan is followed. It's been a long struggle to keep mining from the area and to change the point of view that agriculture is a 'placeholder' for future development."

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Programs upcoming include:

March 5, grand opening of the Estero Creek Schoolhouse of 1904, by the Estero Historical Society. The public is invited.

March 25, tentative date for ECCL "All Work and No Play" party at Angelina's. Stay tuned for more information.

April 23, Tea at Shadow Wood.

The meeting was adjourned at noon.