



Estero Development Report

Volume 12, Number 10, Issued September 2013

Produced by the Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL)

Calendar

Mon., Sept. 2	Incorporation Referendum	Feasibility Study Submitted to Legislature
Mon., Sept. 2	Annexation Referendum	Bonita Springs mails notice To annexation voters
Wed., Sept 4, 9 a.m.	Miromar Lakes DRI Rezoning Hearing before Lee County Hearing Examiner	Community Development Bldg., 1500 Monroe, Ft. Myers
Wed, Sept. 4, 5:05 p.m.	BOCC First Budget Hearing	Old Lee Cty. Courthouse Downtown Ft. Myers
Tues., Sept.10, 5 p.m.	Estero Fire Rescue Monthly Board Meeting	District Headquarters, Three Oaks Parkway
Wed., Sept. 11, 5 p.m.	Estero Design Review Committee Meeting	Estero Community Park
Fri., Sept 13, 10 a.m.	ECCL Monthly Members' Meeting, Joe Mazurkiewicz, Jr., Guest Speaker	Estero Community Park
Mon., Sept. 16, 5 p.m.	Estero Community Planning Panel	Estero Community Park
Wed., Sept 18, 5:05 p.m.	BOCC Final Budget Hearing	Old Lee Cty. Courthouse Downtown Ft. Myers
Fri., Sept. 20, 9 a.m.	Lee County MPO	Cape Coral City Council

		Chambers, 1015 Cultural Park Blvd., Cape Coral
Wed., Oct. 2, 5:30 p.m.	Bonita Springs Annexation Referendum	First reading of ordinance authorizing Pelican Landing Referendum
Fri., Oct. 11, 10 a.m.	ECCL Monthly Members' Meeting	Estero Community Park
Wed., Oct. 16, 9 a.m.	Bonita Springs Annexation	Final reading of ordinance Authorizing Pelican Landing Referendum

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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Incorporation Referendum Progress

The Feasibility Study has been successfully completed by Joe Mazurkiewicz, Jr. Ph.D., President of BJM Consulting, Inc. The study, along with the Village of Estero Charter, was presented to the State Legislature on September 2, 2013.

The Feasibility Study clearly shows that, once incorporated, a Village of Estero would develop a significant reserve over the first five years. That is based on a comparison of conservative revenue estimates versus operating expenses. Estero residents benefit from the fact that a

larger proportion of the Estero property tax base is commercial, not residential, property than other municipalities.

It would be up to the elected officials of Estero to decide what to do with the reserve funds, which could include a number of options such as lowering the property taxes, establishing higher levels of service or allowing the reserve to remain as a safety net for the community's future (the full study and fact sheet are on the ECCL web site at www.esterofl.org).

The charter was prepared by Burt Saunders of Gray/Robinson Law Firm. It describes the form of government of the proposed Village of Estero, which is the Council-Manager form, consisting of seven council members elected from seven districts. The Council would then appoint a Village Manager to be the chief administrative officer. The charter provides the city the power to run the city within certain guidelines, addresses the length of terms, and a variety of other issues (the charter and districts map are also on the ECCL web site at www.esterofl.org).

At press time, there were over 2700 signatures on the ECCL web site's on-line petition requesting our state delegation to allow the residents of Estero the opportunity to have a referendum in the November 2014 General Election. This does not include the hard copy petitions being circulated within the various Estero communities.

In addition, the Chairman of the Board of the Estero Chamber of Commerce Gene Montenieri informed the ECCL that their recent survey about the pending Estero incorporation showed that a majority of business respondents support moving forward with the incorporation proceedings. On their web site, <http://esterochamber.org> they have included a statement declaring: The businesses and residents must stand united to protect Estero's boundaries and brand. Therefore, the Estero Chamber of Commerce stands beside the Estero Council of Community Leaders in their search for the best possible method(s) to assure this protection."

HOSPITAL COMMITTEE

The South Lee County Hospital Committee (SLCHC) is reaching out to Estero and Bonita Springs' residents for personal accounts of problems accessing timely emergency care due to lack of proximity to a local hospital.

LCHC is contacting community boards asking them to canvas their residents to identify people who have experienced delays in getting timely access to acute hospital care. SLCHC is asking that the responses to be submitted to Scotty Wood at scotty.w@comcast.net by Sept. 20, 2013.

This information is being gathered for use by the Lee Memorial Health System (LMHS) in their appeal for a hospital at the southeast corner of US 41 and Coconut Road in Estero. LMHS will be presenting their appeal in a trial before an Administrative Law Judge during the week of November 4, 2013.

Earlier this year, LMHS applied to the State of Florida for permission to build an 80-bed hospital, expandable to 200 rooms, just south of Dillard's in Coconut Point. Shortly thereafter, the Naples Community Health System (NCH) filed an objection to the application claiming that the proposed hospital was not necessary. They claimed that the residents in South Lee County already have adequate access to emergency and acute hospital care. The objection also claimed that NCH would lose market share to the new hospital.

Based upon data provided by the 2000 and 2010 Censuses the permanent population of Bonita Springs and Estero increased by 24,255 persons, or 57.3% during the recently completed

decade. The total population of these two communities increased in seasonal population from 60,913 in 2000 to 97,524 in 2010, an increase of nearly 60% in just 10 years.

In spite of a severe recession restricting growth for nearly half the decade, the permanent, seasonal and total population of both communities grew by over 50% between 2000 and 2010. Of that population growth between 41% and 50% are people 65 years of age and over whose health care needs are much greater than their younger counterparts.

Recognizing that the two communities grew by over 36,000 persons, or 60%, between 2000 and 2010 it is not unreasonable to expect that this service area will grow by another 25 to 30 thousand during the present decade characterized as it is by the peak baby boomer retirement years.

The SLCHC, co-chaired by Mayor Ben Nelson and Estero Council of Community Leaders Chairman Emeritus Don Eslick, has been working to get a hospital in South Lee County since 2004.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

Estero Walmart

Construction of the Estero Walmart, to be built on 33 acres at the northeast corner of Estero Parkway, is expected to begin at the end of the year or early next year. Walmart does not have a completion date for the store but it typically takes about a year to finish new store construction.

The Estero Community Planning Panel and the ECCL have worked with Walmart officials and Estero residents adjacent to the site since 2003, conducting many meetings to come to acceptable terms for all.

In 2010, Walmart's corporate leadership approved a new, smaller store format for development throughout the country. All of their new stores are much smaller than in the past. They are building a 180,000 square foot store instead of the originally zoned 208,000 square foot store. The standard design of their new stores varies from the Mediterranean design approved by the County for this site; however they agreed that the corporate design would be substantially modified in order to comply with Estero's appearance standards imbedded in Chapter 33 of the Lee County Land Development Code.

ENVIRONMENT

Edison Farms

Edison Farms is now currently owned by the insurance consortium that holds the mortgage on the entire property. Conservation 20/20 has enough funds available to negotiate the purchase of the property and will need to obtain at least two new appraisals since the original appraisals are over six months old. No member of the BOCC has taken the lead in urging the staff to notify the new owners of the county's interest in purchasing the entire property.

“Martini Glass” Parcel

The Lee County Board of Commissioners conducted a final hearing on the Hearing Examiner’s (HEX) recommendation to approve the rezoning of this land parcel for development. This hearing was held in the commission chambers on Monday August 19, 2013. The Commissioners voted unanimously (5-0) to uphold the HEX and staff recommendations on the rezoning of the parcel.

Florida Water and Land Legacy Campaign

We are continuing to gather petitions through volunteers and send them to Tallahassee. We will gather petitions through November 2013. The goal is obtain 250,000 petitions from volunteers and the remaining petitions will be obtained by a hired firm. Currently we have approximately 150,000 **verified** volunteer petitions already submitted. The campaign has developed an online petition. Those availing themselves of this petition online will still have to download the petition, complete it, and then mail it to campaign headquarters in Tallahassee. The campaign leadership believes that we will obtain the required number to get the amendment on the ballot for the November 2014 election. Hopefully all of our Estero volunteers will continue to obtain signed petitions. If you need more petitions contact Phil Douglas at 239-948-4494 or via email at pdindy@comcast.net. You may call Phil and make arrangements to get your petitions to him.

Conservation 20/20 Program

It is very important to continually monitor the funding for Conservation 20/20 to maintain the current level of funding for the Conservation 20/20 Program. It doubtful that we have three votes on the BOCC to continue the current millage rate for Conservation 20/20 Program. To maintain the current millage we must be able to get at least three of the commissioners to support it. Much additional lobbying will be necessary. Our cause was not helped with the recent editorial in the New-Press supporting diversion of the current millage from the Conservation 20/20 Program and urging a 2014 referendum. The News-Press has not given much positive coverage to the Conservation 20/20 Program during the past several years.

Troyer Brothers Mine Appeal

Troyer Brothers is still appealing the decision of the Lee County Circuit Court which sustained the county’s denial of the zoning request for a mine. The appeal has gone to the Appellate Court for review. Nothing new has happened.

ESTERO’S HOUSING PERMITS

Estero’s Home Construction Permits in June and July Evidence Rebound

Sixty-eight (68) single family home building permits, along with permits for twenty (20) homes in condominiums and twelve (12) units in duplexes, were issued in the Estero Planning Community in June and July, 2013. The total of one hundred (100) units equals the 100 units permitted in June and July last year, but far surpasses the comparable two month figure for any other year since 2006. These figures indicate the continued upturn in new home construction that began a year ago.

The dollar value of the 100 units permitted in June and July totaled \$15,423,789, just slightly less than the comparable figure for 2012, but nonetheless the best two month totals in over five years.

Forty-two (42) of the 68 single family permits were for The Preserve at Corkscrew, which is being built by Centex/Pulte Homes and Lennar on Corkscrew Rd. east of I-75. Over 180 permits have been issued to the Preserve in the last year, representing about 50% of all single family home permits issued in the last year and 70% of all those permitted this year. For June and July this year, the other single family home developments averaged less than five permits a month, showing signs that they are nearing completion.

The twenty (20) condominium units were permitted for Mirasol's six and seven unit buildings on Via Coconut Pt., being built by D R Horton. The twelve (12) duplex units are for Villa Palmeras on Three Oaks, being built by Neal Communities.

The following table compares year-to-date 2013 figures with the prior thirteen years.

Year	Year-to-Date Housing Units	Building Value	Average Building Value Per Unit	Percentage of Single Family Units
2000	1,122	\$154,418,848	\$137,628	41%
2001	1,399	213,746,261	152,785	45
2002	905	153,144,578	169,221	57
2003	1,033	155,939,745	150,958	37
2004	1,049	225,941,691	215,838	65
2005	1,645	340,070,708	206,730	51
2006	969	236,835,506	244,412	31
2007	384	108,303,686	282,041	38
2008	107	36,466,055	340,804	83
2009	86	31,457,481	365,785	77
2010	139	27,170,158	195,469	77
2011	106	22,156,697	209,025	91
2012	207	35,013,362	169,147	71
2013	307	54,023,827	175,973	76

Source: Lee County Permit Reports for the Estero Planning Community; See <http://www.leegov.com/gov/dept/dcd/Reports/Pages/reports.aspx>. Click on the "Select the Report Type" drop down box to select "Planning Communities," and then click on the "Select the Area" drop down box to access "Estero," which displays the "Estero Planning Community" Residential reports.

ESTERO'S COMMERCIAL PERMITS

Estero's Commercial Permits Show Signs of Life in July/August

During June and July, 2013, commercial permits, excluding the condominium permits, totaling \$7.1 million were issued for Estero. Included is a \$5.0 million permit for Family Health Centers of SW FL which is currently under construction adjacent to the Vines entrance along Rt. 41. Permits were also issued for several remodeling projects totaling \$.9 million at Coconut Point, including \$.7 million for the new Michaels store. Also permitted was a \$.4 million remodeling at Publix at Rt. 41 and Corkscrew. So far this year, the only other significant investments have been the interior build-out of the office building on Chevrolet Way near I-75, interior remodeling projects at Coconut Point and Miromar, and common areas in Villa Palmeras.

As shown below, commercial investment fell precipitously from 2006 through 2010, and then began to improve in 2011 and the early months of 2012. However, the last few months in 2012 and the first five months of 2013 were exceptionally low. With office vacancy rates continuing to hover around 25%, significant additional investments for office space is unlikely in the near future.

With the \$5.0 million investment in the Family Health Centers, the year-to-date totals are now comparable to year-ago figures.

Year	Year-to-Date	Annual Total
2000	\$71,541,520	\$77,250,835
2001	22,496,652	44,116,526
2002	15,288,582	23,135,139
2003	11,842,650	23,234,725
2004	13,548,400	60,859,820
2005	44,789,557	111,037,977
2006	150,602,944	184,709,240
2007	138,368,161	157,614,045
2008	35,018,481	39,261,677
2009	7,781,212	9,752,556
2010	4,925,558	9,322,546
2011	8,532,121	11,717,593
2012	10,663,365	11,879,291
2013	10,353,414	N/A

Source: Lee County Permit Reports for the Estero Planning Community; See <http://www.leegov.com/gov/dept/dcd/Reports/Pages/reports.aspx>. Click on the "Select the Report Type" drop down box to select "Planning Communities," and then click on the "Select the Area" drop down box to access "Estero," which displays the "Estero Planning Community" Commercial reports.

Note: The building values above understate the cost of each residential and commercial building because they exclude the value of the underlying land.

Estero’s Single Family Home Sales in July/August Continue to Rebound

In July and August, 2013, a total of 70 single family homes were sold in Estero, according to Multiple Listing Service (MLS) figures. While this is fewer than were sold in May and June, this is consistent with the summer months being slower than the months in the seasonally stronger second quarter. This year, the 70 units sold in July and August compares favorably to the 55 sold in those months last year. Monthly comparisons to the prior year have now been favorable for ten of the last twelve months.

As shown in the following table, on a year-to-date basis, sales are up 12%.

Period	Sold in 2011	Sold in 2012	Sold in 2013	Inc (Dec)	Inc (Dec) %
Jan	23	58	20	(38)	(65) %
Feb	45	21	25	4	19
Mar	39	32	39	7	22
Qtr 1	107	111	84	(27)	(24)
Apr	50	29	49	20	69
May	27	37	48	11	30
June	28	32	46	14	44
Qtr 2	105	98	143	45	46
July	26	35	38	3	9
Aug	31	20	32	12	60
Sept	24	31			
Qtr 3	81	86			
Oct	16	28			
Nov	21	21			
Dec	24	28			
Qtr 4	61	77			
Year	354	372			
Year to Date	269	264	297	33	12%

As of August 31, 2013, there were 327 listings of currently active unsold homes in Estero. This compares with 344 listings a year ago and 327 listings at the end of June. The 327 figure is the lowest inventory in the last two years, and is significantly lower than earlier this year. This figure includes 105 pending sales, compared with an average of 128 in the first five months of 2013. This decline is consistent with the seasonal sales decline in the third quarter.

The 327 listings represents about a 10 months’ supply of unsold homes, which has consistently improved throughout 2013. A 6 months’ supply typically indicates a good market.

Of the 327 active listings, 13% represent “distressed sales,” i.e., short-sale listings or bank owned properties which, in each case, the bank is expected to receive less than its loan

amount. This month's 13% approximates the 15% average which has been typical this year, but below the 20% level of June last year.

Thanks as always to Joe Pavich, Sr. of Realty World in Estero for compiling these figures for the ECCL.

Note: These amounts include most of Estero, but do not include the Estero portion of Pelican Landing, which is not separately listed in the MLS. Also, none of the above amounts include listings of multi-family homes.