



Estero Development Report

Volume 12, Number 5, Issued March 2013

Produced by the Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL)

For More Information about Estero

...see www.esterofl.org

Opportunities for Citizen Participation That will Protect Estero's Quality of Life

Fri., March 8, 10 a.m.	ECCL Monthly Members' Meeting, Dist. 3 Commissioner Larry Kiker Guest Speaker	Estero Community Park
Tues., March 12, 9:30 a.m.	Bd. of County Commissioners Impact Fee Moratorium Hearing	Old Lee County Court House, 2120 Main St. Ft. Myers
Tues., March 12, 5 p.m.	Estero Fire Rescue Monthly Board Meeting	District Headquarters, Three Oaks Parkway
Wed., March 13, 5 p.m.	Estero Design Review Committee Meeting	Estero Community Park
Fri., March 15, 9 a.m.	Lee County MPO Meeting	Cape Coral City Council Chambers, 1015 Cultural Park Blvd. Cape Coral
Sun., March 17, 4 p.m.	"Music of Brahms & Dvorak" Estero Concert Series	Koreshan State Historic Site
Mon., March 18, 5 p.m.	Estero Community Planning Panel	Estero Community Park

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PROPOSED MORATORIUM ON IMPACT FEES

The Lee County Commissioners have been looking at the idea of putting a two-year moratorium on impact fees for new construction in Lee County.

- The proponents of this idea say that it will stimulate the building industry and create jobs.
- The opponents of this idea say that we have already turned the corner and that new construction is on the rise and that we do not need to give away the millions of dollars that impact fees would bring in over the next two years to stimulate something that is already on the upswing.

Impact fees have been imposed on new construction for many years and are used to pay for the new infrastructure that new development causes. It has been said that impact fees are a fair way for new growth to pay for the growth that it causes.

Impact fees are used to pay for the new infrastructure of roads, schools, parks, fire service and Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

The Estero Council of Community Leaders, along with all five of the Lee County municipalities, the Lee County League of Women Voters, both major newspapers, many Lee County citizens' advisory committees, the Lee County School System, all the fire districts and many, many other organizations, are opposed to the proposed moratorium.

Our opposition to this proposal is based on the fact that:

1. There is no data that shows that a moratorium on impact fees will stimulate the building industry. In fact, many studies show that counties in Florida that have imposed a moratorium showed no difference in construction than surrounding counties that did not impose a moratorium during the same period.
2. By eliminating the impact fees on new construction, we would be putting all business and residential homeowners at an unfair disadvantage with new, lower-cost construction. This also would drive down the value of the homes and commercial properties that were built with the cost of impact fees.
3. The building industry, which has been pushing this proposal and has been lobbying the County Commissioners very heavily, has publicly stated it wants to eliminate the impact fees permanently. If this were to occur, the cost of future infrastructure would be shifted from the building industry to the current taxpayers. That is you. The county would have to find another source for the tens of millions of dollars that will be needed and the only other source would be to raise taxes. Increase real estate taxes, increase sales taxes, increase gas taxes.

The public hearing and final vote will be held on Tuesday morning, March 12, at 9:30 AM, in the Old Lee County Court House in Ft. Myers.

If you want to express your opposition to this proposal you can:

- Visit the Brooks Concerned Citizens' web site and send an e-mail to the County Commissioners. www.brooksconcernedcitizens.com
- Attend the County Commissioners' meeting on Tuesday, March 12, at 9:30 AM, and express your opposition to the moratorium.

HOSPITAL COMMITTEE

The [South Lee County Hospital Committee](#) leadership group met with Lee Memorial Health System (LMHS) Executive Staff on February 20. LMHS announced they had filed a letter of intent with the

Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to build an 80 bed hospital on the 33 acres owned by the Hospital in the south end of Coconut Point, behind the Bonita Community Health Center (BCHC).

The timing of the letter of intent was dictated by a deadline in Florida law giving Lee Memorial only 14 days to respond to a similar letter filed two weeks ago by Health Management Associates which plans to build an 88 bed hospital to serve south Lee from a site near Alico Road and I-75.

LMHS said that it was their intention to begin building the hospital as soon as the property is rezoned, the Development of Regional Impact (DRI) in which the site is located has been approved and the AHCA has approved the proposal. LMHS must file a preliminary application with ACHA by March 6 and complete the full application in April 2013. AHCA has until June to approve or deny the application. The new hospital applications of the two hospital systems will compete with each other for approval by AHCA. The AHCA could approve no hospitals, one of the two hospitals or two hospitals.

LMHS will work with the Hospital Committee and Oakbrook Properties, the developer of the DRI, to rezone the property for a hospital and amend the DRI for the change in use and its implications on the region.

If all goes well with AHCA and the zoning and DRI changes, Lee Memorial could start construction of the hospital in 2014.

The Committee members indicated to Lee Memorial that they believed the residents of Bonita Springs and Estero would support the Lee Memorial proposal because the proposed location would serve them much better than a hospital five miles north of the Estero boundary and nearly 10 miles north of Bonita Springs.

ANNEXATION/INCORPORATION STUDY COMMITTEE

The city staff of Bonita Springs is preparing a recommendation to be reviewed by the City Council regarding the processes needed to present the alternatives of annexation to the Estero residents of Pelican Landing and The Colony. ECCL will comment and make recommendations to Estero residents upon completion and presentation of the report.

A local organization, Vote Estero, has reinitiated its earlier unsuccessful attempts to incorporate Estero. They presented their rationale at the January ECCL Board meeting and the Board asked that they prepare more definitive information to be reviewed by a committee to be reinstated under the chairmanship of John Goodrich, Director of Government Relations and Chair of this committee since 2007.

Because Vote Estero has begun organizing their efforts to solicit support for incorporation, the ECCL Board issued the following statement:

“Once the [Annexation/Incorporation Study] Committee has completed its review, it will make a recommendation to the ECCL Board for their approval. In turn, the Board’s recommendation will be presented to the full ECCL membership at a future regular monthly meeting. It also will be available to all Estero residents on the ECCL web site <http://esterofl.org/eccl/>.

The ECCL has been informed that Vote Estero will soon be initiating a petition drive asking residents to sign a petition supporting incorporation of Estero, as well as soliciting funds to support their efforts.

ECCL believes that such a petition drive is premature until the ECCL Board has received and acted upon the Annexation/Incorporation Study Committee recommendations. ECCL encourages all Estero residents not to sign any incorporation petition or financially support Vote Estero until the ECCL Board has acted on the Vote Estero proposal.

The ECCL Committee has asked Vote Estero for definitive information about their incorporation efforts, such as detailed budgets on municipal services to be offered, costs of spending on such services, capital requirements, County services to be continued or discontinued, and form of government recommended. The Committee is awaiting such information so that it can make an informed recommendation to the ECCL Board of Estero.”

In the February ECCL Board meeting, a Vote Estero Director informed the Board that they were moving their target date for a referendum on incorporation from November 2013 to November 2014. As a result, the information they wish to present to ECCL will not be available for several weeks.

The Annexation/Incorporation Study Committee has been reinstated with over 35 members and will undertake their charge when presented with definitive information regarding annexation and incorporation.

ESTERO COMMUNITY PLAN

The ECCL Board met on February 18 with the Estero Community Planning Panel's plan revision consultant and agreed upon further refinements to the proposed Estero Community Plan.

The ECCL Board also is considering hiring an additional consultant, one with experience in creating incentives for high-quality commercial construction, to address the 7 million square feet of un-built commercial space in the Estero Plan Commercial Corridors.

ESTERO PLACE

Neal Communities went before the Estero Community Planning Panel (ECP) on February 18, with a proposal to rezone their property on the southwest corner of Corkscrew Road and Three Oaks Parkway to allow for development of 92 single family units.

Access to this development will be from Three Oaks Parkway and River Ranch Road; no access to Corkscrew Road is planned.

This is the property which was formerly known as [Midtowne Estero](#), which included a big box, mixed use development.

The ECP supported this development as planned.

THE “MARTINI GLASS” PARCEL

Ned Dewhirst, Oakbrook Properties, met in January with Johnson Engineering, The Brooks’ CDD engineering firm, and Chuck Adams, the Operations Officer of the Brooks CDD, to discuss drainage and other issues. It appears that nothing will be done with this parcel concerning development until 2014 at the earliest and probably 2015. Tentative plans call for approximately 200-220 two story condominium units. The engineering firm’s current assessment is that the water retention ponds to be built on the parcel will do nothing but enhance the drainage of The Brooks.

ESTERO CONCERT SERIES

The music of Brahms and Dvorak will be presented at the fourth Estero Chamber Music Concert Series at the Koreshan State Historic Site’s Art Hall at 4 p.m. on Sunday, March 17.

Johannes Brahms’ Horn Trio in E-Flat Major and Antonin Dvorak’s String Quartet No. 8 in E Major will be presented. Artists include Kenneth Friedenber on French horn; Bella Gutshtein on the piano; and the Naples String Quartet featuring Boris Sandler and J. Kozbial on the violin, J. T. Posadas on viola and Adam Satinsky on cello.

The Art Hall at the Koreshan State Park is located at 3800 Corkscrew Road in Estero. Seating is limited to 80 attendees.

Tickets for this concert are \$30 per person and are available by calling 239-596-8404 or emailing rcc@rccnaples.org. The venue honors the Koreshan Unity Settlement which considered art and music an integral part of their lives. The Art Hall was built circa 1905 and includes a restored 1885 Steinway grand piano.

The concerts are being presented by Bella Gutshtein and Boris Sandler, artistic directors and founders of the Estero Concert Series. The last concert of the season is scheduled for April 28.

BACKGROUND

The Estero Council of Community Leaders, Koreshan State Historic Site, the Friends of Koreshan and Bella Gutshtein collaborated to present this Estero Concert Series.

Estero's Community Plan includes a goal to integrate the Koreshan State Historic Site and our historic heritage into the fabric of the community. This concert series will provide the cultural environment envisioned by the Koreshans for the enjoyment of the residents and visitors of today.

Estero's Improving Home Construction Trend Continues

During January, thirty-three (33) [single family home building permits](#) with a total building value of \$5.9 million were issued in the Estero planning community. These are the best January figures since 2007.

Fifteen (15) of the 33 permits were for The Preserve at Corkscrew, which is being built by Centex/Pulte Homes and Lennar on Corkscrew Rd. east of I-75. The Preserve has been ramping up in the last five months as sixty-six (66) permits have been issued in that period. In January, ten (10) permits were issued to nearby Bella Terra. For 2013, it is expected that most permits will be issued for the Preserve and Bella Terra while the two Toll Bros.' developments on Estero Parkway, Belle Lago and the Reserve of Estero, appear to be winding down.

The following table compares January 2013 figures with January of the prior thirteen years. The building values of \$5.9 million this January were up over 75% percent from last January and approximated last December's \$6.0 million.

Year	January Housing Units	Building Value of Units	Average Building Value Per Unit	Percentage of Single Family Units
2000	77	\$11,813,625	\$153,424	61%
2001	146	25,310,064	173,357	51
2002	83	15,451,187	186,116	52
2003	109	20,384,062	187,010	63
2004	153	25,552,428	167,009	80
2005	176	41,429,210	235,393	51
2006	75	16,796,195	223,949	27
2007	59	14,077,487	238,601	24
2008	9	2,688,186	298,687	56
2009	8	3,909,939	487,742	50
2010	19	3,325,793	175,042	79
2011	16	2,283,545	142,722	75
2012	22	3,339,222	151,783	82
2013	33	5,855,414	177,437	100

Source: Lee County Permit Reports for the Estero Planning Community; See <http://www.lee.gov/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.” That displays the “Estero Planning Community” reports.

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

Estero’s January Commercial Permits Remain Weak

During January, [commercial permits](#) totaling \$.4 million were issued for Estero’s commercial buildings. About half of the amount was for remodeling two stores in Coconut Point.

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 were exceptionally low. For the year, 2012 exceeded 2011 by about 1%. The January, 2013 permits continued to be exceptionally low.

A recent analysis prepared for businesses with Estero addresses shows that Estero’s retail vacancy rates for recent months have been about 3%, which is exceptionally good. However, Estero’s office vacancy

rate has been above 30% for the last eighteen months. This suggests that significant investment in Estero office space in the near future is unlikely.

Year	January	Annual Total
2000	\$5,015,801	\$77,250,835
2001	2,295,968	44,116,526
2002	818,116	23,135,139
2003	804,159	23,234,725
2004	128,760	60,859,820
2005	2,523,640	111,037,977
2006	13,414,883	184,709,240
2007	18,391,724	157,614,045
2008	3,028,264	39,261,677
2009	1,122,922	9,752,556
2010	331,365	9,322,546
2011	3,179,495	11,717,593
2012	1,434,121	11,879,291
2013	454,653	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.” That displays the “Estero Planning Community” reports.

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

The ECCL wishes to thank Andrew DeSalvo at Premier Commercial, Inc. in Estero for providing vacancy statistics for the Estero businesses.

Estero’s Single Family Home Sales Pick-Up in February

Multiple Listing Service (MLS) figures show that 25 [single family homes](#) were sold in Estero in February. As shown below, this is up from 20 in January, and 21 sold in February, 2012. On a year-to-date basis, sales are off 40% from a year ago, but January, 2012 was the strongest month in recent years.

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			
Qtr 1	107	111			
Apr	50	29			
May	27	37			
June	28	32			
Qtr 2	105	98			
July	26	35			
Aug	31	20			
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	68	79	45	(32)	(40)%

As of February, 2013, there were 438 listings of currently active unsold homes in Estero. This compares with 429 listings a year ago and 407 listings at the end of January. The February increase from 407 to 438 mirrored a big increase last February also, as many home owners list their homes early in the season. The 438 figure is unusually high this month as it includes 121 pending sales, compared with an average of just 80 throughout the fourth quarter of 2012. This reflects increased activity and a potential increase in completed sales in March.

The 438 listings represents about a 16 months' supply of unsold homes, compared with a 15 months' supply in January. Both figures are well above 6 months' supply which typically indicates a good market.

Of the 438 active listings, 10% 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 10% continues the month-by-month trend down from the 20% level of June last year.

Thanks 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.