

Estero Development Report

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Produced by the Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL)
For more on Estero, visit <http://www.EsteroToday.com>

August Opportunities for Citizen Participation at Meetings to Protect Estero's Quality of Life



View the [Calendar at EsteroToday](#) for ECCL and community events



View the [Calendar at Estero-FL.gov](#) for Village Meetings

The Emerging Role of the ECCL

It has now been almost 5 months since the Village Council was elected and took office. During that period the Village Council has done an amazing job of establishing a fully functioning municipal administration.

Additionally, the Village Council has made a number of operating decisions that define how they will fulfill their responsibilities.

As a result of the Village Council making these organizing and operating decisions, the ECCL and other public policy community organizations have been better able to define their roles in the community and their relationship with the Village.

Village of Estero Committees

The Village Council moved quickly to establish an ability to respond to the demands of landowners and developers wanting to gain Village approval for their development projects. In addition, Village has hired the necessary staff and advisors plus they have established two important advisory committees, the Planning and Zoning Board (PZB) and the Design Review Board (DRB).

If these boards are to function effectively, public participation is essential. The Residents of Estero need to be alerted in a timely manner about the important matters on the agenda for each upcoming meeting. The Village posts this information on their website but otherwise has limited ability to reach out to the community.

As a result the ECCL has taken on the responsibility of ensuring good public participation at these important meetings by using our email list containing more than 3,400 households. You have been receiving three ECCL emails each month advising you about an upcoming meeting of the PZB or the DRB. Several of our member residential communities forward this information on to other residents in the community which gives lends itself to greater exposure of this information.

The Second Village Council Decision Regarding Advisory Committees

Prior to the election, the Village of Estero candidates favored establishing seven (7) advisory committees. Each of these committees would have been chaired by a council person with a different area of responsibility (like Finance, Public Works, Environment, Transportation etc.)

When discussing this idea at a Village workshop they were advised by their legal counsel that the Florida's sunshine law would apply to each committee and its members. As a result, each of the members could not discuss committee business with another committee member outside of a public forum that was previously advertised. Because of this, the Village Council decided they would not establish such committees.

The ECCL has a long history of supporting many issue oriented committees. Most recently it was the ECCL Annexation/Incorporation Committee. This committee led the effort to reduce the impact of Bonita Springs annexation of properties formerly in southwest Estero while building public support for legislative approval of our referendum on incorporation.

The Village Council decisions allowed the ECCL to continue to establish committees of our members and other residents of Estero to research, educate and advocate for public policies beneficial to the community.

Attendance at all ECCL committee meetings are open to the public, are advertised by both our emails system as well as press releases. At a recent ECCL Transportation Committee about 70 members/residents attended which is pretty good attendance for the middle of the summer!

Who Speaks for Estero

At the July 15th Village Council meeting Mayor Batos made a statement encouraging all Estero residents and groups to seek support from the Village Council first when it comes to Village Projects that Lee County and its agencies may be involved in. This way the Village of Estero speaks with one voice.

At a workshop the following week this policy was discussed and provided an opportunity for the ECCL to offer its support for this approach. Don Eslick, ECCL's Interim Chairman, told the Council that on any issue within the jurisdiction of the Village the ECCL's first stop will be the Village Council. He continued by saying "We understand the importance of your role. We want to enhance it"

ECCL is committed to presenting its plans for promoting a "Village issue" with another government before using our extensive communications capabilities to launch a campaign to gain that agency's approval.

Historic and Continuing Collaboration with Lee Memorial

Ever since Lee Memorial bought 30 acres of land in the southern section of Coconut Point in 2004 the ECCL's Hospital Committee has worked with Lee Memorial to obtain such a facility to serve the residents of Estero and Bonita Springs.

More recently when Lee Memorial sought the approval of the State Agency for Health Care Administration (ACHA) members of the ECCL members sent thousands of email to ACHA supporting the application and some members of the committee traveled to Tallahassee in support of Lee Memorial's application. After the application was denied by the State, Lee Memorial did not give up but rather chose a very promising alternative route to better and more accessible healthcare for the area.

They immediately set about identifying all the health care services that are not readily available to the residents of the area and will soon be in the process of designing and building a 172,000 square foot, \$140,000,000 facility that will provide all those services.

In addition Lee Memorial has agreed to produce a progress report on the development of this facility and the services it will provide at least once each month until the Healthcare Destination of Distinction is completed and certified about 3 years from now. So far this year the ECCL has distributed six "Healthcare Progress Reports" to everyone on our sizeable email list asking everyone to share this information with your friends and neighbors.

Conclusion

The Village Council has demonstrated, in these past 5 months, that it has the organization, resources, responsiveness and the determination to be the primary community policy decision-maker and spokesperson for the Estero community. The ECCL has watched the Village Council establish its method of operation and is adjusting its role and using its unique resources so as to compliment, rather than conflict, with the Village Council.

Estero area the top suburban office market in Eastern US

The Estero area — where Hertz is building its new headquarters — is the No. 1 suburban office market in the East, according to a report released Wednesday by corporate relocation consultant The Boyd Co.

Boyd also named Estero as the suburban market with the lowest operating costs nationally for a corporate headquarters.

That likely played a major role in Hertz's decision two years ago to relocate from Bergen County, New Jersey, said John Boyd, a principal in Princeton, New Jersey-based Boyd.

"There's no industry more cost sensitive" than the automobile sector, he said.

But Estero is also hitting on all eight cylinders when it comes to what CEOs are looking for when they make a move, Boyd said: favorable taxation treatment, a good pool of potential employees and a superior quality of life, he said.

"These are the cities our clients are asking us to look at," said Boyd, who was in town Wednesday to give a presentation on Sanibel to some clients.

Bonita Springs Mayor Ben Nelson said a lot of the area's successes have been the result of hard work by business and government leaders who started when the recession was still under way.

"We've all been working toward making this a place where we have the quality of life," he said. "In 15 minutes you can be wherever you want to be: the Gulf of Mexico, fishing, golf. This is just the place to be, it really is."

Boyd said Estero's allure extends to adjacent areas: basically south Lee County west of Interstate 75.

But one factor that contributes to the area's popularity is the proximity of Naples just to the south, he said — that city has a critical mass of second homes owned by corporate executives who tend to know each other and know Naples.

Both Florida Gov. Rick Scott and John Frissora, the former Hertz CEO who made the decision to relocate, have homes in Naples and had direct discussions that led to Hertz's move.

"A lot of people who make decisions about the future in Florida meet in Naples," Boyd said.

John Cox, CEO of the Naples Chamber of Commerce, said he's found that a huge advantage in talking to companies thinking about relocating.

"I would say it's a brand that's come of age," he said. "Every major corporation in America has someone who is in some way connected to this market."

But connections alone won't bring success, Boyd said: Expect more relocations from companies that are suppliers, clients or business partners with Hertz and want to be near the company wherever it is, he said.

Still, getting corporations to relocate to your town is an intensely competitive industry and some of this area's new competitors are surprising, he said.

“You’re in direct competition with north Nevada more than you realize,” Boyd said — that’s where Tesla Motors CEO Elon Musk is building a giant battery factory in Minden, Nevada, that will transform what’s now a sparsely populated area into a major business hub.

The area also has Nevada’s answer to Naples: Lake Tahoe, another vacation home favorite of top executives.

Boyd said the biggest loser in the relocation wars right now is Connecticut because of that state’s steadily increasing tax burden over the past few years.

That hasn’t escaped the attention of the competition, he said: “Florida Gov. Rick Scott has spent a lot of time in Connecticut in the past few weeks.”

ESTERO OFFICE MARKET FACTS

- No. 1 suburban office market in the East
- Least expensive suburban market in North America
- 19th best suburban office market in North America

SOURCE: The Boyd Companies

July Residential Building Permits Hold Steady

In July, 2015, permits for thirteen (13) single family homes and one (1) duplex were issued in the new Village of Estero. The dollar value of the permits was \$2,496,450. Of the 13 single family permits, seven (7) were issued to Estero Place on Three Oaks and two (2) were issued to Pebble Pointe on Coconut Rd.

Of particular interest this month is the permitting of five (5) model homes at Estero’s newest community, Tidewater. This upscale 55-plus single family community is being developed by Del Webb, a division of Pulte Homes, at Estero Pkwy. and Ben Hill Griffin.

The table below compares 2015 year-to-date figures with those of the previous 15 years.

Year	Year-to-Date Housing Units	Building Value	Average Building Value Per Unit	Percentage of Single Family Units
2000	1,122	\$154,418,948	\$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	215,388	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	299	51,411,251	171,944	83
2014	272	46,430,485	170,700	83
2015	526	59,218,119	112,582	15

Source: Lee County Permit Reports for the “Village of Estero”; (Note the new web address with new instructions): <http://www.leegov.com/dcd/rpts>. Click on “Building Permits,” then click on “Monthly,” then click on “Village of Estero,” then click on “2015,” then click on the “Month,” and select “Building Permits: Residential.” Then click on “Open Report.”

July Commercial Building Permits Remain Slow

The value of commercial permits in the new Village of Estero in July, 2015 totaled \$1,089,195. Included in the total is \$.7 million for remodeling the Embassy Suites off Corkscrew Rd.

The table below compares 2015 year-to-date figures with those of the previous 15 years.

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	9,885,065	11,879,291
2013	10,353,414	14,656,213
2014	79,963,835	139,285,611
2015	64,163,645	N/A

Source: Lee County Permit Reports for the “Village of Estero”; (Note the new web address with new instructions): <http://www.leegov.com/dcd/rpts>. Click on “Building Permits,” then click on “Monthly,” then click on “Village of Estero,” then click on “2015,” then click on the “Month,” and select “Building Permits: Commercial.” Then click on “Open Report.”

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 Continue Robust in July; Year to Date Sales Up 45%

In July, 2015 the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) recorded fifty-one (51) single family home sales in the Village of Estero. This is 55% ahead of last July. Through seven months this year, sales are up 45% from last year.

Sales figures so far this year and for the last two years are shown in the following table:

Period	Sold in 2013	Sold in 2014	Sold in 2015	Inc (Dec)	Inc (Dec) %
Jan	20	29	34	5	17
Feb	25	33	35	2	3
Mar	39	25	65	40	160
Qtr 1	84	87	134	47	54
Apr	49	47	69	22	47
May	48	49	71	22	45
June	46	51	63	12	24
Qtr 2	143	147	203	56	38
July	38	33	51	18	55
Aug	32	31			
Sept	27	33			
Qtr 3	97	97			
Oct	48	38			
Nov	27	35			
Dec	49	43			
Qtr 4	124	116			
Year-to-Date	265	267	388	121	45

As of July 31, 2015, there were 327 listings of currently active unsold homes, which is the lowest level this year. That represents just 5 months' supply, which is the lowest level since the ECCL first starting tracking the figure in 2012. At that time, it hovered around 12 months' supply. And, with only ninety-four (94) sales pending at the end of July and the slowest months of the year ahead, sales are expected to decline in the short term.

Distressed sales continued to approximate 6% of sales and inventory, as they have for the past year.

As always, thanks to Joe Pavich, Sr. of Realty World in Estero for providing the ECCL with the MLS figures for the new Village of Estero.

Notes: 1) "Distressed sales" include short-sales and sales of bank owned property in which the bank receives less than their loan amount.

2) Figures include homes in the new Village of Estero (excluding homes in the Estero portion of Pelican Landing, which are not separately shown in the MLS). Also not included are figures for multi-family homes.