



Estero Development Report

Volume 14, Number 4, Issued April 2015
 Produced by the Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL)
 For more on Estero, visit <http://www.EsteroToday.com>

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

Mon., Apr. 6, 10 a.m.	Village of Estero Council Mtg.	Estero Fire Rescue Three Oaks Parkway
Tues., Apr. 7, 10 a.m.	Village of Estero Council Workshop	Estero Fire Rescue Three Oaks Parkway
Fri., April 10, 10 a.m.	Village of Estero Council Workshop	Estero Fire Rescue Three Oaks Parkway
Sun., Apr. 12, 4 p.m.	Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Boccherini featured In Estero Concert Series	Koreshan Historic Site Art Hall
Mon., Apr.13, 10 a.m.	ECCL Monthly Members' Meeting	Estero Community Park 9200 Corkscrew Palms Blvd.
Tues., Apr. 14, 5 p.m.	Estero Fire Rescue Monthly Board Meeting	District Headquarters, Three Oaks Parkway
Fri., Apr. 17, 10 a.m.	Village of Estero Council Mtg.	Estero Fire Rescue Three Oaks Parkway
Fri., Apr. 17, 1:30 p.m.	Village of Estero Council Workshop	Estero Fire Rescue Three Oaks Parkway

Fri., Apr. 17, 9 a.m.	Lee County MPO	Cape Coral City Council Chambers, 1015 Cultural Park Blvd., Cape Coral
Fri., Apr. 24, 10 a.m.	Village of Estero Council Mtg.	Estero Fire Rescue Three Oaks Parkway
Fri., Apr. 24, 1:30 p.m.	Village of Estero Council Workshop	Estero Fire Rescue Three Oaks Parkway

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Why Your Community Needs to Continue its Support for the ECCL

If there are local issues affecting your community, do you want to go it alone or do you think you will be more successful if you have a large network of communities supporting your position?

If the roads or sidewalks or other infrastructure in your area is unsafe or inadequate, do you know who to call and can you summon enough support to influence the decision makers or would you rather be part of an organization that has solved these kinds of problems many times and can generate thousands of emails in support of your position?

If there is a major development near your community, would you prefer to fight it by yourself or would you like to be joined by an organization that has dealt with zoning matters for many years and that brings with it a network of similar communities and the ability to reach out to its email list of 3,700 households to send emails to the public officials who will be making the final decision on the matter?

The ECCL is planning on changing the format of its monthly meetings so that ECCL community members and alternates and Community Board members will have an opportunity each month

to present the ECCL membership with your community's concerns that could adversely impact your community and, secondarily, the overall Estero community.

Since 2002 ECCL has developed an email list in order to send our monthly newsletter, the Estero Development Report, to the current list of 3,700 Estero households. With your help we plan on expanding this list and to reestablish our community sub-lists so that we can advise as many people as possible when there is an issue that affects only a smaller segment of Estero.

At the March 13th ECCL Meeting Suzanne Bradach, Lee Memorial's Project Director for the 172,000 square foot, \$140 million "everything but a hospital" project that Lee Memorial plans to start building in the south end of Coconut Point in 2017, urged everyone to continue their support for the ECCL because she has seen the impact that our support over the years has had on our joint effort to make quality healthcare more accessible to all south Lee County residents. The hospital knows that no other community in Florida has produced over 10,000 letters and emails in support of a hospital application.

There are many threats and opportunities affecting Estero that are beyond the Village Council's responsibility. Accessible healthcare is just one of them.

The area just east of the Village called the Density Reduction-Groundwater Resource (DRGR) area is constantly under threat by mining and home-building interests with no concern that further development of that area threatens the areas wetlands that are necessary to store and clean the water so it does not flood Estero's communities along our rivers and streams, further contaminate Estero Bay and reduce the available fresh water supply needed by the whole region.

If this area, just outside the Village limits, is not protected traffic safety on the eastern segment of Corkscrew Road will become even more dangerous and our battle against CR 951, and the environmental damage it would bring to the DRGR, will be much more difficult.

If you really want to know what is going on in Estero or what has happened in Estero over the last 15 years just go the ECCL website www.esterotoday.com. In addition, the [ECCL fact sheet](#) lists some of the current and past quality of life issues the ECCL is working on or has accomplished.

Estero Has High Standards and Momentum Too - - Don Eslick

On Sunday, March 22nd the News Press published an article in its real estate section by Gary Tasman, a local real estate agent, that mistakenly argued that Estero's high standards and thorough review of development projects could cause Estero to be perceived as anti-development and lose investment opportunities to surrounding communities and be left with lots of vacant, undeveloped land.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Estero's high development standards and the committees that help enforce them have been around for over 10 years.

The Estero Community Plan was approved by the Lee County Board in 2002 followed by three Estero-specific Land Development Code county ordinances. During this period Estero worked with Lee County to establish the Estero Community Planning Panel (ECPP) and the Estero Design Review Committee (EDRC) to serve as advisory committees to the County on all Estero commercial rezoning and development orders.

As a result of this legislation each application to rezone commercial property in Estero has been required throughout this period to conduct a public hearing in Estero prior to the County considering the application to be complete. This requirement has not only helped the community but has saved our developers time and money by knowing the community's concerns early in the planning process. Since the early 2000's the ECPP has conducted over 150 such meetings and has supported most all such developments before the County Hearing Examiner and the Board of Commissioners.

That legislation also required that each application for a commercial project Development Order, the process for approving each project's design, would not be considered complete without a public meeting in the Estero community. Estero is the only Lee County community with a design review board, everywhere else this review is performed by County staff with no public input. Once again the EDRC, a body composed of professional architects, engineers, planners, landscape architects etc., has conducted over 100 meetings to review many hundreds of projects over the last decade.

Estero is not anti-growth nor have its high standards retarded development in the community.

In spite of the "great recession" and our high standards Estero has added over 15,500 housing units and over 4 million square foot of commercial space since the turn of the century.

About 13,000 of those housing units were permitted between 2000 and 2006, when the housing market collapsed nationwide. Between 2008 and 2011 the annual number of permitted housing units in Estero never exceeded 200. Housing development in Estero started to rebound in 2012 and is now in its fourth year of recovery.

Estero's high standards did not stop the developers of Coconut Point from locating in Estero nor Miromar Outlets Mall from tripling its size since the standards became effective. Together they have added about half of Estero's 4 million square feet of commercial development growth, most of it since 2004.

The Village of Estero boundaries contain about 16,600 acres of land. Two years ago when the ECCL hired Seth Harry and Bill Spikowski, well known urban development architects and planners, to help the community plan the future development of the remaining vacant land in Estero's commercial corridors, only about 1,000 acres remained vacant, or about 6% of Estero total land area.

During the last two years the following developments have reduced the available developable vacant land by nearly 300 acres so that Estero now has only about 700 acres, or 4% of its total land area, remaining to be developed

Several parcels on major commercial arterials have been down zoned to residential use:

- **Tidewater:** 127 acres will soon be used for a 387 senior housing unit development just north of Germaine Arena where site preparation has just gotten underway.
- **Springs at Estero:** construction is now underway on 260 rental housing units on 8 acres on land just east of Germaine Arena.
- **Courtyards of Estero:** this rental housing development has recently pulled a permit to build 104 units on 9 acres on the north side of Corkscrew Road just west of I-75
- **Estero Place:** 102 single family housing units are now under construction on 48 acres on the southwest corner of Three Oaks Parkway and Corkscrew Road.
- **American House:** site work has just begun on 194 senior living units on 9 acres in the south end of Coconut Point just south of the future 172,000 square foot Lee Memorial healthcare “Destination of Distinction”
- **Autumn Leaves:** a 54 bed, 36,000 square foot assisted living facility is under construction on 4 acres on the west side of US 41 across from the Coconut Point regional shopping center.

Commercial development in Estero has been surging these last two years as well, consuming even more of the Village’s limited vacant land.

Some of the commercial developments now underway are:

- **Hertz World Headquarters:** construction is well underway on the Hertz’s 250,000 square foot Global Headquarters, the parking deck that supports it and an auto sales and leasing center on 34 acres at the north end of Coconut Point.
- **Wal-mart Supercenter:** construction is also well along on a 180,000 square foot shopping center on 33 acres located on the northeast corner of US 41 and Estero Parkway.
- **Coconut Point Honda:** site preparation is underway on Lee County’s third Honda dealership on a 6 acre parcel located on the west side of US 41 across from Hertz’s Global Headquarters.
- **RaceTrac Service Station:** site preparation is underway for this facility on 2 acres just south of the Honda Dealership
- **Culver’s Restaurant:** Estero’ Culver’s restaurant was completed late last year on 2 acres on the north side of Corkscrew Road just west of I-75.
- **Discovery Day Academy:** this early childhood education center is under construction on 2 acres just south of the Elks Club on the western leg of Coconut Road.
- **Smaller Restaurants and Offices:** First Watch and Pollo Tropical restaurants, Mattress Firm, Aspen Dental and space for one more tenant have recently been completed on about 3 acres in the Coconut Trace development across US 41 from the Coconut Point Shopping Center.

Estero may not have a lot of land for development but the vacant lands it has is critical to its success.

Almost all of Estero's remaining vacant lands are in its two commercial corridors...along US 41 and along Corkscrew Road. The majority of the property is located within two strategic locations:

- the Village Center which surrounds the intersection of Corkscrew Road and US 41, and
- the Healthcare Village which surrounds the intersection of Coconut Road and US 41.

The community's plan for the Village Center is to provide incentives for the development of a high density, walkable, transit friendly, mixed use traditional neighborhood that becomes the civic center of the community building on the 65 acre Estero Community Park, the underutilized wide railroad corridor, the Estero River, the 200 acre Koreshan State Site (including the recently acquired Boomer property), the Old Estero historic area and the large lake created when US 41 was constructed.

The community's plan for the Healthcare Village is to build upon Lee Memorial's plans for a 33 acre, 172,000 square foot, \$140 million patient centric, integrated, technology supported, coordinated care facility that will provide south Lee County with a broad array of healthcare services that include health, wellness and interventional treatment along with a freestanding emergency department, disease management and diagnostic and rehab services. As noted above the 194 unit American House senior living community and the 54 bed Autumn Leaves assisted living development are just getting underway in the Healthcare Village.

The Estero community has used a variety of professionals over the last 2 years to help the community plan how these important land should be developed in order to satisfy the community's unmet needs. Architect and planner Seth Harry has guided the effort since late 2012.

In early 2013 Peloton Research Partners studied the Estero and southwest Florida real estate market and how it had changed as a result of the recession. This research confirmed that Estero was substantially over zoned for retail development. Because 60% of all retail sales by Estero retailers were being sold to non-Estero residents, Peloton estimated that it would take 10 years for the area's population growth to require another one million square foot of retail space in Estero, far below the amount authorized by the existing zoning. Peloton also found that Estero was quite lacking in rental and senior housing. A finding that is now quickly being remedied.

After a couple of workshops with the landowners in the Village Center and the Healthcare Village, the community and its consultants conducted three workshops in the fall of 2014 to see if the Estero community agreed with the results of the planning effort up to that time. About 300 Estero residents attended these sessions and were virtually unanimously supportive.

Detailed reports on all of these planning efforts were shared with all the candidates for Estero's initial Village Council during the campaign. In general they were all supportive of the plans as approved by the public. As a result the consensus opinion is that the Village Council will soon be following up on these plans.

We are confident that Estero will complete its build out over the next several years in a way that will make our residents and southwest Florida proud.

Chamber music concert to feature Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Boccherini

The music of Beethoven Mendelssohn and Boccherini will be brought to life in Estero's historic Art Hall at 4 p.m., Sunday, April 12, at the Koreshan State Park, 3800 Corkscrew Road.

Beethoven's String Trio in C minor, Mendelssohn's String Quartet No. 2 in A minor and Boccherini's String Trio in A minor will be performed by featured artists Max Rabinovitsj, Jennifer Kozbial Posadas on violins, J.T. Posadas on viola and Adam Satinsky on Cello.

Performers for the Estero Concert Series are all accomplished classical musicians, several of whom are currently with the Naples Philharmonic Orchestra and other important musical organizations around the country.

Tickets are \$40 per person and available by calling (239) 596-8404 or emailing rcc@rccnaples.org.

The last concert of the season is scheduled for 4 p.m., Saturday, May 9.

February Residential Building Permits Include More Units at the Springs of Estero

In February, 2015, permits for twenty (20) housing units in a multi-unit building, and eleven (11) permits for single family homes were issued in the new Village of Estero. The dollar value of the permits was \$3,361,209.

Including this month's multi-unit permit, the Springs of Estero has now received permits for thirteen (13) buildings for a total of two hundred sixty (260) units. It is located off Ben Hill Griffin in front of Germain Arena.

Of February's eleven (11) single family home permits, six (6) were issued for Pebble Pointe near Coconut and Three Oaks. Ultimately, ninety single family homes are expected at Pebble Pointe. Also in February, three (3) permits were issued for the Neal Communities' Estero Place, on Three Oaks, which is expected to include 102 single family homes.

Only one permit was issued in February for the Preserve at Corkscrew, located east of I-75. Since construction began three years ago, all of the expected four hundred forty-one (441) homes have now been permitted. The Preserve accounted for about half of all Estero permits last year.

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	329	\$42,540,412	\$129,302	32%
2001	289	48,480,038	167,751	57
2002	191	35,231,265	184,457	56
2003	376	58,389,301	155,291	31
2004	248	46,184,756	186,229	76
2005	491	104,218,898	212,258	43
2006	165	35,590,118	215,698	27
2007	139	34,406,017	247,525	20
2008	37	12,238,274	330,764	89
2009	31	11,988,196	386,716	74
2010	38	7,277,277	191,507	79
2011	21	3,285,432	156,449	81
2012	50	7,856,640	157,133	76
2013	67	12,155,511	181,426	100
2014	77	11,457,010	148,792	66
2015	282	21,828,425	77,406	8

Source: Lee County Permit Reports for the “Village of Estero”; See <http://www.leegov.com/gov/dept/dcd/Reports/Pages/reports.aspx>. Click on “Building Permits” below the caption “Select the report type;” then click on the “Monthly” time period; then click on the drop down box for “Select the Area;” and click on “Village of Estero;” and finally click on “Building Permits: Residential.” (Note: These access instructions have been revised this month to access the new Lee County reports for the incorporated Village of Estero.)

February Commercial Building Permits Include Hertz and a Memory Care Facility

The value of commercial permits in the new Village of Estero in February, 2015 totaled \$33,290,751 (excluding permits for the Springs of Estero). Included in the total is \$28 million for Hertz. In addition, a \$4.2 million permit was issued for Autumn Leaves of Estero, a 54 bed community devoted to memory care patients. It is being built across Rt. 41 from Coconut Point Mall near Marsh Landing.

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

Year	Year-to-Date	Annual Total
2000	\$6,224,692	\$77,250,835
2001	10,191,033	44,116,526
2002	1,913,907	23,135,139
2003	1,011,631	23,234,725
2004	1,079,434	60,859,820
2005	5,214,576	111,037,977
2006	56,324,955	184,709,240
2007	33,162,359	157,614,045
2008	15,674,464	39,261,677
2009	3,628,999	9,752,556
2010	360,340	9,322,546
2011	3,392,431	11,717,593
2012	1,869,135	11,879,291
2013	1,316,492	14,656,213
2014	1,001,660	139,285,611
2015	51,588,808	N/A

Source: Lee County Permit Reports for the “Village of Estero”; See <http://www.leegov.com/gov/dept/dcd/Reports/Pages/reports.aspx>. Click on “Building Permits” below the caption “Select the report type;” then click on the “Monthly” time period; then click on the drop down box for “Select the Area;” and click on “Village of Estero;” and finally click on “Building Permits: Commercial.” (Note: These access instructions have been revised this month to access the new Lee County reports for the incorporated Village of Estero.)

Estero’s Single Family Home Sales Increase Again in March; Quarter 1 Represents a Five Year Record

In March, 2015, the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) recorded sixty-five (65) single family home sales in the Village of Estero. This figure is about thirty more than each of the last two months and up 160% from last March. This year’s first quarter was 54% ahead of the first quarter last year and the best first quarter in at least the last five years.

In March, six (6) home sales were “distressed sales,” i.e., short-sale listing or bank owned property, in which case the bank received less than their loan amount. March’s inventory of unsold homes includes only twenty-three (23), or 6%, which are expected to be distressed

sales. Six percent is near the lowest percent since the ECCL began tracking this figure in 2012 when distressed sales consistently accounted for 10-15% of Estero's sales.

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			
May	48	49			
June	46	51			
Qtr 2	143	147			
July	38	33			
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	84	87	134	47	54

As of March 31, 2015, there were 404 listings of currently active unsold homes, about the same as last month. The 404 active listings include one hundred forty-four (144) pending sales, once again about the same as last month. Higher pending sales figures often indicate increased sales in the next month.

The 404 listings in inventory this March represents 10 months' supply of unsold homes, about the same level as a year ago and last month, but less than the 15 month level two years ago.

Note: 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.

Thanks to Joe Pavich, Sr. of Realty World in Estero for continuing to provide the ECCL with the MLS figures for the new Village of Estero.