



Estero Development Report

Volume 12, Number 11, Issued October 2013

Produced by the Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL)

Calendar

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| Tues., Oct. 8, 5 p.m. | Estero Fire Rescue Monthly Board Meeting | District Headquarters, Three Oaks Parkway |
| Wed., Oct. 9, 5 p.m. | Estero Design Review Committee Meeting | Estero Community Park |
| Fri., Oct. 11, 10 a.m. | ECCL Monthly Members' Meeting, Lee Memorial Health System | Estero Community Park |
| Wed., Oct. 16, 9 a.m. | Bonita Springs' second reading Annexation ordinance | Bonita Springs City Council |
| Fri., Oct. 18, 9 a.m. | Lee County MPO | Cape Coral City Council Chambers, 1015 Cultural Park Blvd., Cape Coral |
| Sun., Oct. 20, 1 – 5 p.m. | Taste of Coconut Point ECCL & Estero Chamber of Commerce | Coconut Point Mall |
| Mon., Oct. 21, 5 p.m. | Estero Community Planning Panel | Estero Community Park |
| Mon., Oct. 28, 6 p.m. | Rep. Ray Rodrigues Town Hall | Estero Community Park |
| Mon., Nov. 4 | Lee Memorial Health System | Tallahassee |

Trial

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|------------------------|---|---|
| Fri., Nov. 8, 10 a.m. | ECCL Monthly Members’ Meeting, Hertz | Estero Community Park |
| Tues., Nov. 12, 5 p.m. | Estero Fire Rescue Monthly Board Meeting | District Headquarters, Three Oaks Parkway |
| Tues., Nov. 12, 6 p.m. | Rep. Ray Rodrigues Town Hall | Estero Community Park |
| Wed., Nov. 13, 5 p.m. | Estero Design Review Committee Meeting | Estero Community Park |
| Mon., Nov. 18, 5 p.m. | Estero Community Planning Panel | Estero Community Park |

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GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Incorporation Referendum Progress

Two “Captains” meetings were held in September with over 75 in attendance. “Captains” are volunteers from Estero communities who are ensuring that the residents in each of their communities are aware of the various aspects of the [Estero Incorporation](#) issue. All were encouraged to schedule workshops in their communities, gather signatures on petitions and ask residents to contribute to the ECCL Defense and Planning Fund.

Currently there are 23 communities and three organizations which have had or have scheduled community workshops. The workshops include a PowerPoint presentation addressing the reasons for Estero’s actions, advantages of incorporation, getting to a public vote in November 2014, and how communities and residents can help.

Rep. Ray Rodrigues, member of the Lee County Delegation, will be conducting two **Town Hall meetings** at the Estero Community Park. The first will be held on **Monday, October 28** and the second on **Tuesday, November 12**; both meetings will start at **6 p.m.** He intends to gather input from Estero residents regarding the possible incorporation referendum. All residents are invited to attend and participate.

At press time, 6,000 petitions had been signed to let the Lee County Delegation know that Estero residents want the opportunity for self-determination.

HOSPITAL COMMITTEE

Don Eslick, ECCL Chairman Emeritus and co-chair of the [South Lee County Hospital Committee](#) (SLCHC), has been deposed in preparation for an upcoming trial of Lee Memorial Health System’s appeal for a hospital in Estero. Scotty Wood, Estero resident and member of the SLCHC, also will testify at the trial.

The SLCHC has been 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. Eighteen residents have responded to date with tales of their experiences attempting to receive acute care in a reasonable timeframe.

Additional information was recently gathered from each residential community regarding the demographics of the overall community, including the growth in seasonal, recreational and occasional use population, the growth in the over 65 age group and the distance from the community to the nearest hospital.

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.

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

The SLCHC has been working to get a hospital in South Lee County since 2004.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

Miromar Development Corp. has postponed into October the hearing on its application before the Lee County Hearing Examiner, suggesting that they are trying to respond to the requests made by the residents in the eastern Estero communities, with the ECCL's support.

Miromar stated it is intent on substantial public engagement on its proposal. They plan to go before the Estero Community Planning Panel, Estero Design Review Committee and Grandezza community, which will be directly south of the proposed new southern development.

Residents' concerns include the height of the buildings on the southern border of the Miromar property which could be visually offensive to Grandezza residents directly across the extended Estero Parkway.

The residents also want Miromar to ensure the necessary roadway improvements required by this new development. They are requesting Miromar to enhance and financially support the eastward extension of Estero Parkway to an intersection with Corkscrew Road and to vacate the existing right of way of power lines through the Grandezza community.

Miromar Development Corp. is proposing a change to their 1800-acre [Miromar Lakes](#) mixed commercial and residential development, which currently surrounds Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) on all four sides. They are proposing to move over 75 percent of the commercial and residential development from the northern part of their property to the southern part, where it will complement FGCU's expanding student housing complex.

ENVIRONMENT

Edison Farms

[Edison Farms](#) is now owned by the insurance/bank consortium that holds the mortgage on the property. Jennifer Hecker of the Conservancy of Southwest Florida has made several attempts to contact the attorney representing the new owners but the attorney has not returned any of her calls. No member of the BOCC, nor the County Manager, is currently taking a leadership role to urge the staff notify the new owners of the county's interest in purchasing the entire property.

The Troyer Brothers Mine Appeal

[Troyer Brothers](#) has lost its appeal at the Florida Appellate Court level. They are now asking for a rehearing before the entire appellate court panel of judges. The chances of success are minimal and less than 10% of being successful.

The Florida Water and Land Legacy Campaign

We are continuing to gather petitions through volunteers and send them to Tallahassee, however, with the Estero incorporation referendum drive now a priority, this item has moved to the back burner. The Florida Supreme Court has ruled that the amendment meets all of the requirements to be placed on the ballot assuming the requisite number of signatures can be obtained. Much of the future work will be done by paid volunteers and petition collectors. ([pdf](#))

TRANSPORTATION

Collier County proposes to send 400 trucks a day onto Estero's Corkscrew Road

Collier County's Board of County Commissioners has a plan for beach restoration that threatens the safety and quality of life of Estero's Corkscrew Road residents as well as the quality and maintenance of that road.

The ECCL believes it's unreasonable to send 400 trucks a day, from SR82 down the two-lane Corkscrew Road to I-75, hauling sand to replenish Collier County's beaches when Collier County has several 4-6 lane roads that could serve the same purpose.

Adding these sand-laden trucks 6 days a week will make it almost impossible for Corkscrew Road residents to safely enter and exit from their communities and almost impossible for all Estero residents to enter onto I-75 going south.

There is no traffic control along Corkscrew Road and this intrusion will turn Corkscrew Road into a dangerous speedway. This road houses Pine Woods Elementary, a Fire Station, a water plant, The Miromar Mall, The Miromar Design Center, and the residential communities of Stoneybrook, Grandeeza, Wildcat Run, Bella Terra, and the Preserve at Corkscrew, with a total of 5000 homes.

In the next five years there will be an additional 3000 new homes along Corkscrew Road.

The ECCL prepared an email addressed to the Collier County Commissioners and County Manager for all Estero residents to send via the Brooks Concerned Citizens web site at www.brooksconcernedcitizens.com stating we strongly object to this proposed assault on our personal safety and quality of life, as well as the degradation to our road.

ESTERO CONCERT SERIES

Chamber Music to Grace Estero Hall for Third Season

Brahms, Verdi and Bach are a few of the legendary composers to be featured in the 3rd [Esterro Concert Series](#) being conducted at the Koreshan State Historic Site's Art Hall this season.

Performers for these concerts are all accomplished classical musicians, several of whom are currently with the Naples Philharmonic Orchestra and other important musical groups around the country.

All concerts will be held at 4 p.m. Tickets are available at \$34 per person; this price includes entrance to the park. Subscriptions also will be available. Reservations may be made by calling (239) 596-8404 or emailing rcc@rccnaples.org.

The Koreshan State Historic Site is located at 3800 Corkscrew Road in Estero. Seating is limited to 90 attendees.

Esterro Concert Series

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Saturday, Nov. 23 | Music of Brahms & Verdi |
| Sunday, Jan. 19 | Music of Bach, Damase & Villa-Lobos |
| Sunday, March 16 | Music of Beethoven & Mendelssohn |
| Saturday, April 19 | Music of Tchaikovsky |
| Saturday, May 17 | Music of Schubert |

In addition, a [Holiday Concert/Fundraiser](#) will be held at 4 p.m., Sunday, December 29. The full program will be announced in early November. The principal goal of this special event, which will include an auction and raffle, is to secure the future of the Esterro Concert Series.

BACKGROUND: The concerts are being presented by Bella Gutshtein and Boris Sandler, artistic directors and founders of the Esterro Concert Series.

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. Gutshtein became interested in developing a cultural center there about 8 years ago. Following reconstruction of the facility, she brought a New York architect to the Hall to ensure that it would provide the proper acoustics for chamber music.

The concerts feature a restored 1885 Steinway grand piano which was used by Koreshans in numerous concerts during their golden age.

Esterro'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 HOUSING PERMITS

Estero's New Home Starts Continue to Rebound in August

In August 2013, [permits](#) were issued in the Estero Planning Community for twenty-seven (27) single family homes, twenty-three (23) homes in condominiums and twelve (12) homes in duplexes. The total of sixty-two (62) units represents the single best August since 2006 and one of the three best months since 2007. These figures confirm the continued strength in new home starts that began about a year ago.

The dollar value of the 62 August permits was \$12,067,661, far surpassing any single month in the last five years.

Sixteen (16) of the 27 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 190 permits have been issued to the Preserve in the last year, representing over 50% of all single family home permits issued during that time. Although Bella Terra has led the way in building starts for the last several years, recently they are starting less than ten homes a month. This suggests that they are nearing completion.

Sixteen (16) condominium units were permitted for two new Colony buildings, while D R Horton's Mirasol complex received a permit for another seven-unit building on Via Coconut Pt. The twelve (12) duplex units are for Neal Communities' Villa Palmeras development on Three Oaks.

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 | 1,324 | \$185,979,596 | \$140,468 | 44% |
| 2001 | 1,620 | 247,128,734 | 152,549 | 45 |
| 2002 | 995 | 170,674,374 | 171,532 | 58 |
| 2003 | 1,130 | 173,165,820 | 153,244 | 41 |
| 2004 | 1,155 | 252,025,813 | 218,204 | 64 |
| 2005 | 1,924 | 402,498,096 | 209,199 | 52 |
| 2006 | 1,086 | 270,683,985 | 249,249 | 30 |
| 2007 | 405 | 112,048,147 | 276,662 | 36 |
| 2008 | 116 | 39,664,561 | 341,936 | 84 |
| 2009 | 104 | 36,972,442 | 355,504 | 77 |
| 2010 | 144 | 29,566,886 | 205,326 | 78 |
| 2011 | 129 | 26,549,340 | 205,809 | 83 |
| 2012 | 227 | 39,619,832 | 174,537 | 72 |
| 2013 | 369 | 66,871,002 | 181,222 | 71 |

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 Remain Depressed in August

During August, [commercial permits](#), excluding condominium permits, totaled \$.8 million in Estero. Included is a \$.5 million permit for remodeling the Publix at Corkscrew and Ben Hill Griffin. So far this year, the other significant investments have included the \$5.0 million Family Health Centers building near the entrance to the Vines on Rt. 41, the interior build-out of the office building on Chevrolet Way near I-75, interior remodeling projects at Coconut Point and Miromar malls, remodeling the Publix at Rt. 41 and Corkscrew, and common areas in Villa Palmeras.

As shown below, commercial investment fell drastically 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, with the exception of the Family Health Centers permit, the first eight months of 2013 have been exceptionally low. With office vacancy rates continuing to hover around 25%, significant additional investments for office space is unlikely in the near future.

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

| Year | Year-to-Date | Annual Total |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 2000 | \$73,093,826 | \$77,250,835 |
| 2001 | 26,322,473 | 44,116,526 |
| 2002 | 16,986,322 | 23,135,139 |
| 2003 | 14,032,515 | 23,234,725 |
| 2004 | 16,385,992 | 60,859,820 |
| 2005 | 51,712,399 | 111,037,977 |
| 2006 | 163,043,204 | 184,709,240 |
| 2007 | 144,142,654 | 157,614,045 |
| 2008 | 36,229,579 | 39,261,677 |
| 2009 | 7,924,236 | 9,752,556 |
| 2010 | 6,021,412 | 9,322,546 |
| 2011 | 9,477,466 | 11,717,593 |
| 2012 | 10,224,322 | 11,879,291 |
| 2013 | 11,140,217 | 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.

The ECCL thanks Andrew DeSalvo at Premier Commercial, Inc. for providing vacancy statistics for Estero businesses.

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 the Third Quarter and Year up Double Digits

In September, 2013, [27 single family homes were sold](#) in Estero, according to Multiple Listing Service (MLS) figures. While this is fewer than were sold, on average, in the last six months, this is consistent with the summer months being slower than the months in the seasonally stronger second quarter. The 27 sold this September compares to the 31 sold in September last year.

Despite the September decline, as shown in the following table, the total of 97 homes sold in the third quarter represents a 13% increase from the third quarter last year. On a year-to-date basis, the 324 homes sold so far represents a 10% increase from both 2011 and 2012.

| 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 | 27 | (4) | (13) |
| Qtr 3 | 81 | 86 | 97 | 11 | 13 |
| Oct | 16 | 28 | | | |
| Nov | 21 | 21 | | | |
| Dec | 24 | 28 | | | |
| Qtr 4 | 61 | 77 | | | |
| Year | 354 | 372 | | | |
| Year to Date | 293 | 295 | 324 | 29 | 10% |

As of September 30, 2013, there were 278 listings of currently active unsold homes in Estero. This compares with 333 listings a year ago and 327 listings at the end of August. The 278 figure is the lowest inventory in the last two years, and is significantly lower than earlier this year. This figure includes 80 pending sales, compared with an average of 120 in the first eight months of 2013. This decline is somewhat consistent with the seasonal sales decline in the third quarter as some sellers hold off new listings until season begins. This decline is expected to result in a slowing of sales in upcoming months due to fewer new listings and the resulting lower inventory of homes available.