

Estero Council of Community Leaders
Minutes of the 53rd Monthly Meeting
June 15, 2007
1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Estero Community Park

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Eslick at 1:00 p.m. at the Estero Community Park. A quorum was present.

Twenty-eight people were in attendance representing twenty communities and three community wide organizations. Three guests were present.

Guests were introduced.

Minutes

Minutes of all prior meeting except May are available online at www.esterofl.org. The May minutes will be available for approval at the August meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Chris Smith reported a balance of \$6,416.24. No income was reported for the month. There are five communities that have not paid their dues. Monthly expenses were \$191.00 for Stewart & Sons, for liability insurance. The Estero Community Improvement Foundation has a balance of \$16,429.71 with no activity the past month. The Treasurer's report was moved, seconded and accepted by a unanimous vote.

South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)

Charles Dauray, West Coast board member of the water management board spoke to the members. The restoration of The Everglades National Park is a priority of the district and a \$10 billion project. The DR/GR encompasses 93,000 acres and zoned for 1 residence per 10 acres. As a new board member, Mr. Dauray was appointed as the chair of the audit committee for the SFWMD.

Mr. Dauray's goals are, as a conservationist, to consider man an integral part of nature, not an enemy of nature. Since we are drawing water from other areas he would like to see Lee and Collier counties obtain an alternative potable water supply for 2 million people. Secondly, he would like to work on the Everglades Agricultural Area. This is an area south of Lake Okeechobee, mostly agricultural land. Many blame this area for disturbing water flow and water quality; he wants to eliminate the "blame game" and come up with mutual solutions to preserving our water supply. His third goal is to be sure that the water supply we have locally is secure. For more information see <https://my.sfwmd.gov>.

ECCL Organizational & Membership Issues

Mr. Eslick reported that the meetings have been restructured in order to make them more of a dialog rather than committee reports, particularly items where no activity is taking place at the present time.

FGCU has a website for volunteer "recruiting"; ECCL could place a need for volunteers on this website. Lisa Paige spoke about this website to the group. The website is a place where different agencies can have access to a volunteer center; she explained that all students at FGCU have to do a certain number of service hours at a not-for-profit agency or entity. Particular needs have not yet been identified for help to the ECCL. Sam Levy suggested a student representative attend the ECCL meetings.

A motion was made to approve as members and alternates pending their board's appointment which will likely take place in the fall (Don Brown, Kathy Curko, Corrie Gessler, Ken King and Bob Nelson with Ron Reichert being his summer sub, Mike Keister.) This includes the communities of Belle Lago, Corkscrew Woodlands, Meadows of Estero, Villages of Country Creek and Villagio. The motion was seconded and approved by the members. The motion carried.

Mr. Eslick is resigning from his position on the ECPP. He has been appointed to be a member of the County's Charter Review Committee. A motion was made that John Goodrich be appointed as the ECCL representative to the ECPP board to fill this vacancy. The motion was seconded and approved by the membership.

It is the hope of the ECCL to provide by e-mail to the representative boards, the Estero Development Report, the Agenda for the ECCL meetings and the minutes of each meeting. This keeps the communities board's "up-to-date" on what is going on "outside their gates". Twelve boards have signed up so far and Mr. Eslick encouraged the rest of the members to try to get their board's names turned in. If the community does not have a board, there may be certain people who should be on this list.

Community Action Groups were discussed. These groups will be informed by e-mails with educational information regarding local happenings with the county board, the water district and the MPO plus other governments of interest to the community. It was pointed out that people underestimate the impact of their vote, protest, e-mail that they might send to make a particular point. Estero has been very strong advocating items that benefit the community and these "action groups" are a good means of continuing and expanding these efforts. The ECCL has always been a collegial organization helping one another with different issues. If your community has an issue that needs a voice, let your representative to the ECCL carry your message and thus give it more impact. Arnie Rosenthal stated that the way to have a successful action group is to get the approval of your local board and a current e-mail list for "alerts". Kim Dailey,

the website manager, has 2,000 e-mail listings and is working on methods of informing that number when an “action” needs to be circulated. This number, plus the addition of action groups can create a substantial base for community action.

Estero Community Improvement Foundation

Dan Dronkers reported that an exploratory meeting was held on June 6, with three members of the Bonita Springs Community Foundation (BSCF) and Don Eslick, Jack Meeker, Don Vilnius and himself. He felt the meeting was worthwhile but reported that no specifics were decided at this time. Mr. Eslick stated that the BSCF is 10 years old and has assets of about \$3 million. They are affiliated with Southwest Florida Community Foundation which has a base of about \$50 million.

One great advantage of ECIF affiliating with these organizations is their tax expertise which would enable the ECIF to receive longer term, estate donations that tend to be much larger than current contributions.

Mr. Dronkers and Neal Noethlich are working with developers and new area business to raise more funds for the Estero High School landscaping project. Mr. Dronkers also reported that the ECIF has received \$30,000 grant from the Dunn Foundation. These monies are designated to study how other counties in Florida have planned their use of rural areas. Bill Spikowski, Mary Gibbs, county planning department, and the ECCL will be meeting to see how we can use this money to plan the future use of rural Lee County.

Website Development

Sam Levy reported that the results from the focus groups will come from Lee Memorial Hospital. Other than the need for a hospital emergency center in Estero, one thing learned was that residents are not fully aware of the health system that is in place in Southwest Florida. Therefore a plan is in the works to incorporate into our website a medical services information center. It is hoped that this would enable a seasonal resident to look at the website, find a doctor, and make an appointment, etc., prior to their arrival for the season. Sam mentioned a link <http://ww2.doh.state.fl.us/IRM00profiling/searchform.ASP> which is maintained by the State of Florida; every licensed Florida physician's profile is listed.

Kim Dailey, Tom O'Dea and Jack Lienesch are meeting to incorporate a developer's flow chart/work sheet in the ECPP and EDRC sections of the website to help the builders planning to present to those review bodies. Currently we are getting 200 hits a day or 6,000 a month on the website; this shows what a useful tool we have. During season the traffic can double.

Transportation Issues

Phil Douglas and Don Eslick testified before the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) today regarding the I-75 Coconut Road interchange. The MPO decided to go ahead with the Interchange Justification Report (IJR) which is basically a traffic study, asking “do you need another interchange and if so, where should it be? FDOT had taken on the IJR without consulting the MPO; the MPO decided that they could be the applicant for the IJR and determine the scope of the study. The meeting seemed to result in the change of the MPO from just a planning organization to an organization that would take responsibility for the plans being implemented properly.

Neal Noethlich has a meeting planned for Monday with FDOT and all the developers and community representatives along US 41 between Corkscrew Road and San Carlos Park to discuss the delay in the widening of US 41 north of Corkscrew Road.

Don Vilnius reported that the County and the developer are at “odds” regarding the desired improvements of the western access to the intersection of US 41 and Williams Road. The County has volunteered to pay some of the signalization costs at the intersection to reduce the cost to the developer. Vilnius is working with the County, the developer and West Bay to “stretch” a little.

Density Reduction Groundwater Recharge (DRGR)

Recently ECCL, with the assistance of Commissioner Janes obtained a meeting of county planning, smart growth and natural resources staff and their consultants, a hydrologist, an ecologist and a planner to try to identify where the county is deficient in terms of having information to deal with the different kind of permits that are being sought in the DRGR. We have been meeting with them for about 2 months and got down to a two page paper listing the things to do if you are going to have the kind of information you need in order to evaluate these permits and be able to protect your water supply and natural resources.

A truck traffic study on mining was done in 2000 and Neal Noethlich would like the county to update this study.

Estero Fire Rescue Report

Sam Levy reported that the property tax issue will affect the Fire Rescue Department’s budget. The union contract is up September 30th. 80% of the budget is personnel and budgeting for personnel when you don’t know your income creates an impossible situation. This is strictly informational at this point, stated Sam. The permit has been approved for the District’s new administration building; however, the beginning of construction is undetermined. The cost of the permit is \$43,000. The building will be paid exclusively from impact fees.

The meeting was adjourned. **There will be no July meeting.** Next meeting will be Friday, August 17, 2007 at 1:00 p.m. at the Estero Community Park.

Respectfully submitted,
Faie Saunders, Secretary