

Draft Letter to the Red Sox Site Selection Committee from the ECCL

The agreement between Lee County ("County") and the Boston Red Sox organization ("Red Sox") committing the Red Sox to continue to hold their spring training sessions in Lee County for the next 30 years offers a multitude of economic and other benefits to the community. In connection with this agreement the county has committed to construct a new stadium which will allow the Red Sox to maximize their training sessions and season. Pursuant to that commitment the County has solicited offers from land owners' for the transfer or sale to the County of parcels of land of suitable size and location for the proposed stadium.

The Estero Council Community Leaders ("ECCL") has as its mission to provide a forum for each of its 30 some residential communities, within the planning district, to voice its opinions with respect to community issues. Thereafter, the ECCL presents the consensus of its members' opinions to the appropriate county and state decision makers for consideration.

In furtherance of our mission, we would like to address our concerns with respect to the so-called Edison Farms property ("Site") as a proposed site for the new stadium.

The Site is situated in the DR/GR and thus environmental and other factors relating to the uses and potential development of the Edison Farms property were considered and included in the report and recommendations made by Dover Kohl, the County's DR/GR planning consultant, delivered to the BOCC on August 1, 2008. Likewise, issues relating to the property were also addressed in the DR/GR Ad Hoc Steering Committee report delivered to the BOCC on July 30, 2008. The development and land use plans contained the Dover Kohl report, in a manner consistent with the views contained in the Committee report, categorized the property as Priority 1 Restoration and thus inappropriate for use

as a site for the stadium. Further, development of the proposed Site for the stadium and other activities would likely lead to urban sprawl. The BOCC has, subsequent to the presentation of the Dover Kohl report, retained that company to develop specific plans and guidelines for the implementation of their recommendations relating to the DR/GR, including the property and the proposed Site.

By letter to the BOCC dated February 3, 2009, the Conservancy of Southwest Florida identified 5 criteria which they believe should be among those used in selecting and appropriate site for the stadium. Utilizing those criteria The Conservancy recommends the elimination of the Site from further consideration as the stadium site. They further state that any selection of that Site for the stadium would result in their initialing legal action to prevent such use. Similar views have been expressed by the Responsible Growth Management Coalition and by the Estero Bay Agency on Bay Management.

It has been proposed that access to the Site be gained from Corkscrew Road east of Ben Hill Griffin. That segment of Corkscrew Road will require upgrading to accommodate current and future automobile and mining truck traffic volume. The access to that portion of Corkscrew road would, of necessity, be via Ben Hill Griffin or the I-75 interchange thus aggravating already severe traffic congestion on Corkscrew Road between Ben Hill Griffin and Three Oaks. In addition, an access road connecting the Site to Corkscrew Road. would have to be constructed at a cost of several million dollars and the mitigation of its environmental impacts.

Finally, current and ongoing studies by the South Florida Water Management District and others have identified the surface water runoff from the Site as a cause of flooding in parts of South Lee County. Without a doubt, the use of the Site for the stadium and its ancillary facilities, not to mention further use of the

Site for other development activities, would only aggravate the situation to the detriment of many residents of Bonita Springs and Estero.

It is therefore clear to the ECCL that use of the Site for the stadium contravenes the specific recommendations adopted by the BOCC and contained in the Dover Kohl Report, would aggravate existing serious traffic and flooding problems, and fails to meet the criteria outlined by the Conservancy of Southwest Florida.

Further, any litigation brought by the Conservancy or other groups would result in delay in implementing the Red Sox facility in violation of the BOCC's agreement with the Red Sox.

For all of the above reasons the ECCL respectfully request that the Edison Farms site be eliminated from consideration as a location for the Red Sox stadium and training facility.