

Estero Council of Community Leaders
Minutes of the 64th Monthly Meeting
May 16, 2008
1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Estero Community Park

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Eslick at 12:00 p.m. at the Estero Community Park. A quorum was present.

Guests were introduced. Scott Vanderbrook, the Acting Chief, was present representing Estero Fire Rescue. Dina Wilson attended from San Carlos Park. Ed Payton from the Reserve at Estero introduced himself.

Minutes

The minutes of prior meetings are available on the website, www.esterofl.org. The March and April minutes were approved. Faie Saunders, Secretary requested written copies of committee reports that are of some length be e-mailed to her to insure the correct transcription of said report. You may e-mail her at faie1027@comcast.net

Treasurer's Report

Chris Smith reported that the ECCL account has a balance of \$10,696.88. Expenses were \$130 for the website and \$328 for liability insurance. The ECCL account has \$349.15 which is a balance from the social committee. A motion was made and seconded to move this money to the ECIF account. All approved. The ECIF has a balance of \$23,193.63 (not yet including the \$349.15) There still are some communities whose 2008 dues are delinquent. A motion was made to accept the Treasurer's report. It was seconded and approved by all.

FGCU Green Print meeting

It was announced that a meeting will take place at the FGCU Student Union entitled "A Vision for Southwest Florida" on Thursday May 22 and 9 a.m.

Florida Wildlife Federation Banquet

The ECCL will be awarded the Conservation Organization of the Year award for 2008 at the Collier Athletic Club on June 14. We were chosen by the Wildlife Federation's board of directors for efforts in building community partnership, problem solving and promoting solutions for Lee County's environment and passing this on to the decision makers in the county.

ECIF Update

Dan Dronkers reported that trees will be planted at four gates at the Estero High School as a start of the landscaping project. Copperleaf Foundation has given \$2,500 toward this project and Dan thanked them for this. An anonymous donor has pledged to take care of ongoing fertilizer and mulch for the project. The Spirit of the Gulf concert raised \$1,200. A fashion show is being planned for

November 12th at Dillard's. License plate frames may be placed in your golf pro shops and receive ½ of the proceeds. Call Dan at 949-0383 or dbdronkers@comcast.net.

Health Care Topics

NCH has had to cut their workforce by about six dozen people. Sam Levy has had communication from Dr. C. B. Rebsamen, Medical Director for Lee Memorial, stating that their future planning is slowly coming about. They are meeting with groups of doctors to include them in the plans, for they need their support. The future, during this economic downturn, is uncertain, but they do have our information from the focus groups that Estero participated in last year and will include this in their process.

Code Enforcement

Sam Levy reported that in the last six months there have been 300 cases opened and attended to. One single issue that has resulted in a large number of complaints is the area of West Broadway and Ludich Lane where residents and some absentee landowners are violating codes. They found an excessive amount of ducks and roosters and unlicensed vehicles and boats. Code enforcement is still working on these complaints.

Lee County Watershed Study

Nick Batos reported that the County and SFWMD's first public hearing was held May 8 at which time the consultants were introduced. This hydrologic engineering consulting firm, Boyle Engineering, will receive all current information from the county and district and they will begin working on the study and report their progress to the District, the County and the public in July. The agreement between SFWMD and Lee County has been completed and all the concerns expressed by Nick and his committee will be included. There will be a number of public sessions throughout the process and the consultants assure us that the work will be completed before the May 14, 2009 deadline. It was stressed that all the affected communities need to participate in the public meetings that will take place. Their communities will be affected and their input should be heard.

Representatives may send names of those who would attend these meetings to Don Eslick and that person will be e-mailed a reminder prior to each meeting.

County DR/GR Planning Progress Report

Kevin Hill was unable to attend this meeting and Mr. Eslick reported for him. About 100 people, about 30 from Estero, participated in a charette last month organized by Dover, Kohl, the County's DR/GR consulting firm. The purpose was to provide local perspective to the consultants who are preparing the draft plan of the DR/GR for the County. There were developers, conservationists and miners also present. The consultants summarized these results. The habitat was shown to be protected; mining was relegated to the northern Alico Road corridor. Their completed report is due the end of June. During July, the report will be

reviewed by the committee and public input will be welcome at this time. In August, the BOCC will review the recommendations of the consulting group and the advisory committee and come up with a comprehensive plan for the area.

Transportation Progress Report

The MPO met last week and received the work program for FDOT for the next five years. They did not delay any further, the widening of US 41 from Corkscrew to San Carlos Park. However, the works program needs to be adopted at the June MPO meeting. The Expressway Authority seems to be back on track after some uncertainty because of the economy. It is felt that long term, the growth that southwest Florida has been seeing in the last 20 years will continue, albeit at a slower pace presently. The need will be there for widening I-75. There are four options right now. **Peak period tolling** would mean tolling lanes 5 and 6 during the morning and evening rush. **A reversible lane 7** is another idea under consideration. **An 8 lane plan with 2 reversible lanes** is the third option being studied. The relocation of the inter-modal corridor from the middle of the road to one of the sides of the expressway is also being studied. All the options relate to the segment from the Lee county line north to the airport or to Colonial Blvd.

Joint meeting with Bonita City Council and ECCL

Friday, May 30 is the date of the next joint meeting. The possible agenda was discussed. The South Lee County Watershed Study will be important to both communities. Since there are several new members to the City Council, some information updates need to be included in the meeting. Sandy Lane between Coconut Point and Old 41 needs to be discussed for completion in the future. Continued support of the Expressway Authority by Estero and Bonita should be discussed. Support for the \$10 million for the improvement of both Bonita Springs and Corkscrew interchanges. A short update of the Freestanding Emergency facility will be given by Sam Levy. Bonita wants to add interim improvements on the Bonita Road US 41 intersection. Discussions of Retail failures seem to be a result of the economy and a chamber issue; Neal Noethlich feels we need to be concerned, we don't want abandoned buildings because of over-building, i.e., better planning early on. Study of the DR/GR is one of ECCL's priorities and should be on the agenda, including mining permits in the DR/GR. The new council members have not discussed the Estero/Bonita two mile buffer and Vote Estero's position. A summary discussion was suggested for this upcoming meeting. The MPO has 15 members right now; they can go to 19 and the City of Bonita Springs would like to expand the MPO to 16 members with Bonita increasing from 1 to 2 members. If the communities were represented according to population the unincorporated area of Lee County is most under-represented and the City of Fort Myers is over represented. The membership was rather ambivalent about this subject; it was decided that the subject will be broached at the meeting and find if Bonita has any additional interest. John Spear has suggested 2 meetings a year with some meetings in between to move things along.

Mining in the DR/GR and the Florida Legislature

Thanks to Senator Burt Saunders of Naples, a bill that would strip local governments of their authority to issue mining permits and regulating mining was defeated in his Senate committee. Persons using the Brooks Concerned Citizens website sent out about 20,000 e-mails to the Governor and key legislators in the course of about four weeks informing them of each one's opinion on this legislation. Fifty people testified before the Hearing Examiner regarding the Estero Group mining application. Now they can testify to the BOCC in early June on this matter. Kevin Hill will organize this group.

Lee County Fertilizer Ordinance

Nick Batos reported on the new fertilizer ordinance that passed on May 13, 2008. The purpose of the Ordinance is to reduce the amount of nutrients that run off into the waterways; thereby improving the quality of our waterways. Important points of the ordinance are:

- a) Everyone applying fertilizer must meet the requirements,
- b) Professional landscapers must get certified within the 1st year,
- c) No fertilization may be done from June 1 through September 30,
- d) The fertilizer will be a slow release,
- e) No fertilizing within 10 feet of any water bodies,
- f) The county will educate the vendors regarding restrictions and after one year, fines will be levied on offenders.

Fire District Consolidation Study

Sam Levy reported that on April 29 a meeting was held at Bonita Springs Fire District and representatives of all three fire districts questioned the three chiefs and all their questions were answered satisfactorily. They will meet again in June with a short list of concerns. State Representative Trudi Williams surveyed voters regarding their support of the consolidation of the three fire districts and 60% of the respondents voted in favor of the consolidation.

Voter Registration

Estero consistently votes at a high level and we hope this will continue. A side story to this was related by Chairman Eslick as follows; he was in Lehigh for a meeting and some residents were bemoaning the fact that they, the residents of Lehigh, were ignored by the County. But one of their speakers noted that the reason for this is that they don't vote in big numbers. Cape Coral is similar with a low voter participation rate. They stated that Estero and Bonita Springs are "super voters" because so many of us vote. This emphasizes the worth of voting and voting STRONG.

ECCL Organizational Items

Paul Magalhaes will become the alternate for The Reserve at Estero and Ed Payton will be the community member. This change was moved, seconded and passed.

Dena Wilson from San Carlos Park spoke in favor of a sidewalk on US 41 from San Carlos Park south. She was informed that this will be installed when U.S. 41 is widened and more than likely not any sooner.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m. Next meeting will be June 20 at 1 p.m. at the Estero Community Park.

Respectfully submitted,
Faie Saunders, Secretary
Faie1027@comcast.net