



ESTERO Development Report

Volume 13, Number 3, Issued February 2014
 Produced by the Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL)
 For more on Estero, visit www.EsteroFL.org

February Opportunities for Citizen Participation That will Protect Estero's Quality of Life

Tues., Feb. 11, 5 p.m.	Estero Fire Rescue Monthly Board Meeting	District Headquarters, Three Oaks Parkway
Wed., Feb. 12, 5 p.m.	Estero Design Review Committee Meeting	Estero Community Park
Fri., Feb. 14, 10 a.m.	ECCL Monthly Members' Meeting	Estero Community Park
Mon., Feb. 17, 5 p.m.	Estero Community Planning Panel	Estero Community Park
Fri., Feb. 21, 9 a.m.	Lee County MPO	Cape Coral City Council Chambers, 1015 Cultural Park Blvd., Cape Coral

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Hospital

Lee Memorial Seeks Hospital Rezoning in Coconut Point

Lee Memorial is seeking County approval to build a six-story, 160-bed hospital on the 30-acre site they have owned since 2004. The property is just south of Coconut Road between US 41 and Via Coconut Road.

The Lee Memorial Health System (LMHS), leaders of the South Lee County Hospital Committee and other Estero and Bonita Springs’ community leaders testified before a Lee County Hearing Examiner on January 29 in support of the LMHS’s application. The HEX is expected to announce her recommendation in the next month or two. It will then go before the Lee County Board of Commissioners for a final decision.

The Hospital Committee has worked with LMHS for nearly a decade to obtain a hospital for the south Lee area. At present the nearest hospital and emergency room is over 10 miles from the Lee Memorial site.

The hospital recently presented their plan to the Estero Community Planning Panel which voted unanimously to support the plan.

Lee Memorial’s immediate plans call for a three-story, 80-bed hospital with helistop. This facility would employ about 400 staff and would generate another 320 jobs through the spending it would bring to the area.

LMHS is looking to later enlarge the hospital and add a five-story medical office building.

Among those who spoke were:

Don Eslick
Scotty Wood

Co-chairman, South Lee County Hospital Committee
Executive Committee, South Lee County Hospital Committee

Dave Shellenbarger	Executive Committee, South Lee County Hospital Committee
Nick Batos	Chairman, Estero Council of Community Leaders
Jack Lienesch	Chairman, Estero Community Planning Panel
Phil Douglas	The Brooks' Council of Presidents
Scott Vanderbrook	Fire Chief, Estero Fire & Rescue District

Eslick and Wood recently traveled to Tallahassee to testify in support of Lee Memorial's appeal for state approval of the hospital. The decision in this case is expected in March or April. Once the judge rules, her recommendation goes back to the Agency for Healthcare for a final decision.

Community Planning

Comprehensive Plan

Within the next several months, the Estero Community Planning Panel should complete its work with the Lee County Planning Staff on updating revisions to the Estero Plan portion of the County's Comprehensive Plan.

A particular focus is on rejuvenating development of the community's substantial undeveloped lands in the commercial corridor along portions of US41, Corkscrew, Via Coconut and Three Oaks Parkway. Special emphasis is being given to the Town Center area north of the new Hertz location and the area southeast of the Coconut Road/US41 intersection where the proposed Lee Memorial Hospital would be located, if approved by the State in its pending proceeding.

Commercial Corridor Repositioning Study

The ECCL is expanding its Commercial Corridor Repositioning Study to help identify the most promising and appropriate types of new, high-quality commercial and "mixed use" (commercial and multi-unit residential) development. The consultants have advised that little additional retail development is likely in the near future. The emphasis will likely be shifted more to office, hospital-related, and community facility expansion.

The ECCL and its consultants are now seeking to involve local land owners and developers in consideration of various options and possible incentives.

Preparation for Incorporation

A project is underway to identify and address the numerous issues that a new Village Council would face should the state Legislature and Estero residents vote in favor of the incorporation referendum.

Council members would be elected a few months following a positive outcome of the November 2014 election. The ECCL will provide the new Council and the public with information on options for a wide variety of issues ranging from office space and management and information technology options to briefings on major policy issues that may require early Council action.

Hess Denied Variance in Signage

The Lee County Hearing Examiner (HEX) recently denied a request by the Hess Convenient Store, 10351 Corkscrew Road, for a variance in signage.

Hess applied for approval of the fee-standing pole sign currently on their property. The HEX denied the application because this type of sign does not meet the regulations stipulated in the Estero Community Plan.

The pole sign at this site was first permitted in 2000. The property was under different ownership at that time and it was in compliance with the land development code.

In 2005, the County adopted the Estero community planning regulations, establishing desired architectural, sign and development standards in Estero. These regulations prohibit free-standing pole signs, internally illuminated box signs and signs exceeding 17 feet in height.

Once Hess took ownership of the property, the sign lost its legal, nonconforming status.

Hess may now redesign the sign and resubmit their application.

Environment

Coalition Meeting on the Redevelopment of the Northeast Quadrant of the DRGR by the City of Bonita Springs

On December 4, the ECCL hosted a coalition meeting including our environmental partners to discuss the proposed development of the Northeast Quadrant of the DRGR by the City of Bonita Springs and its environmental implications. We are currently in the process of developing a collaborative position with our environmental partners. Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 5, 2014. The Bonita Springs Water Task Force held its first meeting on January 13; it was mainly organizational in nature.

The Florida Water and Land Legacy Campaign

The requisite number of signatures has been achieved to place the Water and Land Conservation Amendment on the November 4, 2014 ballot. It will be amendment Number 1. A total of **696,294 signatures** have been validated with a total of **683,149 signatures** required to be verified to qualify this petition for the ballot. We have qualified in 16 congressional districts where 14 are required. It is now very important to “educate” the electorate of the importance supporting this constitutional amendment. It will need a 60% favorable vote to pass.

Pebble Pointe at The Brooks – The “Martini Glass Parcel

The new development will be called *Pebble Point at The Brooks* and will consist of 90 single family home sites. A great deal of preliminary work is now underway prior to any ground breaking. Groundbreaking should occur in August or September, with the target of having model homes ready for viewing by January 2015.

Estero's New Home Starts Remain Soft in December; 2013 Up 30% -- Best Year Since 2006

In December 2013, permits were issued in the Estero Planning Community for seventeen (17) new single family homes. This represents the fewest permits issued in any month since October 2012. However, the 448 total of permits for the year 2013 increased by over 30% from 2012, and represents the best year since 2006.

The dollar value of the December permits was \$2,294,380. This was the lowest monthly total in the last twenty-one (21) months, but, for the year, building values were up about 30%.

Lower permit and building values in the last four months are attributable to reduced permitting at Bella Terra, which has received no permits for two consecutive months. This suggests that Bella Terra, like the Reserve of Estero and Belle Lago, are nearly built-out.

Offsetting those declines is the stable level of permits being issued each month to the Preserve of Estero, just west of Bella Terra, which is being built by Pulte and Lennar. In the last year and a half, 265 permits have been issued to the Preserve. Ray Blacksmith, President of Cameratta Properties, developer of the Preserve, recently told the ECCL members that he expects to build 441 units in total, and that turn-over is expected near the end of 2014.

The following table compares 2013 figures with the prior thirteen years.

Year	Housing Units	Building Value	Average Building Value Per Unit	Percentage of Single Family Units
2000	2,088	\$291,811,402	\$139,756	41%
2001	2,104	325,403,253	154,659	47
2002	1,500	278,888,919	185,926	51
2003	1,425	231,712,400	162,605	47
2004	1,646	365,109,794	221,816	60
2005	2,833	627,683,225	221,561	46
2006	1,310	343,633,334	262,316	39
2007	432	123,191,025	285,164	38
2008	167	56,356,637	337,465	81
2009	164	53,242,861	324,652	76
2010	194	39,205,544	202,090	79
2011	181	37,949,095	209,664	83
2012	341	59,611,615	174,814	75
2013	448	77,060,791	172,011	75

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 Drop Further in December; 2013 Up 23% -- Best Year Since 2008

Like most Decembers, commercial permits were low this past December, totaling less than \$200,000. For all of 2013, however, the total permit value reached \$14.7 million, up 23% over 2012, and represents the best year since 2008.

The most significant investment in 2013 was the \$5.0 million Family Health Centers building just north of the Vines on Rt. 41. Other notable investments included a number of interior remodeling projects at stores in Coconut Point and Miromar Outlet malls of \$3.2 million, remodeling of the two Publix buildings of \$950,000, and construction on Corkscrew of the new Culvers restaurant of \$750,000.

The following table compares 2013 figures with the prior thirteen years.

Year	Annual Total
2000	\$77,250,835
2001	44,116,526
2002	23,135,139
2003	23,234,725
2004	60,859,820
2005	111,037,977
2006	184,709,240
2007	157,614,045
2008	39,261,677
2009	9,752,556
2010	9,322,546
2011	11,717,593
2012	11,879,291
2013	14,656,213

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.

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 Continue Strong in January

In January 2014, MLS records show that twenty-nine (29) single family homes were sold in Estero. This compares favorably to the twenty (20) sold in January 2013, although down from December's unusually strong sales level of forty-nine (49) homes.

Included in January sales were only 6 sales (or 21%) that were "distressed sales," i.e., short-sale listings or bank owned properties which, in each case, the bank received less than its loan amount. The six distressed sales are slightly ahead of the 2013 average of four sales per month.

Sales figures are shown in the following table:

Period	Sold in 2012	Sold in 2013	Sold in 2014	Inc (Dec)	Inc (Dec) %
Jan	58	20	29	9	45
Feb	21	25			
Mar	32	39			
Qtr 1	111	84			
Apr	29	49			
May	37	48			
June	32	46			
Qtr 2	98	143			
July	35	38			
Aug	20	32			
Sept	31	27			
Qtr 3	86	97			
Oct	28	48			
Nov	21	27			
Dec	28	49			
Qtr 4	77	124			
Year	372	448			

As of January 2014, there were 346 listings of currently active unsold homes in Estero, compared with 407 listings a year ago, and up from December when only 305 units were in inventory. The 346 listings include 102 pending sales, which is higher than the 83 unit average of the previous four months.

The 346 inventory represents a 9 months' supply of unsold homes, which is about the same as the previous six months. It is dramatically improved from January 2013, when there was a 14 month supply. A 6 months' supply typically indicates a good market.