



Planning for the Future:

Residents in Estero and Surrounding Communities Speak Out.

In October 2019, the Estero Council of Community Leaders (ECCL) determined it would be important to examine the views of residents (specifically those receiving communications from the ECCL and living in Estero and the surrounding communities) on what plans they would like to see implemented locally. In addition, it was essential to examine how ECCL communications could be enhanced and what actions should be prioritized.

Although the ECCL conducted a study in late 2018 to examine reaction to the London Bay Home's development plans that would limit access to the Estero Bay for boaters, (the results of this work has been communicated to London Bay Homes and the Planning Committee in Bonita Springs and we hope for a positive outcome) -a more general examination of future potential developments that might be

considered for our area, has never been formally undertaken.

An online survey was conducted in the latter part of 2019 generating almost 600 responses from over 40 neighborhoods in the area. 58% of respondents were males and 42% female, with almost 2/3rds having lived in the locality for 11 years or more (41% for over 15 years).

Most (over 90%) receive their ECCL information via email updates and the majority (80%) felt this was the best way of obtaining such information, although there was interest in communications being made via social media too.

Most understood and seemed aware of the ECCL's main aims relating to

- Being kept informed of issues threatening our quality of life
- Protection and preservation of water, wetlands, wildlife, and wilderness
- Maintaining the appearance of building development according to agreed community design plans
- Improving transportation and planning for safe roadways, walking/biking trails, and multi-use paths



As far as the achievements of the ECCL were concerned, those considered the most important were: -

- Assisting the opening of Lee Health Emergency Dept
- Establishing Village of Estero
- Mobilization to attend Commission meetings on lime rock mining
- Establishing building design standards

Looking to the future, residents felt the ECCL should focus their advocacy efforts on:

- The Environment (A clear winner)
- Community Development
- Health and Healthcare
- Transportation.

There was little interest in more large box stores, commercial business development, Olympic Swimming Pool, or an Arts and Craft center. Many added comments such as: -

“Limit building so as to not over-burden the infrastructure.”

“Control growth and prevent overbuilding”

“Stop building apartment buildings...we have enough Multi-Dwelling Units”

But from a list of possible future developments that might be considered, the highest score was for a Performing Arts Center.

The most important issue that residents felt the ECCL should focus on in the future was the “environment” (79% put this as their 1st, 2nd, or 3rd choice).

73% agreed with the idea of using funds to enhance landscaping on Estero's major roadways.

79% approved of expanding the arts, recreation and entertainment offerings in the area, with most interest focused on: - recreation and entertainment offerings in the area, with most interest focused on: -



- Enhancing access Estero river for walking, fishing, boating (58%)
- Marina Access to Estero Bay for boating, paddle boarding, etc. (52%)
- Shakespeare in the park + other open-air-performances (43%)
- A “Taste of Estero” (33%)



As a result of the investigation, the ECCL will look to ensure that communications remain compelling, attractive, and focused.

With the growing interest expressed in social media (Facebook; Twitter; LinkedIn; Next Door, etc.), this too will be examined to help address the needs of those who use these methods of obtaining information.

Given the interest in the Community Theatre and having more music concerts, an initial low-cost option could be to encourage more organized open-air events such as plays and concerts in order to gauge the interest level. This too will be discussed further by the ECCL team.



Finally, the ECCL is mindful of the concerns expressed about the over-development of small lots of land within Estero and surrounding communities. It is clearly a concern to many due to the potential increase in population density and the impact on our roads. We will attempt to influence future planning initiatives accordingly.

Developmental interest (amongst other ideas) will focus on: -

- Connecting biking and hiking trails
- Enhancing access of the Estero River
- Ensuring marina Access to the Estero Bay
- Development of a community theatre and the implementation of open-air venues for music, and open-air plays