

**ESTERO COMMUNITY PLANNING PANEL**  
**Minutes of Public Meeting #171 – March 16, 2015**  
**Estero Community Park, Estero, Florida**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The Meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by ECPP Chairman Lienesch.

Panel Members present: Jack Lienesch, Chairman; Estero Community Association, Roger Strelow, ECCL; John Goodrich, ECCL; Ned Dewhirst, Estero Development Community; Neal Noethlich, Emeritus Chairman, Jeff Maas, Estero Chamber of Commerce, Greg Toth, Founding member; Bev MacNellis, Treasurer. Paul Roberts was absent for tonight's meeting.

Also present were Howard Levitan, Estero Village Council, several representatives from the Coconut Crossing development project and their agents, and Laura DeJohn, Jeff Graef and Bob Koch for the Via Coconut Place MPD project. Finally, Sharon Jenkins-Owen and Chip Block from the Lee County DCD Planning Staff were also present at this meeting along with four members of our EDRC and several interested residents.

Public Notice: Chairman Lienesch reported that the meeting notice was posted on the ECPP website the previous week. A quorum of the ECPP was present for this meeting.

Minutes of the Prior Meetings. Chairman Lienesch reported that the minutes of the February 16, 2015 Meeting of the Panel were prepared by the Secretary, had been vetted by the Panel twice, and had been posted and reposted on our ECPP website. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed to accept the final version of the February minutes as posted.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer MacNellis reported \$956.44 in our bank account with one outstanding invoice for a previous meeting. Motion to accept the report was made, seconded and approved.

Chairman Lienesch explained why this is the final public meeting of the ECPP after nearly 15 years. The newly elected Estero Village Council will soon appoint by ordinance two groups reporting to them which will have similar responsibilities and more authority than the ECPP and EDRC currently enjoy with Lee County.

**PRESENTATIONS:**

1. Coconut Crossing MPD: Presentation by Tom McLean and Bob Mulhere from Hole Montes. This is a follow up presentation to the July 2014 preliminary presentation for a Comprehensive Plan amendment for this property from Urban Community to the Intensive Development Lee Plan category and an amendment to the MPD zoning in order to achieve higher densities on the project. Two alternate master concept plans are proposed -- the first is the same as was originally approved; the second is a redesign of Development Area #1 (East side) which attempts to achieve a town center feeling with buildings close to the reverse frontage road similar to Fashion Drive in Coconut Point. To develop this concept, several deviations from

current requirements in Estero will be required: buildings will front on the internal road and not US41, thus requiring parking behind the building and adjacent to 41. Another is requesting a maximum height of 95' with parking underneath the structures and featuring one to two levels of office topped by residential units above. A few other changes were noted including reshaping the dry detention area, moving the required trees in the buffer to internal to the walkable areas, requesting parallel parking on the frontage road and allowing shared parking along it similar to Fashion Drive.

Discussion of the buffering from 41 included a sightline analysis of adjacent traffic showing that with the planned berm and landscaping additions, the vehicles in the parking lot would be essentially invisible to the 41 traffic.

McLean noted that the original zoning for the MCP allowed 75' building heights but was granted in 1998, before Estero's LDC was adopted limiting heights to 45'. Achieving Intensive Development zoning in the County would allow 120' building heights, although this could be further conditioned by Estero's Village Council as appropriate.

General questions/comments by several members of the panel:

Traffic increase? From today's zoning of 631 2-way trips/day up to 1000. A new analysis has not yet been done.

Density Calculation? For clarification the zoning request includes using the "super mixed use" planning option which calculates project density over the entire project site (inclusive of both commercial and residential areas) in exchange for meeting certain mixed use criteria.

Usages? The usages listed are typical of "bubble zoning" -- everything that is in the county guidelines. It was strongly suggested that these be pared down substantially to be more consistent with the "mixed-use, walkable" design concept presented. The developers seemed to agree to this being done. One difficulty is that outparcel #8 is not currently part of their ownership and that parcel's owner wishes to keep his options open.

Where is the assurance of "high-quality design" consistent with the ability to achieve much higher density? The developer noted that they will commit to a "pattern book" or "beauty book" similar to what was done in the Coconut Point DRI to ensure consistent architecture and landscaping across the site. This would become a part of the zoning resolution to ensure that if the property were to change hands in the future, the agreed upon development guidelines would transfer with the deed.

Two FDOT entrances from US41 and one from Coconut Road were shown.

Several comments were negative to the maximum height being 95'. The chairman asked that sightlines be generated for the surrounding residential properties including the proposed residential portion of the entire site on the West.

The panel was split on the town center concept -- some liked the buildings being set with zero lot line next to the internal street (termed an "inside out" design); others did not and preferred the original overlay concept with put the buildings close to US 41 with parking behind (like the Corkscrew Road overlay around the Estero Commons development). Some panel members were concerned that we were force-feeding the mixed use concept on properties that may not be conducive to its design/function based on the property's location. A general agreement that a beauty book outlining the architecture and layout of the site would assure everyone that the appearance would be pleasing before approval to move forward.

Chip Block from the county then updated the panel as to the status of this application: after two iterations it has been found sufficient (once tonight's public meeting is completed.)

Audience members also commented: Nancy Cohen liked this new concept for Development Area #1 much better than the original site plan that included a shopping center anchored by Kohl's. She also felt that various height buildings are an improvement to the monolithic appearance that Estero's 45' restrictions would generate.

Ryan Binkowski noted that this concept is much preferred over the traditional neighborhood development that is endemic in Estero today. However he cautioned that most beauty books are attractive and interesting but NOT BINDING unless tied directly to the zoning resolution governing the property.

Chairman Lienesch summarized many of the concerns (noted above) and suggested that the island outparcel #8 should somehow be brought into the fold, if only by restricting its architecture to be consistent with the beauty book and its usages to be consistent with the rest of the mixed-use properties on site.

## 2. Via Coconut Place MPD -- revisit

This project was reviewed at our February meeting but several items did not appear to be well described in the original presentation. The developer agreed to send their responses electronically to the panel for review and it was included in tonight's agenda in order to place these comments in the minutes for a permanent record. Three of the developer representatives were present to clarify their responses to the concerns raised.

Ned Dewhirst read from his assessment of the materials sent:

Comments on the Master Concept Plan:

- \* The requested deviations are not clearly shown re: location

- \* As mentioned before, the road entry and connector road to west in the middle of the MF area should be conditioned to be dedicated for public ROW at such time is needed in the future and therefore roadway standards designed to be such now

- \* The MF area is too conceptual to support such a drastic increase in allowed density in order to assure architectural quality and site layout efficiency; and to justify the requested deviations #1 and 3
- \* The proposed commercial in its limited size and configuration (approx. 145' in width) is hard to justify the project as an overall mixed use in order to justify the requested buffer deviation and also the requested uses
- \* Requested new access point 330' appears to be unwarranted when considering the location is just south of a major intersection (Corkscrew Road)
- \* Deviation #2 justification is based upon being a mixed use project; given the limited size and configuration of the proposed commercial area, this seems like a weak argument. It appears the limited width of the commercial land is driving the request.
- \* Given the proximity to FGCU, the parking space deviation reduction appears too aggressive at 13%. (See the Koch comments below).

Comments on Allowable Uses:

- \* Many of the proposed uses are not conducive to being a mixed use commercial area to enhance the MF area, such as auto parts store / bait and tackle / banks w/drive thru / convenience store / drugstore w/drive thru / EMS / hardware store / package store / Fast Food restaurants / used merchandise store etc.
- \* Given the location next to existing Single Family and the limited configuration, the commercial intensity and uses should be pared back to mostly gen/med office and limited uses that would enhance the MF project but not be intrusive to the existing SF area to the west. At such time in the future when that SF area has been vacated or purchased to be combined with the current proposed commercial land, then a more intense and variety of commercial uses could be justified.

[Bob Koch commented that there really should be a special designation for student housing, but one way to comprehend this is to fix the number of occupants in the lease that the owner (parent?) has to sign prior to any rental. Bob also assured the panel and audience that a beauty book with assured quality is fine, but the question remains as to where it fits in the approval process. He reminded the panel that 11 acres in this plan are designated residential; 3 acres for commercial. He also noted that 15% of all residential properties in FL are leased]

Chairman Lienesch noted for this project as well as for the Coconut Crossing project, the final disposition will be determined by Estero's village council when they become organized enough to provide zoning direction for properties in the village. This new process will probably begin as early as next month, as the ordinances creating a planning and zoning advisory board (PZB) and

a design review board (DRB) have been drafted and can be approved after they make it through two readings by the council at public meetings and are adopted.

### Other Items

The chairman explained to everyone again why this is our last meeting and outlined the new process going forward in which the function of the Hearing Examiner and County Board will be replaced by the Village Council acting on the recommendations of the PZB and DRB. He noted that these organizations will be expanding their control beyond being purely recommending bodies to the county to include regulatory powers going forward. He indicated that many of the members of today's ECPP and EDRC will also be considered to be potential members of the new organizations.

### Concluding Remarks

Finally, the chairman mentioned specifically three individuals who have been with the ECPP for most of its existence dating back to the early 2000s.

1. Don Eslick -- "Mr. Estero" who was a founding member of the panel and a visionary leader without whose guidance and counsel we never would have enjoyed the success we have.
2. Neal Noethlich -- the original chairman (meetings 1-100) who has continued his vision and guidance as an emeritus member since then.
3. Greg Toth -- a founding member for the development community who has been a stalwart representative for over 14 years.

Others who were instrumental in the launching and early success of the ECPP include Mitch Hutchcraft, Dan DeLisi, Eileen Galvin, Sis Newberry and David Graham (in whose honor we created the Estero Award for Excellence in Development.)

There have been many successes in our efforts (Lowes, Coconut Point, Wal\*Mart) and a few disappointments (Race-Trak and one or two others); all in all, we can be proud of the legacy we have been instrumental in leaving for those that follow us and for the new Village Council.

Several members of the audience thanked the panel for its service.

Our final meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m. Refreshments were available in an adjoining room to celebrate the history of the panel.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jack Lienesch, Chairman and acting Secretary