

ESTERO COMMUNITY PLANNING PANEL
Minutes of Public Meeting #160 – April 21, 2014
Estero Community Park, Estero, Florida

CALL TO ORDER:

The Meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m. by ECPP Chairman Lienesch.

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

Also present were Kathie Ebaugh and Sharon Jenkins-Owen, Lee County Community Development Staff, Bill Prysi, EDRC Chairman, Nick Batos, ECCL Chairman, Al O'Donnell, EDRC, Nancy Cohen, EDRC, Joe McHarris, EDRC, Ryan Binkowski, EDRC, Gerard Ripo, EDRC, and Gerald Simon, EDRC. There were also several members of the public, including Sis Newberry, Gene Rison, Michael Lause, and Chad Caldwell.

Public Notice: Secretary Levitan reported that the meeting notice was posted on the ECPP website. The Agenda has been posted for over a week on the website. He noted that a quorum of the ECPP was not present for this meeting.

Minutes of the Prior Meeting. Chairman Lienesch noted that the minutes of the March 24, 2014 meeting were prepared by Secretary Levitan, had been vetted by the Chair, and sent to the Panel. He asked for comments on the minutes and it was decided to table the minutes until the next meeting to give the Panel the opportunity to review them in greater detail. Thereafter the minutes as approved will be published on the ECPP Website.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer MacNellis presented her Treasurers' Report, and reported a balance of \$404.42. Motion made, seconded and unanimously passed to accept the Treasurer's Report as made.

PRESENTATIONS: Administrative Amendment for Milestone Learning Center.

Presented on behalf of the owner by Michael Lause. This property is in the strip center right outside of Breckenridge. They want to turn one of the buildings (second on the right) into a day care center for children from 6 months to kindergarten age. They would also do a playground in the rear of the store with a 6 - foot pvc fence all around the playground. They want to open in June for summer camp. We asked if they had talked with Breckenridge, but they have not done so. Greg Toth asked if they had been required to redo their traffic study, but none had been required by the County as of yet. Several members asked to know where is the queuing lane for pick-up and drop off?

The response was that there is not a specific time for pick-up or drop-off since it is a day care facility. However, there are only 23 parking spaces for the maximum of 85 children, and the parents have to park first and go in and either register the child or sign them out at the end of the day. Ned Dewhirst stated that we have dealt with this issue at the private school right behind the Elks Lodge on Coconut Road. We have had the same issue of stacking for drop offs before. He also feels that the owner should deal with the Breckenridge HOA regarding this new use. Greg Toth does not think that 23 spaces are enough for a day care center, and Ned Dewhirst does not believe that this complies with the LDC. The current access road will have higher traffic once the remaining development occurs, and this could really be a problem in the future.

Chairman Jack Lienesch summarized the comments of the Panel. There are three issues that need to be addressed by the applicant: first the Panel questions whether there is enough parking at this facility. Second the applicant needs to at least talk to someone from the HOA at Breckenridge. Finally, the Panel has concerns about traffic and the access road especially during drop-off and pick-up times. There is a poorly developed inter-connection which comes out way too close to the intersection with US 41. At this point, Chairman Lienesch stated that we do not have a quorum at this meeting, and therefore we can only recommend that we hear more information about this from the County and Breckenridge. Our concern is that this is an administrative amendment that might be approved even though the Panel has several unresolved issues. At this point, the Panel has concerns about this project and are not taking any action to approve this. We will communicate these concerns to the County Staff.

The Panel also asked the Chair that we get the documentation for proposals for public hearings at least a week before the meeting date so that they can be reviewed in detail prior to the meeting date.

ECPP ISSUES:

1. Esterro Community Plan Revisions. Kathie Ebaugh and the Working Group made this presentation. The draft of the revised Community Plan is going to the LPA next Monday, April 28th. Kathie does not expect a lot of issues on this matter. Paul O'Connor will be there. Sharon Jenkins-Owen is also joining their staff as a Community Planner to assist Kathie Ebaugh as she transitions out of Lee County. She will be the new planning director for Sarasota Public Schools, leaving Lee County on May 16th. This is her last meeting with ECPP. Sharon has been with Lee County for several years and is well versed in the planning arena.

Kathie Ebaugh went on to present the update on the budget under the contract. The costs are then split 50% each between the County and ECCL. There is a new invoice from the consultants in process. We have not started public hearings on the actual Plan and the LDC changes. Bill Prys is preparing a new invoice, and this will bill a lot of the money left in the budget from areas other than the LDC changes. The process is as follows, first the Plan goes to the LPA for approval, and then it goes to the BOCC to approve transmittal, and finally on to the State for an expedited review. After this State

review, the Plan comes back to the Board for final approval. With respect to the overall Lee County Comp. Plan revisions, Staff is now looking to completion in the first quarter of 2015 at the earliest.

2. Update on LDC Rewrite, Future Plans, Funding and Timing. Bill Prysi reviewed the Power Point presentation that was presented at the EDRC at their last workshop session. We are going to work on a two-phase process, the first phase would include those items that can be completed for delivery to the County by July 21st in order to be completely through the approval process by November 4th election due to the transition features of the Estero Bill. Not much of the Seth Harry Report has been incorporated into the planning for the LDC revisions. Neither the Town Center Area nor the Medical Center area has been written into the LDC changes. The issue is the priorities as to what the consultants will work on this Summer and how are we going to spend the remaining funds in the County grant for community planning? Prysi does not think that we can do the Town Center Area or the Medical District in the Phase 1 planning process.

It is clear from the County that we will not be able to reformat the existing LDC into a document that makes more sense and is written in an orderly basis. There is insufficient time in Phase one to do this and get Staff approval. The Design Standards planned include Basic Elements, Architectural, Landscaping, Transportation and Signs. Bill Prysi is talking about at least mapping out two new overlay districts to add to the existing overlay districts (Corkscrew and US 41). The two new districts are represented by Old Estero and Town Center Overlays. What is not included in Phase 1 planning are the FGCU Research overlay and the Medical District Overlay. Prysi also stated that these new overlays were not contemplated by the existing contract with the County. Whatever is not done before the election in November is not going to involve the County, and would then flow to the Village of Estero. The real issue is what happens on December 31st if and when we become a municipality. The adoption of the LDC portion of the contract may not be finished so the County may not pay the last \$5,000 split applicable to this part of the contract. Finally, Prysi stated that as to Phase 2 of the LDC revisions, current LDC provisions deal only with service station uses and big box stores. Prysi thinks that we may want to develop additional provisions for both auto dealerships and office buildings greater than 150,000 s.f.

The plan for tonight's workshop is to look at each Element in the Design Standards in order to prioritize them. At that point there were many comments from the Panel about the impossibility of doing such a major revision codifying the LDC design review guidelines in such a short period of time. Prysi started with a discussion of the Architectural Standards, and stated that we would have two architectural styles (Mediterranean and Old Florida) and then redefine the high quality standards that we want. This would be accomplished by developing actual standards for the two prevailing styles: for façade, general massing, roof massing and shape, roof elements and materials, roof eaves and soffits, vertical exterior elements, and walls, windows and awnings, doors, columns and railings, and beams, arches, and balconies.

Joe McHarris then presented the proposed Architectural Design Standard concepts via the power point presentation that was shown to the EDRC workshop on April 9th. We then moved to a discussion of site planning elements, including water management systems and low impact design standards. This concept of low impact design strategy is likely a Phase 2 issue.

Next we discussed the differentiation between landscaping and buffering. The key is to break out the areas where we want to buffer, and then have landscaping not buffering for integrated design. We would do this in Phase 1 by allowing alternative betterment design rather than just having formulaic buffering. In other words, the concept would be to allow creative landscaping as an alternative to just buffering.

With respect to signage, Prysi stated that there was no intent to look at newer rules for electronic signs. For Phase 1, he would like to propose the addition of the classical proportion to the sign provisions, so that newer signs will not be just a square massing.

3. Prioritization of Phases for LDC Revisions. The most important things for Prysi and his team are the architectural standards and pedestrian connectivity standards. Perhaps Phase 1 could also include some of the sign standards (still not digital signs). Nick Batos said since there will be a lot of infill projects, especially residential developments, there are very few standards that currently apply to these developments. We at least need to include multi-family buildings into our architectural standards. The concept discussed was to take the architectural standards and add them into Phase 1 as intent statements and then follow-up later on with the specifics of the regulations. Kathie Ebaugh thinks that the only things that could get through the Staff review process in the limited time available are pedestrian interconnectivity and simple sign changes. The additional work that we contemplate in Phase 1 like the architectural standards is likely to take more time and may in fact limit the ability to get through the process with the two areas that she thinks is possible.

Finally, there again was a discussion of electronic signage and why this had been taken off the table for any discussion. Some felt that this should be handled by deviation on a case-by-case basis, and others felt we should have this as a part of the LDC. Simon, as an owner of Coconut Point, should be able to come to the Panel and make a presentation with respect to electronic signs. Batos feels strongly that the entire community must be able to weigh in on this subject as well. We will move forward on these signage issues identified by Bill Prysi so long as we at least have a community discussion fostered by the Panel as to the electronic signage issues.

The Panel went on to prioritize as Phase 1 or Phase 2 the specific areas of new standards which were delineated in the power point presentation. The main addition in Phase 1 would be the site plan and interconnectivity standards. Kathie Ebaugh suggested that Prysi send the architectural standards on its own, separate and apart from the signage and site plan issues designated in Phase 1, so that we see what Staff's initial reaction would be to adding these other issues to Phase 1.

Ned Dewhirst then came back to the subject of the overlay districts. He felt strongly that at the very least we ought to identify the areas that would be covered by the Medical District since there is some activity in that area already and identifying the District would help coalesce the fact that the Community wants to move forward with such development in this specific area.

Bill Prysi agreed that he will summarize the sense of the Panel as to Phase 1 and Phase 2 LDC changes, and then distribute a list of those standards that have been designated for each Phase along with those areas that will be sent to Staff for their initial reaction.

Nick Batos will go over the priorities that were discussed at tonight's meeting with the ECCL Board at their next meeting based on the summary prepared by Prysi. In addition, the ECCL will be asked to include Prysi as a speaker at the next ECCL Members Meeting in May to discuss the plan with respect to LDC changes.

4. Other Issues. Chairman Lienesch reported that the Estero Apartments will be at the LPA on Monday for a Comp. Plan Amendment. He will represent the ECPP at this hearing.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Howard Levitan, Secretary