

BOARDROOM REPORT

Notes from recent REIS Board meetings

LEE PLAN AMENDMENTS MORATORIUM

The Board of County Commissioners has enacted a moratorium on Lee Plan Amendments in DR/GR areas (Density Reduction / Groundwater Recharge) while the "Groundwater Resources and Mining Study" is undergoing peer review. Professional hydrologists have noted significant concerns with the study's validity. The Study is on Lee County's web site (www.lee-county.com) via home page link on the left under Current Events.

LEE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE REVISIONS

The Board of County Commissioners is scheduled to conduct a final hearing and vote on proposed amendments to the Land Development Code August 23. Numerous revisions regard grading for single-family and duplex lots, and building height limits for land use categories with no variances or deviations allowed.

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

REIS is proceeding to establish a business-oriented college scholarship foundation that would provide opportunity for REIS members to make contributions. See page 2 for more details.

LUNCHEON SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Luncheon sponsorships have been reserved through November. Interested firms are urged to contact Stan Stouder, 481-3800 soon to reserve dates.

HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY

The Florida Hometown Democracy movement to require local voters' approval on land-use decisions is persisting in spite of recent setbacks. In March, Florida's Supreme Court rejected the proposed ballot language of the referendum to amend the state constitution. In May, the Court rejected the appeal. The organization is now working to get the amendment on the 2006 ballot. An amendment passed in the recent legislative session will now require at least 60% majority for voter-initiated constitutional amendments.

RICCIANI, MATHIS & JESSEN, CPAs

Certified Public Accountants

(239) 482-3535

800-940-6003

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IMPORTANT REMINDER!

REIS monthly luncheon meetings will be in the Magnolia Room at Pelican Preserve Town Center.

The Pelican Preserve entrance is on Treeline Avenue, on the south side of Colonial Boulevard, just one mile east of I-75 (exit 136). The gatehouse attendant will direct you to the Town Center. Meetings will continue to begin promptly at 11:45 on the second Tuesday of the month.

LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS

In Washington, Florida Congressman Clay Shaw introduced H.R. 1663 as a companion to S. 621, to permanently extend the leasehold depreciation provision. The Jobs Creation Act passed last year allowed short-term straight-line 15-year depreciation on property put in service between October 22, 2004 and January 1, 2006. The proposed legislation would extend the tax provisions of the Jobs Creation Act.

ADA REFORM

Florida Congressman Mark Foley, the sponsor of the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Notification Act, is redrafting the bill that would provide opportunity to correct an alleged ADA violation before the legal process begins. Foley expects to reintroduce the bill soon.

Meanwhile, the Department of Justice is considering extensive revisions to the ADA Accessibility Guidelines, including the option to apply the new guidelines to existing properties that have built or renovated to comply with current guidelines.

WETLAND ISSUES

A coalition of real estate and property rights groups has been meeting with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to correct the misapplication of rules that treat man-made drainage systems as though they were high quality wetlands. The effort to reform wetlands rules is also meeting with the President's Council on Environmental Quality and U.S. Army Corps.

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(239) 481-3800

ssstouder@cbre-fmyers.com
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REIS REPORT

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news for Southwest Florida's commercial and investment real estate community

REIS SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

REIS is hiring Links Network, Inc. of Orlando to assist in establishing a 501C3 non-profit Foundation that will raise funds for scholarships for local students interested in attending Florida colleges and universities for pursuit of studies relating to the real estate industry (i.e., appraisals, sales and marketing; development; legal aspects, etc.). REIS plans to fund the costs relating to the Foundation and for the Foundation to distribute 100% of the funds raised for scholarships. Details are still in the works, and subject to approval by the REIS Board. The Foundation should be incorporated and have all IRS approvals by December.

ENGINEERING DEGREES OFFERED

In June, Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) authorized bachelor of science degrees in bioengineering, civil engineering, and environmental engineering. 35 students have already enrolled for the classes which will begin August 22. The school expects to offer master's degrees in 2007 or 2008.

REAL ESTATE DRAWS MBAs

M.B.A. students are packing real estate finance, strategy, and investment classes, according to an article in the "Wall Street Journal Online" on July 13. Masters programs at the nation's most prominent business colleges are reporting dramatic increases in enrollment for real estate courses. Real estate is becoming entrenched in M.B.A. programs and schools are creating real estate research centers and sponsoring conferences. The students are also entering national real estate competitions to test their finance, design and development skills. "No matter where you decide to go in life, you are bound to encounter real estate issues," says Georgette Poindexter, head of the real estate department at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS!

REIS members are invited to publish articles in Fort Myers "News-Press." The articles will be prominently positioned in the Sunday Real Estate section under the heading "Commercial Connection." The articles must be related to commercial real estate and approximately 800 words. The author's picture and credentials will be included.

There is no cost involved. The articles are comparable to a \$1,200 advertisement – only with much greater credibility. Contact Drew Robinson, (239) 489-3303 extension 213, today to schedule your feature article.

REGULATORY REPORTS ONLINE

Lee County's Concurrency Management Report for the year ahead was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners June 28. The report is accessible via www.lee-county.com/dcd.

The latest edition of the Lee Plan Codification (through December 2004) is available online via www.lee-county.com/dcd/comprehensiveplanning.

ROAD PROJECTS TO BE FUNDED

Collier and Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) are conducting joint workshops to evaluate and rank 18 candidate projects to be funded through the Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) in fiscal years 2005/06 and 2006/07. TRIP has been created and funded by the recently enacted state Growth Management Act to provide up to 50% of the cost of highway and public transportation projects that will improve regionally significant transportation facilities. TRIP projects are also eligible for State Infrastructure Bank loans for up to half the local match. Program details and meeting information is available at www.swfrpc.org/mpo.



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**Janet Watermeier
Frank D'Alessandro**
A Consulting and Development Team
Fort Myers; (239) 425-6025
Toll Free: (866) 561-1718
www.FGC-Group.com