

BOARDROOM REPORT

News from recent REIS board meetings

HOT MEETING AGENDA:

- **Transportation** is the focus of the April meeting, with Johnny Limbaugh and Dave Loveland from Florida and Lee County Departments of Transportation.
- In May, water resource expert Tom Missimer will address regional **water supply issues**.
- David Mica of the Florida Petroleum Council will discuss **oil drilling** in the Gulf of Mexico at the June meeting.

GROUP INVESTING WORKSHOP:

June 2nd, REIS will present a program explaining alternative methods for structuring group investments in real estate, including the legal and tax implications. Conducted by Gene Trowbridge, author, attorney and national CCIM instructor. Details will be provided to REIS members in the coming month.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND GROWING:

The REIS Scholarship Foundation is inviting REIS members to make charitable donations, with 100% of donations to be available for scholarships to area colleges. Representatives of four local colleges and universities will attend the April meeting and be available to discuss their schools. Contact Walter Serbon, 239.437.0025, for more information.

NEW MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORIES:

The 2006 REIS Membership Directories will be available at the April luncheon meeting. The directory is also on the web site, www.reis-swfl.org, and may be searched by member, company, or profession.

MEMBERS TO BE SURVEYED:

Members are being surveyed, to determine better ways for REIS to communicate and serve its membership. Surveys will be emailed and distributed at the April luncheon meeting.

EXPRESS CHECK-IN AT MEETINGS:

Preregister for REIS luncheons and take advantage of the new "Express Lane" at the registration table. Make your reservations on the REIS web site, by emailing sheston@swfla.rr.com, or calling Sharon Heston at 239.410.1253. Then mail your check to Sharon Heston, 154 Elephant Way, North Fort Myers, FL 33917.

LEHIGH ZONING MORATORIUM

On April 4, Lee commissioners will conduct a public hearing to consider adopting an emergency ordinance to prohibit re-zoning to a residential district. They'll also consider a moratorium on privately-initiated comp plan amendments for property within Lehigh Acres Planning Community. The re-zoning moratorium would extend to September 2007, when the Lehigh Acres community plan is expected to be completed.

LEE IMPACT FEES STUDIED

Lee County's **Fire / Emergency Services Impact Fee Study** is finished and may be reviewed at www.lee-county.com/dcd/. The second public hearing to adopt recommended increases is scheduled at the Board of County Commissioners' meeting April 11 at 5 p.m..

Study of **Road Impact Fees** will take place in May-June. Lee County Impact Fees are now reviewed every 3 years, however County staff would support 4-year intervals.

LEE MAY EASE BLASTING REGS

The second public hearing to adopt a revised blasting ordinance is scheduled at the Board of County Commissioners' meeting April 11 at 5 p.m..

The ordinance, proposed revisions, and committee agendas are at www.lee-county.com/dcd/.

BEACH REVIEWS COMP PLAN

Fort Myers Beach Town Council will review evaluation of its Comprehensive Plan in April. Meeting agendas are at www.plone.fmbeach.org. Evaluation Report, Land Development Code and Zoning Maps are at www.spikowski.com/beach

COMMENT ON COLLIER TRAFFIC

Collier Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has a web site for comments on Collier County traffic: www.trafficincollier.com

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MURDOCK VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS RATED

Charlotte County's Professional Services Committee has scored the proposals for development of Murdock Village, a large multi-use community to be developed by the private sector on land largely acquired by eminent domain. The top four: Stock Development, Forest City Land Group, Falcon Tranwell Webb, and Kitson Partners; will make oral presentations to the committee April 13-14.

Developer proposals, scoring, plans, maps, concepts, and details are available at <http://www.charlottecountyfl.com/MurdockVillage/>

AVE MARIA FUNDS ROAD WORK

Developers of Ave Maria have pledged \$75-80 million for road improvements in the project's vicinity, plus tons of fill dirt. Collier County will initially apply the dirt and funds to expedite widening 11 miles of Oil Well Road to a 4-lane divided road with bike paths. Improvements to Camp Keais Road will likely follow. Oil Well Road will be the primary route to Ave Maria, which will have an entrance on Camp Keais Road.

FLORIDA LAND TRUST ACT

Senate Bill S1956, sponsored by Sen. Dave Aronberg, would create the Florida Land Trust Act. It would: delete the requirement that land trustee be a qualified fiduciary; entitle principal residence in a trust to homestead exemption; and provide certain rights, liabilities and duties to beneficiaries. The bill passed the Judiciary Committee March 29 and is in Banking and Insurance Committee. Similar Bill H7099 in the State House of Representatives Finance and Tax Committee.

HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION BILL

House Bill H353, co-sponsored by Rep. Jeff Kottkamp, would increase Homestead Exemption on local property taxes from \$25,000 to \$50,000. The bill is in the House Finance and Tax Committee.



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AFFORDABLE HOUSING REMEDIES

In 2005 Florida's Dept. of Business and Professional Regulation approved nearly 29,000 existing housing units to be converted to condominiums. The conversion trend, combined with rising impact fees, land and construction costs prices, is worsening the shortage of affordable and workforce housing.

The State's Florida Housing Finance Corporation offers a variety of Multifamily Development Programs:

- **Multifamily Mortgage Revenue Bonds** program provides below market rate loans to developers who reserve a certain percentage of their apartment units for low-income families.
- **Florida Affordable Housing Guarantee** issues guarantees on financing for affordable housing.
- **HOME Investment Partnerships** provide non-amortizing, low interest rate loans to developers housing who acquire, rehabilitate or construct affordable housing.
- **State Apartment Incentive Loans** provide low interest loans to developers of affordable rental housing.

A wide variety of Affordable Housing legislation is currently being discussed in Florida's legislature. House Bill 1555 / Senate Bill 2552 would require developers to include affordable housing in large projects or contribute to the Florida Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

The Southwest Florida Community Housing Subcommittee is recommending a number of programs to increase the supply of workforce housing in the local area. Suggestions include: encouraging **Infill Development** or Redevelopment; **Density Bonus** units for developments that include below-market-rate housing; and **Mitigation Requirements** on Developments or Regional Impact. Details on the policy initiatives and meeting agendas are available at www.swfrpc.org

REIS is considering a workshop to bring government and development interests together to determine solutions. Mary Gibbs is studying local assistance programs and considerations, while Sharon Jenkins-Owen serves on the state's Affordable Housing Study Commission. Both are on the REIS Board of Governors.

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