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BOARDROOM REPORT

News from recent REIS board meetings

Luncheon Programs:

The April luncheon looked at proposed changes to the Lee Plan, presented by Kathie Ebaugh, AICP, principal planner with Lee County Dept. of Community Development. Sponsored by [IBERIABANK](#).

The Legislative Report will highlight the May 14 luncheon, delivered by Representative Heather Fitzenhagen. Sponsored by [HSA Engineers & Scientists](#).

REIS welcomes your suggestions on programs and speakers you would like to see at the luncheons. Please share your ideas with [Sean Ellis](#), 239.337.3850.

Education Workshop:

Education Committee Chairs [Steven Kushner](#) and [Karen Miller](#) are planning a September workshop of practical ideas for capitalizing on the Real Estate Market Revival, including Site Selection, Project Resurrection, and Innovative Financing. Prime sponsorship opportunities are available.

Horizon Council:

Nominations are sought for Industry Appreciation awards. Criteria and nomination form are on [Fort Myers Regional Partnership website](#). Winners will be honored at the Sept. 20 Industry Appreciation annual event.

Annual Social Event:

Details are top secret but [Chair Bev Larson](#) is planning an evening of fun not to be missed. Contact Bev to assist with plans or to secure a sponsor position.

Membership:

A limited number of memberships are now available to new members. The [membership application](#) is on the REIS website.

Marketing Opportunity:

Two banner ads are available on the REIS website. Contact [Bill Burdette](#), 239.936.1404, for details.

REIS LAUNCHES LINKEDIN GROUP

REIS now offers a LinkedIn Group to expand networking opportunities and provide information on current issues of interest to Southwest Florida real estate investment and development professionals. Join the [REIS Group](#) today to participate in discussions and learn more about your colleagues and the local commercial real estate industry.

LEE PLAN & FUTURE LAND USE

Proposed changes to the Lee Plan Future Land Use element and map will be reviewed in a public meeting of the Local Planning Agency (LPA) on April 22 in County Commission Chambers in Fort Myers. Presentations on the full Lee Plan update will be held throughout the county in the coming weeks. [Click here](#) for the schedule.

Extensive proposed amendments to Lee County's Land Development Code are tentatively scheduled for public hearings before the County Commissioners on May 14 and 28. [Draft changes](#) are available online.

COMMENT ON SUSTAINABILITY

Lee County Office of Sustainability is developing a sustainability plan to be presented to commissioners for adoption later this year. Public input on the plan is sought and may be submitted at [www.leecountytownhall.com](#).

"COMPLETE STREETS" DEFINED

The Lee County Land Development Code (LDC) is being revised with regard to implementing "complete streets" criteria in street design, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities. The [draft update](#) is available for review. Submit comments to [Andy Getch](#) at Lee DOT or [Rob Rice](#) at Dept. of Community Development.

LEE REDUCES IMPACT FEES

Lee County commissioners approved an 80% reduction in impact fees for Roads, Schools, Community and Regional Parks fees for 2-years, commencing March 13, with credits retroactive to February 13. There are no changes to fees for Emergency Services. The new ordinance and fee schedule are on the Community Development [website](#).



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LEGISLATURE ISSUES TO WATCH

Fast-track Foreclosures

HB 87 passed the House Judiciary Committee and is now in Appropriations Committee. The bill would require banks to file a deficiency judgement within one year, rather than 5 years. Condo associations would have the ability to speed up foreclosures if the lender is not moving quickly. It would expedite getting properties into the hands of those with the means to manage them properly and is supported by the Florida Bankers Assn.

Commercial Lease Tax

Legislation (SB656/HB 629) to phase out the sales tax on commercial rental property is in committee review in both the House and Senate. The bills would provide for incremental reduction and eventual repeal of the tax.

Florida Forever - conservation land budget

Governor Scott has requested \$75 million for the program, however SB 584 would limit state or local governments from buying conservation land unless matched by the sale of government-owned property and SB 214 would terminate the Florida Forever Trust Fund.

Conservation Land Amendment

A proposed amendment to the state constitution has gone to the state Supreme Court for review. The amendment would dedicate 33% of net revenue from the existing excise tax on documents for 20 years to be allocated for the acquisition, restoration, and management of conservation lands.

Affordable Housing

Legislators may continue to divert dedicated state and local trust funds that support housing programs use the money for other purposes, however, the Senate proposes \$65 million for developers of low-income housing.

Transportation Concurrency

SB 1716/HB 321 will prohibit local government from applying transportation concurrency or requiring a proportionate-share contribution or construction for new business before July 1, 2016 unless approved by majority vote. New business development must consist of 6,000 or less of non-residential space. Bills are now in Senate Transportation and House Economic Affairs Committees.

STATE TO SET WATER STANDARDS

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) reached an agreement in March that grants the state the right to set nutrient limits for its waterways. DEP is proceeding with rule-making and legislation (SB 7034 / HB 7115) this session to finish setting limits for state waterways.

FORECLOSURE REGISTRY FOR LEE

Lee County Attorneys Office has prepared a proposed ordinance that would require all private and institutional lenders to register properties that are vacant and in process of foreclosure or foreclosed. Lenders would be required to pay a \$200 per year registration fee, inspect and maintain the subject properties. The registry would assist code enforcement. Comments on the [draft ordinance](#) may be submitted to [Dawn Lehnert](#) at the County Attorneys Office.

Realtor® and banking associations have expressed concern that additional regulations create an unnecessary burden and may have an adverse effect on the housing market, while also raising issues about property rights, liability, conflicts with state law, and increased County exposure to lawsuits.

INSTITUTE OF DESIGN PLANNED

The Southwest Florida Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) is guiding efforts to establish a School of Design at Florida Gulf Coast University. Workshops have been conducted to outline multi-disciplinary degree programs and a Needs Assessment in the next step. Provide input or learn more at the [AIA website](#).

SIMMONS ELECTED VICE-CHAIR OF STATE APPRAISAL BOARD

Matt Simmons was elected 2013 vice-chair of the Florida Real Estate Appraisal Board, a nine-member panel that oversees and implements the rules and license laws for the state's 13,000-plus licensees. Simmons also serves as treasurer of the Real Estate Investment Society (REIS).

STAYING INFORMED & INVOLVED

The [calendar of events](#) on the REIS website is constantly updated with industry and government events.



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