

BOARDROOM REPORT

Notes from recent REIS Board meetings

LEE PLAN EVALUATION AND APPRAISAL REPORT

State Dept. of Community Affairs (DCA) has met with the Lee Planning Dept. and addressed the following issues noted in their initial review of the County's report:

Changes in land area: County will provide additional information on its shrinking jurisdictional boundary, due to annexation, and the effects on planning efforts.

Density Reduction / Groundwater Resources (DRGR) Land Use Category: DCA agrees with County's position to evaluate land uses in this area based on the DRGR hydrology study that is underway. The study will also the DRGR value in habitat and species protection.

Water Quality: The County will summarize water quality information for use in analyzing trends.

Transportation: DCA looks favorably to the Alternative Concurrency Approach presented in the EAR, contingent on participation of all affected entities, a financially feasible plan, and stop mechanisms should funding stop.

Financial Feasibility of Implementing the Plan: DCA will review the Annual Concurrency Report provided by the County.

Affordable Housing: DCA understands that the County needs to conduct a housing needs assessment in order to address this issue. DCA will accept an abbreviated study in order to keep the process moving forward.

Local Housing Assistance Program

A draft of Lee County's plan to meet the housing needs of low and moderate income households was presented in March. The plan covers state fiscal years through 2007-2008. The program aims to preserve existing affordable housing and expand production of new housing. The plan is posted at www.lee-county.gov/dcd/

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IMPORTANT NOTICE!

Beginning in May, REIS monthly luncheon meetings will be at Pelican Preserve Country Club. The Pelican Preserve entrance is on the south side of Colonial Boulevard, just one mile east of I-75 (exit 136). The gatehouse attendant will direct you to the clubhouse. Meetings will continue to begin promptly at 11:45 on the second Tuesday of the month.

THANKS MARLENE!

Marlene Knoll, of Old Florida Bank, is retiring from her duties with REIS. For the past few years, Marlene has been the cheerful voice on the phone and the smiling face at the registration table, welcoming members and guests to all REIS events. President Frank Mullins commented that "once you realize how much Marlene does for this organization, you really have to admire her ability to keep us organized and her talent for public relations." Marlene continues to work at Old Florida Bank and we hope to see her from time to time at REIS events.

WELCOME ANDREA!

Andrea Wardwell, of Erickson Associates, is now handling REIS meeting reservations and registration. Glenda Landon, of Edison National Bank, will continue to assist at the registration. Please take a minute to introduce yourself to Andrea at the next meeting and join in welcoming her to REIS.

Membership directories published

The 2005 REIS membership directories have been published and are available free to members. The directories are distributed at the registration table at the monthly luncheon meetings.

The handy booklet includes member contact information, including facsimile numbers and email addresses, as well as a cross-reference index by profession.

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Lee works to improve Development Order approvals

Effective April 18, Lee County Department of Community Development will no longer accept incomplete Development Order (DO) submittals. The change is intended to improve DO review time. The applications have been modified to reflect the documents required, which must be submitted in collated manner. For further information, contact Karen Hutcherson, DCD office manager, (239) 479-8543 or hutchedk@leegov.com.

In related news, the Lee Board of County Commissioners has approved the addition of 23 plan review personnel.

Big increase proposed for park impact fees

A study of Lee County Park Impact Fees proposes that the fee for single family homes increase 36% to \$1,513. The study also proposes the following fee increases:

- multi-family units increase 37% to \$1,135
- mobile home / RV pads increase 42% to \$1,105
- hotel/motel rooms increase 25% to \$696.

The plan is posted at www.lee-county.gov/dcd/

Roepstorff to lead Horizon Council

Former REIS President Robbie B. Roepstorff has been named Chair of the Horizon Council for the next year. Ms. Roepstorff is president of the Bank Of The Islands on Sanibel Island and has been a member of the Horizon Council Executive Committee since 2002. The Horizon Council is a public-private advisory board that advises the Lee Board of County Commissioners on Economic Development issues.



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LEGISLATIVE NEWS

FGCU Engineering School: A bill, HB 817 / SB 1252, would authorize creation of an engineering school, offering bachelor degrees, at Florida Gulf Coast University. Most of Southwest Florida's legislative delegation are co-sponsors, including Senators Saunders, Aronberg, and Bennett; and Representatives Williams, Kottkamp, Goodlette, Davis, and Kottkamp. On April 12, the bill was passed 7-0 by the Senate Education Committee. It is currently being reviewed by the House Education Council.

Intangible Tax: State Representative Jeff Kottkamp (R-Cape Coral) led an effort on the floor of the Florida House of Representatives to repeal the Florida Intangibles Tax. The measure, HB 963, passed on a vote of 85-30.

The corresponding Senate bill, SB 0880, was withdrawn in committee and a new bill introduced, SB 2348, that would reduce intangible tax rates.

Environmental Permitting: State Representative Trudi Williams (R-Fort Myers) has sponsored a bill, HB 759CS, designed to delegate the authority of the Federal Government, section 404 of the Clean Water Act pertaining to wetlands, to Florida's Department of Environmental Protection. The bill would streamline the permitting process, eliminating redundant review by numerous agencies, thereby saving taxpayers millions of dollars. The bill is currently in State Resources Council.

Jenkins-Owen honored

Long-time REIS member Sharon Jenkins-Owen has been recognized as "Planner of the Year" for the Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association. Sharon sits on the governor's Affordable Housing Commission and is president-elect of the state planning and zoning association.



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