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Past President Mary Gentile, CSM, CRX

BOARDROOM REPORT

News from recent REIS board meetings

Monthly Programs:

Dr. Larry Antonucci, president/CEO of Lee Health will be the guest speaker for the **February 9th luncheon**, sponsored by [Suffolk](#).

Lee County's goals and challenges will be discussed by Kevin Ruane, chair of the Lee County Board of County Commissioners, at the **March 9th luncheon**, sponsored by Bank OZK.

Future programs this year are planned to include housing and development strategies, state legislative review, and property value trends. We welcome your ideas for programs and speakers, which may be submitted to [Kent Poli](#), 239.337.3993. If you would like to assist by leading the pledge of allegiance and prayer at a luncheon, please contact [Don Miller](#), 239.571.4968.

Sponsorships:

Contact [Molly Scott](#), 239.226.0500, for information and availability of opportunities to sponsor REIS events.

Scholarship Program:

Donations are needed for scholarships to be awarded in 2021. REIS Scholarship Foundation is a 501(c)3 corporation and donations may be tax deductible. The Real Estate Investment Society manages the Foundation, allowing 100% of donations to be used for scholarships in real estate related programs at Florida Gulf Coast University. Information and an online donation form are on the [REIS webpage](#) or contact [Bev Larson](#) for details.

Membership:

All REIS memberships expired December 31st and any memberships not renewed are now available to new members. Information is on the [REIS website](#).

Website:

Check the [REIS website](#) regularly for the latest details on meetings and events for REIS and other organizations in Southwest Florida's real estate community. If you know of appropriate meetings or events that would be of interest to REIS members, please submit information or website links to info@reis-swfl.org.

WATER RESOURCES CONFERENCE

REIS is co-hosting the 30th annual Southwest Florida Water Resources Conference, a virtual event on January 22nd. The theme is "Times of Challenge and Transformation." The conference features presentations on state rulemaking, the Clean Waterways Act, and sea level impacts. A panel discussion will address current water resource challenges in Southwest Florida. The roster of speakers will include some of the top decision-makers responsible for water resource planning and management in Florida. Details at [Southwest Florida Water Resources Association](#).

CLEAN WATER ACT PERMITTING

In December the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) formally transferred permitting authority under Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to the State of Florida for a broad range of water resources within the State. The transfer is intended to eliminate duplication and streamline the permitting process. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) will now be participating in a joint application process. Pending applications will be transferred from USACE to DEP. New applications for a State 404 permit will be submitted to DEP. If it is determined that a SWERP is also required, DEP will engage SFWMD in the joint permitting process. More information is available from the [district DEP office](#).

BONITA CUTS PERMIT FEES

Effective January 1st, 2021, Building Permit and Plan Review fees for Residential (RES) and Commercial (COM) Building permit applications in Bonita Springs are reduced by 75% for one year. In addition to the temporary fee reduction, the Trade Permit application fee is permanently reduced to \$75 per permit.

NEW BUILDING CODE IN EFFECT

The 7th edition of the Florida Building Code is effective as of January 1st. The revised code includes significant changes to roofing assemblies and wind load criteria. Commercial provisions also include building entry systems, lighting and control requirements, and energy conservation standards.

BEV LARSON, CCIM

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ESTERO DEVELOPMENT CODE

The Village of Estero Town Council conducted a public hearing on its first Land Development Code on January 13th. The Land Development Code lays out zoning and other regulations for subdivisions and development of land. The proposed zoning map, land development code, and schedule of meetings are on the [Village website](#).

LEE SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT PLANS

The School District of Lee County is developing a new proximity-based student assignment plan for elementary schools starting in the 2022-23 school year. The Technical Working Group and community and district stakeholders used the latest GIS technology to organize elementary schools and students into new attendance boundaries (smaller zones, stronger choice). The goals are to improve transportation efficiency and diversity. Each draft scenario has 16 zones compared to the existing 6 sub zones. Four draft boundary scenarios will be presented in public workshops in mid-January.

CORPORATE TRANSPARENCY ACT

Congress passed the Corporate Transparency Act in December, which requires that all shell companies involved in U.S. transactions, including real estate, must divulge owners names or face fines and jail sentences. The information will be stored in a confidential database, accessible to federal law enforcement agencies and shared with banks. The registry will be managed by the Treasury Department and include domestic shell companies as well as foreign entities conducting business in the U.S. The Act is part of an overhaul of money-laundering laws.

SLAW DOG TOURNAMENT ROCKS

The 24th annual Paul Sands Memorial Slaw Dog Invitational golf tournament drew a full slate in November.



Coast University. You may also contribute to the REIS scholarship program by visiting the [REIS webpage](#) or contacting [Bev Larson](#), (239) 281-1290.

The popular event provides funding for the Paul Sands Memorial - REIS Scholarship program at Florida Gulf



REIS BOARD MEMBERS HONORED

Outgoing members of the REIS Board of Governors:

Gordon Glover and Michael Lehnert were saluted for their exemplary service at the December luncheon. 2020 President Mary Gentile was also presented with an engraved award by Vice President Bill Morris.

REIS 2020 President Mary Gentile receives plaque from 2021 President Bill Morris.



REIS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Please join in welcoming our newest members:

Mario Dattilo, Real Estate Acquisitions USA, specializes in real estate investments and public-private partnerships.

Melissa Dial, planning administrative assistant with Barraco & Associates, has extensive experience with land use and development applications and regulations.

Alessandro G. Secino, attorney with Henderson Franklin Starnes & Holt, focusing on real estate transactions and condominium/homeowners association law.

Mike Meunier is a financial advisor with Edward Jones with experience in regulatory compliance and marketing.

Chris Brockmeier, PE, senior principal, community development with Stantec, provides environmental and civil engineering for public and private sectors.

John Ferguson is president of SERVPRO of Central Fort Myers, remediating mold, fire and water damage.

Membership information is on the [REIS website](#).

COVID-19 BUSINESS PROTECTION

The Florida Legislature is preparing to expedite bills to provide businesses with immunity from COVID-19 related lawsuits. Identical bills have been filed in the Senate (SB 72) and House (HB 7) for the legislative session that begins March 2nd. House committees will begin discussions and take votes in January in an effort to fast track the bills. The bills address non-healthcare businesses only and do not provide protection for healthcare providers. If passed by the Legislature and signed by the governor as proposed, the legislation would apply retroactively and the changes would be permanent.

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