

REIS REPORT

June 2006

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

Published by the Real Estate Investment Society

BOARDROOM REPORT

News from recent REIS board meetings

SCHOLARSHIP FUND GROWING:

The REIS Scholarship Foundation has received over \$12,000 in donations, with 100% of donations to be available for scholarships to area colleges. Contact Walter Serbon, 239.437.0025, for more information.

ANNUAL SOCIAL EVENT TO BE COMPETITIVE:

This year's annual social event will feature golf and tennis tournaments, followed by a casual cocktail reception. The event is scheduled for Friday, October 13, at Pelican Preserve in Fort Myers. Details will be provided soon.

ENTITLEMENT PROCESS WORKSHOP:

Planning is underway for a workshop on the process involved in rezoning and acquiring development approvals. The program will include case studies and insight on budgets and timelines. Mary Gibbs and Stephanie Keyes are organizing the workshop, planned for September or October.

REGULATORY ISSUES:

Lee Development Code: Lee County is reviewing policy on including right-of-way (ROW) in density calculations for development approvals. The customary practice of including 50% of ROW is in conflict with policy and Board of County Commissioners confirmed policy, excluding any ROW from density calculations.

DR/GR Development: City of Bonita Springs continues to postpone policy decision on development in DR/GR areas but is addressing development applications case by case.

Downtown Project: Fort Myers is reconsidering aspects of the WCI development proposal for downtown riverfront. The developer has expressed frustration over the process and delays in receiving project approval.

MEMBERSHIP INTEREST:

The "waiting list" of persons seeking membership is over 50 and growing weekly. The board is considering increasing the present membership limit of 235.

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GROUP INVESTMENT WORKSHOP



Approximately 40 REIS members and guests attended a one-day workshop on new strategies for structuring group investments. The workshop was presented by REIS and conducted by Gene Trowbridge, JD, CCIM, a senior CCIM instructor, attorney, real estate broker, group sponsor, and author.

EXPRESS CHECK-IN AT MEETINGS:

Members and their guests may 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.

EXCITING PROGRAMS PLANNED:

- **David Mica**, executive director of the Florida Petroleum Council, will speak at the June 13 meeting.
- At the July 11 meeting, **Dr. Henry Fishkind**, noted Florida economist, will present a review and forecast of the regional real estate market, including the economic factors that influence it. Fishkind is appearing on behalf of the SWF Real Estate Council (REC).
- **Congresswoman Katherine Harris** is scheduled to speak at the August meeting. **Senator Bill Nelson** has also been invited. Both are candidates for US Senate currently held by Nelson.

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WORKFORCE HOUSING SYMPOSIUM

The Horizon Council will host a Workforce Housing Symposium from 8 to 5, June 22. State and national experts will be on hand to explain builder incentives, density, zoning, and financing programs. Details at swflworkforcehousing.com or (239) 338-3161.

GOOD VIBRATIONS

REIS President Stan Stouder has received letters from State Senator Burt Saunders and Lee Schools Superintendent Jim Browder that commend REIS and its members for their contributions to the community. In addition, news of the REIS Scholarship Foundation has recently been published in several local publications and business journals.

PROMOTE YOUR EXPERTISE

REIS members may publish articles in the *Fort Myers News-Press* "Commercial Connection" column, published every Sunday. Topics should relate to commercial real estate and be approximately 800 words. There's no fee involved. Contact Drew Robinson, 489-3033 ext. 219 or drobinson@viprealty.com, for details.

CASH BUYER

Lee County's 20/20 Conservation Land Program is flush with \$32.7 million cash in hand for acquisition of land to preserve. This is in addition to the \$25.9 million earmarked for Babcock Ranch purchase. Details on the program and process for submitting properties are at www.lee-county.com/countylands/Cons2020.

COUNTERING NIMBYISM

Patrick Slevin, a Tallahassee public relations expert, is now publishing the *Slevin Report*, a national monthly publication addressing strategies for dealing with "NIMBYs" (Not In My Back Yard). The publication, along with other resources for resolving NIMBY issues, is at www.SlevinGroup.com.



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REIS MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

Many responses to the recent survey of REIS members affirmed that the organization is doing a great job in serving the membership. Suggestions to improve REIS included:

- provide brief updates at luncheon meetings on county, city, and state issues of particular interest to members.
- provide more professional education programs.
- take a more active role in addressing issues at government level; more legislative advocacy.
- become involved in community service projects.
- more networking opportunities; have ambassadors to help new members become involved.
- less networking; more attention to being a forum for relevant education and debate.
- programs that take a more regional look, addressing communities outside Fort Myers metro area.
- provide current local market information.

REIS MEMBERSHIP SURVEYED

The recent survey of REIS members received 57 responses, representing 24% of the membership. According to survey results:

- 100% of members have email capability and check email at least once a day.
- 100% prefer to receive meeting notices via email and 79% make meeting reservations on the REIS website. 100% of respondents would like to receive an invoice when making reservations online.
- 50% play golf and 26% play tennis.
- Regarding the monthly luncheon meetings: 75% rated the location "Good;" 77% rated the facility and service "Good;" and 68% rated the meals "Good."

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Contact Bill Burdette, REIS REPORT Editor
239.936.1404 bill@burdetteinc.com