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Travis Merrick  
Lori Moore  
Mark Morris  
Kent Poli  
Past President Karen Miller

## BOARDROOM REPORT

*News from recent REIS board meetings*

**Luncheon Programs:**

The April 10th luncheon will feature an update on community redevelopment by Fort Myers CRA Director Leigh Scrabis, sponsored by [Kimley-Horn and Associates](#).

The May 8th luncheon will be sponsored by [Henderson Franklin, Attorneys at Law](#).

REIS welcomes your suggestions for programs. Please share your ideas with [Alexis Crespo](#), 239-405-7777.

**Sponsorships:**

Contact [Kent Poli](#), 239-689-7174, for information and availability of opportunities to sponsor REIS events.

**Scholarship Program:**

The REIS Scholarship Foundation is a not-for-profit, registered 501(c)3 corporation that provides an opportunity to make charitable donations for local college scholarships. More information is available from Scholarship Chairman [Mark Morris](#), 239-671-2266.

REIS thanks **Alexis Crespo, Samantha Howes, Amanda Brock, Mark Morris, David Fry, Bev Larson, and Mike Cannington** for their recent donations. Donations may be made on the [Scholarship web page](#).

**Education Programs:**

The Education Committee is working on concepts for the 2018 Real Estate Symposium. Anyone interested in participating on the committee is encouraged to contact Committee Chairs [Lori Moore](#) (239-338-4248) and [Tim Hancock](#) (239-646-4040).

## REIS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Please join in welcoming our newest member:

**John Svirsky**, of John D. Svirsky, Inc., arranges financing and refinancing for commercial real estate projects.

A limited number of REIS memberships are now available to new members. Full information and application are on the [REIS website](#).

## LEE IMPACT FEES INCREASING

On March 6th, Lee County Commissioners approved an increase in the base rate for building impact fees, but will maintain the existing discount to a 45% collection rate on fees for roads, parks, and schools. Fees for emergency services will still be collected at 100%. The new rate on single-family homes represents a 38% increase. The County is also extending the timeframe for establishing the base rate to every 5 years with an automatic 2.5% increase each year. Several new categories of property uses were created in the fee schedule.

## FLOOD INSURANCE IN LIMBO

The latest short term extension of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) by Congress is set to expire March 23rd. Long term reform of the program appears to be stalled and another extension is expected as part of a resolution to fund the government beyond March 23rd.

## ENVIRONMENTAL BUSINESS EXPO

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) South District presents a free event featuring training sessions and a product and services expo on April 11th in Fort Myers. Details at [DEP South website](#).

## COMMUNITY PLANNING SUMMIT

The "Human-Centered Planning Summit" will take place in Fort Myers April 19th. Speakers include: FDOT Division 1 Secretary L.K. Nandam; FDOT Complete Streets Program Manager DeWayne Carver; Victor Dover of Dover, Kohl & Partners; Ian Lockwood of Toole Design Group; Orlando Transportation Director Billy Hattaway; and Joe Minicozzi of Urban 3. See the [event flyer](#) for details.

## CORKSCREW AREA DEVELOPMENT

Development trends emerging in the Corkscrew Road Corridor and DR/GR environmental protection area will be addressed from developer, environmental and local government perspectives. The program is presented by [ULI Southwest Florida](#) and takes place at Florida Gulf Coast University on April 6th.

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## WETLANDS PERMITTING UPDATE

The Florida Legislature passed HB 7043 to enable Florida's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to take over issuing federal wetlands permits. The change is intended to alleviate lengthy delays in acquiring permits from federal agencies. The bill awaits approval of the Governor. Transfer of permitting responsibilities will need to be negotiated with federal agencies.

## COMMERCIAL LEASE TAX REDUCED

The Florida Legislature passed HB 7807 which reduces the tax on commercial property rent to 5.7% effective January 1st. HB 7055 was also passed to allow businesses to receive tax credits for a portion of the Business Rent Tax they pay, which will go toward certain scholarship funds. Effective: July 1, 2018.

## NEW BONITA PERMIT INSPECTIONS

Bonita Springs now requires final landscaping inspections for all commercial fence permits and monument signs. Commercial and residential permits now require preliminary silt screen/drainage inspections. The required inspections became effective February 13th.

## ESTERO COMP PLAN UPDATE

The Village of Estero's first Comprehensive Land Use Plan was submitted to the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity for review by State agencies on January 10th. Comments are expected in mid-March, then the Plan will be revised as needed and presented in a public hearing before the Village Council, likely in April.

## PINE ISLAND INCORPORATION

A draft charter for the potential incorporation of the Villages of Matlacha and Pine Island will be discussed over the course of 4 town hall meetings, hosted by the Greater Pine Island Civic Association (GPICA). The meeting schedule and draft documents are available on the [GPICA website](#).

## SKYPLEX DEVELOPMENT GROWS

Construction is well underway on the Gartner campus in the Skyplex area next to Southwest Florida International Airport. The first 2 office buildings and connecting atrium total about 200,000 sf, accompanied by a 15,000 sf amenities building. Completion is scheduled for October.

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION / INACTION

Growth Management (SB 362, HB 207) would require local governments to include a property rights element in their comprehensive plans that protects private property rights and encourages economic development. *Postponed and withdrawn.*

Private Property Rights (SB 292) would exempt property owners who produce renewable energy and distribute it to users on the property from being defined as a public utility, allowing apartment complexes to produce and sell solar power to tenants. *Postponed and withdrawn.*

Environmental Regulation (HB 1149, SB 1308) would provide examples of reclaimed water use that would create an impact offset when water management districts are evaluating consumptive use permits. It would also require The Water Resource Implementation Rule to include criteria by which an impact offset or substitution credit may be applied to the issuance, renewal, or extension of a consumptive use permit. *Legislature adjourned without action.*

Impact Fees (CS/SB 324 and HB 697) initially would prohibit local governments from collecting fees prior to the issuance of an occupancy certificate but has been amended in the Senate to allow collection upon issuing a building permit. It also restricts the use of collected fees. *Postponed and withdrawn.*


Community Redevelopment (CS/HB 17 and SB 432) would restrict the creation and operation of Community Redevelopment Agencies. Passed the House, *postponed and withdrawn in the Senate*

Conservation Land Acquisition (SB 204) would specify appropriations for management projects. Passed by the Senate, *postponed and withdrawn in the House.*

Local Tax Referenda (CS/SB 317) passed by the House, *postponed and withdrawn in the Senate.*

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (HB 575, SB 1516) would revise regulations for operation of MPOs. *Postponed and withdrawn in the House.*

Rural Economic Development Initiative (HB 1418) would revise the purpose and operation of the program. *Postponed and withdrawn in the House.*



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