

Estero Springs Property Owners c/o Michaela Puthon  
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## **March 24, 2008 Estero Springs Property Owners' Meeting Report**

### **A – Attendance**

Property owners: 16  
Lee County: Denise Sabatini, MSTBU Coordinator  
Bonita Springs Utilities: Mike Liggins  
Assistant to Michaela Puthon: Barbara Ryder

### **B - Purpose**

Meet with Lee County representative to discuss options to complete Estero Springs Subdivision. Inform owners of Lee County procedures and requirements to make parcels buildable, followed by question and answer period. Find a solution, which will be financially beneficial and allows us to move forward.

### **C – Subdivision History**

1. Estero Springs Development Corporation received its approval from the Lee County Board of Commissioners in 1957. A required Surety Bond in the amount of \$40,000.00 was posted. Parcels were sold locally as well as via mail orders all over the US. Most owners never saw what they purchased. The bond either expired or was rescinded, and not all roads were completed. Unit 1 roads were officially dedicated to the public in 1957. Unit 2 remains an unrecorded plat, and in 1966 the "roads", also called Common Elements, were sold at a public tax auction for \$75.00 to a private individual. No improvements were made for 50 years. Parcels remain landlocked and unbuildable.
2. In 1991 a private developer unsuccessfully attempted to assemble individual lots. Prohibitive cost of doing a land assembly and having to pay for infrastructure, will keep future developers out of the picture. Only Lee County has all the resources and manpower to do the project from start to finish. This might take up to 5 years. Property owners will not be charged one dime until after completion. Owners will have 15 years to repay Lee County.
3. **Taxes and Assessed Market Values:** The recent taxes increases have been horrific, to say the least. Early property owners paid \$445.00 per lot. Today's taxable market values average \$65,000.00 per lot. These values are based on previous years' recorded land sales. Starting in late 2004 a sales bubble started and did not end until mid 2006. Prices soared and accordingly, so did your real estate tax bill. Individual requests for new appraisals fell on deaf ears. Hopes for lower taxes for 2008 are not realistic. There were no sales for almost 2 years. A group presentation to the Tax Collector's Office asking for a review of the Estero Springs Subdivision might be a possible solution.
4. **Road Name Deletions:** In 2005 the 911 Service of Lee County requested that the majority of road names and street numbers be removed from county records and replaced with "**Access Undetermined**". It was deemed confusing to emergency response teams, because those **roads were, and still are, non-existent**. Unaffected by those changes were Americana Avenue, Coronado Street, El Paseo Street, Tropicana Avenue and Williams Road.

5. **Statistics:** updated to day of report  
Parcels (county terminology is Strap Number): 203  
Note: a parcel may be 1 lot or may consist of several lots. There are actually 295 lots  
Estero Springs consists of 2 units  
Unit 1: 66 parcels – 14 are Access Undetermined  
Unit 2: 137 parcels – 118 are Access Undetermined  
Existing Homes: 6 (Unit 1 only)  
Owners: 116 (Southwest Florida: 61; FL: 12; out-of-state: 42; out-of-country: 1 )

First mailing went to all owners. Return to sender: 12 New address found: 6

Replies to mailing: 29 – that is 25% of all owners

Second mailing to SWF and FL owners only – this was a reminder of 3/24 meeting

Contributions: \$995.00 given by 22 owners – this approx. 19% of all owners

Expenses: \$485.62 (mailing supplies and costs, room rental, time)

Petitions received: 69

Additional petitions needed: 35

Note: County voting guidelines – 1 vote per parcel (strap number) – 51% of 203 = 104

#### **D – Bonita Springs Utilities**

Bonita Springs Utilities has the franchise for our area. They will work directly with Lee County.

#### **E – Road Requirements**

1. All roads taken over by Lee County for maintenance must have a minimum of 60 ft. in length and may be 20 – 30 ft. wide. The balance would be needed for Right-of-Ways.
2. The road itself will have a center crown. Height would be determined by engineers.
3. All roads must have proper drainage – swales and/or pipes

#### **F – Clarification**

Lee County needs 1 check in the amount of \$500.00 to do a feasibility study and cost estimate, after the “Informal Petition” has been approved by 51% of parcel owners. Individual parcel owners do not have to pay \$500.00 each. Signing a petition is not a commitment to have the improvements done, but rather a request to the county to provide cost estimates.

#### **G - Future communications with owners**

We would like to utilize provided e-mail addresses. This would be more cost effective and quicker than mailings. Please rest assured that all private contact information will not be given to any outsiders, nor will it be provided to other owners without permission.

#### **H – Summary**

1. We need to break the past 50 year cycle of this failed and unfinished subdivision.
2. We need to work together to lower our real estate taxes.
3. We need to combine our efforts to make this a totally viable subdivision with infrastructure and services in place.
4. We need your signed Informal Petition to obtain cost estimates from Lee County.
5. We need additional financial contributions to continue and meet our goals.

One property owner said it best  
**‘We have everything to gain and nothing to lose ’**