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Update from Councilman Forbes

Bernwood Plaza Hilton Gardens Hotel

The developer of a Hilton Gardens Hotel, proposed to be built in Bernwood Plaza on Bonita Beach Road adjacent to the existing pylon sign, has withdrawn his development proposal. The developer for this project withdrew by not moving forward with the next step in acquiring the site. Should any new information become known to us, we will let everyone know by EBLAST. This withdrawal of building this Hotel increases the likelihood of another hotel/motel developer proposing a project in Bernwood Plaza or the land beside I-75 controlled by the owners of Bernwood Plaza and/or the 18-acre site beside I-75 and Hunters Ridge Blvd. There is an obvious advantage of locating a new motel/hotel adjacent to I-75 at an interchange.



Impending Traffic Issues on Bonita Beach Road from Bonita Grande to I-75

County Commissioner Larry Kiker, who represents Bonita Springs, as well as Estero and Ft. Myers Beach, was briefed on November 11, 2016 on impending traffic issues on Bonita Beach Road primarily east of I-75 to and through the Bonita Grande area. There appears to be strong support from leaders of communities from Village Walk through Hunters Ridge to address impending traffic issues. Commissioner Kiker asked that I, as point person, along with appropriate support staff, meet with him and Lee DOT to discuss these impending traffic issues and potential solutions to them. This meeting was held on December 9th. Lee DOT is not planning to change the 70 ft. misalignment of Bonita Grande at this time, but when and if the intersection becomes more hazardous, the County may consider acquiring land to align the intersection. Based on current traffic counts of 10,000 daily and projected traffic counts of 55,000 per day at build out, the projected number of trips per day results in a maximum roadway and intersection design of approximately 5,500 vehicles per hour. Lee County is using these projections as why medians like Hunters Ridge Blvd. are going to be closed when the number of trips per hour hits approximately 2,300.

Attendees for the City at this meeting were Fred Forbes, City Councilman, Jay Sweet, City Planner for the Community Development Department and Jim Wuster, retired traffic engineer and Bonita Springs' representative to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Citizens Advisory Committee. I personally feel these projected trips per day, resulting in a maximum design trips per hour for roadway and intersection design, need to be studied and refined due to the demographics of the east of I-75 residents. An overwhelming majority are retired, living in communities with food service, activity centers, community pools, tennis courts, and in many instances, golf courses, which should significantly lower the projected traffic trips per day and therefore the maximum design trips per hour.

Another point of interest, is the developer of Bonita Express, (what I have referred to as the Waffle House plaza) has several major nationally recognized businesses who are seriously interested in locating in this proposed development. Lee DOT, based on City supplied traffic counts and projected traffic counts of buildouts of the Bonita Exchange or Waffle House plaza, is proposing to close the median cut through and remove the first traffic light west of I-75, which takes you to Waffle House or McDonald's.

Hopefully most of those who receive this EBLAST Newsletter will find information which they are interested in. In the event you did not receive a copy of this information directly, simply email your name, community location, and your email address so you will receive future editions of this Newsletter directly to Sharleen.johnson@cityofbonitasprings.org. Please have your General Manager or Community president post this Newsletter on your community's website or email to the membership. I'm also willing to meet with groups of residents, External Affairs and/or other HOA or Community Committees and organizations to talk about community business. Please let me know if you are interested.

Fred Forbes, City Councilman