

External Affairs Update July 2013

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Bonita East Stakeholders (BES) on Monday, July 12, 2013, where the firm studying the pros and cons and impact of developing the City's DRGR briefed our group, information was disclosed regarding Walmart's continuing interest in opening a Walmart Superstore East of I-75 as part of a large shopping center. The information was disclosed by the firm who is apparently working for the Trustee(s) of Eagle, who was also the developer which obtained zoning approval to develop a large site (between 65 and 75 acres) at the northwest corner of Bonita Grande and Bonita Beach Road. Robert's Consultants was the original developer which initially had a Walmart Superstore as the main anchor for the project. Initially, the City turned down Robert's Consultants Development and the requested zoning. Approximately a year later, Eagle, who held control of the land, resubmitted the proposed development which was ultimately approved by the City including the requested rezoning.

Walmart pulled out of the original proposed Robert's development more than likely based on two issues: 1) significant opposition from East of I-75 residents lead by the former President of Worthington Country Club and their External Affairs Committee and supported by Hunters Ridge, San Remo and Palmira; and 2) City Council and Community Development downsized the maximum size of the single anchor store not compatible with Walmart's requirements. Worthington spent tens of thousands of dollars on attorney and traffic engineering study fees. Should the Trustee(s) for Eagle and Walmart develop a new proposal, more than likely it would require new public hearings and City Council approval to amend the Planned Development (PD) to permit increasing the maximum size of the anchor retailer. Should Walmart or any major retail development be constructed at the corner of Bonita Grande and Bonita Beach Road it would undoubtedly be a catalyst causing more development East of I-75 including the 18 acre +/- wooded site immediately north of our golf hole #3, the remaining Bernwood property immediately north of Hunters Ridge, and the north side of Bonita Beach Road at least from I-75 to Bonita Grande.

We will keep you advised as new information becomes available. Please forward this information to all of your friends especially those in communities other than Hunters Ridge.

Fred Forbes, Hunters Ridge Board President

BES Spokesperson