

A Council of Neighborhood Associations (CONA) meeting was held on March 15, 2017 at 9:30 a.m. at the Gulf Harbor's Civic Center, 4610 Floramar Terrace, New Port Richey, 34652.

Darrin Morse and Gary Nelson, two representatives of the Kitson Plan, were the guest speakers to explain the forward-thinking and visionary plans to develop one of the last land parcels of the old Mitchell Family Ranch in the Trinity area of western Pasco County. The land essentially is a mile square of former cow pasture just off the south side of State Road 54 and just off the west side of Little Road. The proposed development reaches all the way south to the school grounds of the Mitchell Middle and High Schools.

The developers will break ground this summer and on a "village center" very close to the Little Rd/SR 54 intersection. The village center will be finished by July 2018. Eventually, the whole development will be known as a new economic hub in the Trinity area. It will have a mix of shops, offices, a multiplex movie theater, pedestrian-only village squares, parks, bike paths; and, most-of-all, residences patterned after "Wiregrass" in eastern Pasco County. The mile square community will have many streets emptying onto SR 54 and onto Little Road. The rainwater will be contained within the square tract of land; and will not stress the existing Anclote River drainage basin that flows into the Gulf of Mexico. Long-time residents in the audience recalled seeing pedestrians walking on SR 54 chest-high in water during the most recent 100-year flood, called Tropical Storm Debby. They were skeptical of the planned community and its ability to hold much of a storm water runoff.

Some county employees were in the audience and two of them stood up and praised the plan. They may have been from the Pasco County Planning and Development Department (PDD), who oversees the County's Comprehensive Plan and the associated goals, objectives, and policies that guide Pasco's future growth. The old growth patterns of the 1970's (sprawl development and dead-end communities) were a mistake in hindsight. The small subdivisions along the west side of Moon Lake Road are examples of dead-end communities. When driving south on Moon Lake Road, the driver passes Hidden Lake, Forest Pointe, Baywood Meadows, Baywood Forest, Caribbean Estates and Imperial Oaks. It would be appropriate to buy six Dead-End signs and place one at the entrance of each of the six subdivisions, because there is only one motorway out of each community. Another economic disaster, which seemed like a good idea in the 1970's, is the Gulf View Square Mall. The Wal-Mart Supercenter, along with Amazon and other e-retailers, are the biggest contributors to rendering indoor shopping malls obsolete. That is why professionally-schooled regional planners are jumping on the band wagon of economic and residential hubs like the Wiregrass design. Someone mentioned a statistic that Pasco County is 78% residential, owing to a high percentage of retired adults and commuters driving into Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties to work. Seventy-eight percent residential is not healthy for the long-term prosperity of Pasco County.

The next meeting of CONA will be 9:30 a.m., Wednesday, April 19 and a speaker will talk on wise management of the reserves portion of a managed community's budget.