

On Monday, March 26, 2018, the Equestrian Preserve Committee (EPC) held a *State of the Equestrian Preserve* meeting and open forum. Approximately 90 residents attended, along with Mayor Gerwig, Vice Mayor McGovern, Councilwoman Siskind, and Councilman Napoleone.

Committee Chair Jane Cleveland opened the meeting by introducing each committee member and describing their association with the equestrian community. Ms. Cleveland then gave an overview of the committee's work over the previous two (2) years with regard to the Equestrian Preserve Area (EPA). Key items the EPC reviewed during that time included providing recommendations on the Plan of Action First Draft and the rewrite of Wellington's Land Development Regulations as well as several public hearings.

An overview of the rewrite of the draft of the Equestrian Plan of Action was provided along with a summary of recommendations from the draft – attached as Exhibit 'A'. This Plan represents the committee's work plan for the next two years.

The meeting was then opened to the public for an open forum. The open forum lasted roughly an hour, with approximately 15 attendees speaking. Residents came from the Equestrian Club Estates, Palm Beach Point, Rustic Ranches, Little Ranches, Paddock Park, Southfields, Sun Glade, and Saddle Trail Park neighborhoods, along with residents from Eastwood and The Isles. Several residents from these and other neighborhoods commented against expansion of the Preserve, the need for managed growth in the EPA, and the need to preserve and protect the EPA.

Marc Ganzi, Owner and Operator of Grand Champions Polo Club, stated that polo is stronger in Wellington now than it has been before. There were 197 participants and 38 tournaments at his club this year and polo is now played eight out of the twelve months of the year. The biggest difference is that polo is now more accessible to more people.

Additionally, other residents addressed external factors including federal and international, noting that countries such as Spain and Qatar are now developing competitions which take competitors away from Wellington. They also spoke about the need to remain competitive with other places in Florida such as Ocala and Jacksonville who are expanding their equestrian communities.

Some residents spoke to bridle paths with one stating that the number one thing that keeps an equestrian community together is horse trails. The trails need to be dedicated bridle trails, not dirt roads that can be paved over.

Some non-equestrian residents spoke about the impacts of the equestrian industry on non-equestrians. One stated that there are currently 12,000 to 16,000 horses here full-time and asked questioned how much more Wellington wished to expand and whether there was a need for additional expansion. Approximately 400,000,000 pounds of manure is being generated each year and everyone in the community needs to address this issue. The resident added that the majority of the residents in Wellington had nothing

to do with the equestrian community, and suggested that the EPC include non-equestrians on the committee. The interdependency between the communities is important and we needed to move forward together.

Chair Cleveland ended the public discussion by encouraging residents to review the Plan of Action and attend future EPC meetings to provide input.

The EPC will provide a final recommendation on the draft rewrite at its April 4, 2018 meeting.

Recommendations from the Equestrian Plan of Action

Community Interdependence

- Commission an Economic Impact Study to assess the value Wellington's equestrian community provides to the rest of the village. (Study is underway and scheduled for completion in 2018).
- Commission a Planning Study to assess how Wellington's equestrian industry can best position itself for future growth in the industry as a whole.
- Consider creating an ad-hoc group of landowners in the EPA to represent the community on equestrian issues.

Economic Impact

- Commission an Economic Impact Study to assess the value Wellington's equestrian community provides to the rest of the village. (Study is underway and scheduled for completion in 2018).

Horse Sports and Tourism

- Address the following questions as part of a Planning Study:
 1. Is there a need for smaller event venues in Wellington?
 2. Is there a need for other types of venues such as western or breed shows?
 3. What can be done to protect polo from development pressure?
 4. What can be done to help the polo community thrive here in the long-term?
 5. Should Wellington provide more lodging options? If so, where?
 6. Should Wellington attract the World Equestrian Games?

Land Use

- Maintain low density levels in the EPA.
- Encourage commercial uses within venues.
- Loosen regulations related to the number of barns allowed on a property.
- Loosen RV regulations.

Infrastructure

- Widen Lake Worth Road to four lanes.
- Make improvements to address the intersection at South Shore Boulevard and Pierson Road.
- Examine speed-calming methods for high-traffic areas and areas of concern in the EPA.
- Maintain Level of Service 'E' in the EPA.
- Revisit the proposal of a golf cart ordinance or more pathways.

Exhibit 'A'

- Plan for utility improvements including potable water, irrigation quality water, and broadband.
- Address the questions of Pierson Road and South Shore Boulevard through the Planning Study.

Environmental Management

- Continue researching the feasibility of alternative methods of livestock waste disposal in Wellington.
- Work with surrounding municipalities and organizations on a regional solution for livestock waste disposal.