



AGENDA

April 18, 2018 6:30 – 8:30 PM

Estero Rec Center, 9200 Corkscrew Palms Blvd., Estero, FL 33928 - 239-498-0415

(Times are approximate.)

6:30 PM – Gathering, Set-up Room

6:45 PM - Pledge of Allegiance

Reading of the First Amendment, Second Amendment and part of the Northwest Ordinance

Welcome to the Club

- Introduction of Officers and Directors
- Anyone not sign in?
- Please contribute what you can to the donation jar to help the Club pay for the room
- Reminder, this is the time to renew membership or apply to become a member of this Club (only \$20!)

Secretary's Report (if we had a Secretary)

Treasurer's Report and Review of Membership Rolls – Jim Watson

Introduction of candidates who are registered Democrats and who are present (who will talk later)

7:00 PM – New Bonita Springs City Council Member, Laura Carr

How did you decide to run? What was the commitment like when you were in the middle of your campaign? What do you hope to achieve on the Bonita Springs City Council? Did you win because of the success of your campaign or because of voter apathy, as the Naples News suggested?

7:30 PM – What can we do in regard to the BOCC and the CSC?

8:00 PM – Free Speech – Robust Debate on any topic of interest to those attending the meeting.

Candidates who are registered Democrats are allowed to talk now without unduly interrupting the business of the Club.

Final Matters

Democrats – Thank you for taking the time to attend this meeting. We are grateful, since there were other things you could have been doing. Bring some friends next time.

If you liked what you experienced here, tonight – or you didn't like it and would like to make it better – please become a member. Membership applications are on the table by the door. Dues are only \$20.

Asks of a Democratic Club in Lee County:

- Become a member, join the fun, help us become a more-perfect club.
- This election year, the Democratic Party of Lee County is already raising funds, making phone calls and getting ready to knock on doors. They would like this club to send 5 volunteers to their battle for a more Democratic Lee County. And, they will be providing several fun opportunities to help raise GOTV money. Please, after paying your dues to our Club, consider going to **www. leecountydems.org** and becoming a recurring donor to the Democratic Party of Lee County.

If you have any questions or would like to become a member of this Club, speak with any officer or director of the Club, including myself, Steven Blumrosen, President, The Democratic Club of Bonita Springs and South Lee County - 239-270-2655.

**The Democratic Club of Bonita Springs and South Lee County
meets the THIRD Wednesday of every month through the elections.**

Next meeting will be Wednesday, April 18, 2018. Same place, same time.

Look Ahead

**As we get closer to November, we will be asked to canvass door-to-door and phone bank.
If you live in a "Gated Community," it will be helpful if you could give some thought on how to approach other members of your community. Each community has its own rules and customs.**

First Amendment, Second Amendment, and Northwest Ordinance

Bill of Rights – First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

The Bill of Rights and the Northwest Ordinance were put into writing about the same time as the Constitution. The following shed light on the spirit of those times:

“A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”¹

“Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”²

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1. Second Amendment in the Bill of Rights
 2. Art. 3, The Northwest Ordinance (aka: An Ordinance for the government of the Territory of the United States northwest of the River Ohio. <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=8&page=transcript>)

Laura Carr elected new Bonita Springs city councilor

[Thaddeus Mast](#), thaddeus.mast@naplesnews.com; 239-263-4764 Published 7:20 p.m. ET March 20, 2018 | Updated 8:30 p.m. ET March 20, 2018



(Photo: Special to The Banner)

Laura Carr is the newest Bonita Springs city councilor after winning Tuesday’s local election.

The District 3 councilor beat Rick Steinmeyer, earning 72 percent of the vote. Carr got 491 votes, while 192 people voted for Steinmeyer.

“I’m so excited and really happy,” she said. “I have a house full of neighbors who just showed up and surprised me, and we’re all smiling.”

Carr will serve take up a four-year term. Her first full council meeting should be on April 4.

The local election didn’t draw record crowds — voter turnout was less than 13 percent out of about 5,300 registered voters. Only 105 people voted in person; the rest of the ballots were mailed in.

District 1 Councilor Amy Quaremba and District 5 Councilor Mike Gibson both ran unopposed.



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A voter exits the polling station during the 2018 Bonita Springs City Council elections Tuesday, March 20, 2018, at precinct 49, St. Leo Catholic Church in Bonita Springs. Laura Carr and Rick Steinmeyer ran against each other in the race for the District 3 seat. (Photo: Katie Klann/Naples Daily News)

"I'm absolutely thrilled for" Carr, Mayor Peter Simmons said. "She's worked hard. She's been involved with the city for a number of years. She'll be a welcome addition for our City Council. I very much look forward to the continued service with Councilwoman Amy Quaremba and Councilman Mike Gibson."

Steve Slachta has held the seat for eight years and could not run for re-election because of term limits.

Carr will represent residents from the southwest portion of the city, including Little Hickory Island, homes south of the Imperial River west of U.S. 41 and the region south of Bonita Beach Road west of Imperial Parkway.

Carr is a 20-year resident who lives in Spanish Wells. She is involved in local veterans organizations with her husband, a West Point graduate, as well as the National Alliance on Mental Illness.



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Arnold Haake, husband of Laura Carr, dons his "I Voted" sticker while showing his support for his wife during the 2018 Bonita Springs City Council elections Tuesday, March 20, 2018, at precinct 49, St. Leo Catholic Church in Bonita Springs. Laura Carr and Rick Steinmeyer ran against each other in the race for the District 3 seat. (Photo: Katie Klann/Naples Daily News)

Carr said she is ready to dive in to the inner workings of the city.

"What I want to do first is get to understand how the council really works," she said. "I want to meet with staff and get behind the issues in Bonita Springs. I want to be a fully participating member of council."

Carr said the prior council's decision to provide a city loan to the Everglades Wonder Gardens Board of Directors spurred her to run for office. The decision didn't sit well with her, especially after the council decided to take over ownership entirely.

Reducing flooding is a top priority for Carr moving into her new seat, she said. Parts of Bonita Springs suffered severe flooding after Hurricane Irma.

Searching for solutions to traffic congestion, especially to the beach, is a close second. Constructing a parking garage and using shuttles could be an option to reduce traffic, she said.

But she desires to stay on top of the people in District 3 most of all.

“I want to stay in touch, in contact and informed with what my district wants,” she said.

Voter apathy? Bonita residents fail to turn out in large numbers during latest election

[Thaddeus Mast](mailto:thaddeus.mast@naplesnews.com), thaddeus.mast@naplesnews.com; 239-263-4764 Published 6:55 p.m. ET April 16, 2018

Bonita Springs elected city officials determine property tax rates, how hurricane cleanups are handled and where businesses can be built. That's a short list of their power.

But some elections that choose the people who flex authority in Bonita Springs fail to draw more than a few hundred people in a city of around 54,000 residents.

Less than 13 percent of eligible voters participated in the latest Bonita Springs city council election held last month.

More: [Laura Carr elected new Bonita Springs city councilor](#)

Just 105 people who live in District 3 made the short drive to a polling station while another 575 sent their ballots by mail.

Local elections may get less attention than races for higher offices, but they matter, said Vicki Collins, a spokeswoman for the Lee County Supervisor of Elections Office.

“You live in a city, county and state — that’s what’s affecting your world immediately,” said Collins. “Local laws affect every aspect of your life. Hospitals, libraries and infrastructures are all governed by local elected officials. I have no idea why people do not participate more. It blows my mind.”

A few factors could have contributed to Bonita's low turnout.

This is not the year of a U.S. presidential election, which tend to draw more people to the polls or to request mail-in ballots.

Only three City Council seats were up for election, and two of those races were uncontested.

Less than 5,400 people in the city were expected to weigh in on the district races, which are open only to residents who live in those districts. Another factor could have been a lack of awareness.

Editorial: [Carr for Bonita Springs City Council, then a discussion](#)

Amy Quaremba ran a close three-way race her first election in 2016. This year, she was unopposed.

Getting enough volunteers to represent their neighbors on the City Council or even on homeowner's association boards can be a challenge, said Quaremba.

"People are not interested in putting forward the time. You have to be willing to devote a lot of time to do this job," Queremba said. "Maybe some people don't think they're ready. I can understand that."

Some local elections coincide with federal elections, which elections experts say tends to boost voter participation on local issues and races.

In 2016, ballots in Bonita Springs included the mayoral race and two city council elections. Voter turnout in the city was 47 percent — higher than the Lee County average of 37 percent.



Newly elected Bonita Springs mayor Peter Simmons celebrates with his supporters during his election party at Backwater Jack's restaurant Tuesday, March 14, 2016 in Bonita Springs. (Luke Franke/Staff) (Photo: Luke Franke)

Former Bonita Springs Mayor Ben Nelson, who spent 16 years on the City Council, said that passion against an issue or candidate also can motivate people to vote.

"People who vote are people who are mad about an issue," Nelson said. "Very seldom do you see people go to the polls and say, 'That guy's doing a really good job, I should vote for him.'

"Most times, people feel the need to vote against another guy," Nelson continued.

Though finding a way to boost public participation in local government can be daunting for them, candidates should try going out to the community and knocking on doors, Quaremba said.

"The candidates have to create some enthusiasm," she said. "I believe in civic responsibility. Maybe we don't emphasize that enough."

Board of County Commissioners and the Children's' Service Center

By Steven Blumrosen, April 18, 2018

Yesterday, the Lee County Commissioners met in a room packed with residents determined to convey to the Commissioners the importance of a Children's Service Center.

Commissioner Frank Mann made a motion in support. There was no second, at that time. Many people spoke.

To me, at times, it felt like a New England Town Hall (another form of democracy).

I have no doubt that the Commissioners agreed a movement had developed in the county! Hundreds of people were there.



I spoke. Not for the Club but to express my own opinion that it is worth a few "Andrew Jacksons" (\$20 dollar bills) added to my property taxes to get a larger, more dedicated, skilled workforce to take care of me when I finally finish delaying my gratification and start to live life with all the gusto I can manage at that time.

The CSC was the topic of our first meeting this year. As you may recall, a CSC is created by state statute and must be approved by county voters, if it will involve property tax. The best way to get the small property tax issue on the ballot is for the BOCC to put it there. This would not be an endorsement of the CSC by the County Commissioners, it would merely allow the voters to decide. Many voters, like me, might want to chip in a few Andrew Jacksons to get a new organization that will be focused on providing kids with more opportunities to connect with people who can help them find their vision and passion for productive work.

Lee County already has a remarkable educational system. It has produced a Microsoft Competition winner from a high school in one of Lee County's most impoverished areas and, as Jane Kuckel said last month, there are academies in middle schools and high schools to help students gain employable skills. Someone who is not heading for college can graduate with credentials to get a decent paying job.

Fast cars, gun and cash is not a student's only alternative to education.

