

Michelle McLeod Joins the Collier County Planning Commission: A Commitment to Thoughtful Growth

A Florida native with a deep-rooted appreciation for the environment, Michelle McLeod has always felt connected to the natural beauty of Southwest Florida. Growing up, she spent much of her time on the water—boating, skiing, and swimming—developing a lifelong respect for the delicate balance between development and conservation. A proud graduate of Fort Myers High School (Go Greenies!), Michelle has always had “green” on her mind, and now, she brings that mindset to the Collier County Planning Commission.

Shaping Collier County’s Future

The Collier County Planning Commission plays a vital role in shaping the county’s Growth Management Plan (GMP) and Land Development Code (LDC), ensuring sustainable and strategic development. As a new member of this seven-member committee, Michelle is committed to guiding responsible growth that respects the area’s natural resources while meeting the needs of the community.

She aligns with Eric Eikenberg, CEO of the Everglades Foundation, who emphasizes that development today can and should happen in an environmentally sensitive way. As Michelle puts it, “Development and the environment can coexist. It’s about thoughtful planning and sustainable practices.”

Protecting Our Water Resources

Beyond her role on the Planning Commission, Michelle also serves on the Big Cypress Basin Board, a key component of the South Florida Water Management District. This board’s mission is to safeguard and restore South Florida’s water resources, protect communities from flooding, and ensure a sustainable water supply while actively engaging with the public and stakeholders.

A critical focus of the South Florida Water Management District is the restoration of the Everglades, the largest environmental restoration project in U.S. history. Michelle’s involvement reinforces her dedication to preserving Florida’s unique ecosystems while balancing the demands of a growing community.

Proven Leadership in Naples

Michelle is no stranger to leadership and public service. As a former Naples City Council Member, she played an instrumental role in several major projects that improved the quality of life for residents:

- Design and construction of Baker Park – Creating a premier outdoor space for residents to enjoy.
- Reconstruction of the Naples City Dock – Enhancing a key asset for the local boating community.
- Development of a “complete streets model” – Promoting a more walkable and bikeable Naples.
- Construction of the City of Naples Emergency Operations Center – Strengthening public safety and disaster preparedness.

Her experience in city government provides a strong foundation for her work on the Planning Commission, ensuring that growth decisions are made with long-term sustainability and community benefit in mind. When she's not shaping policy or protecting Florida's water resources, Michelle is an active outdoor enthusiast. She enjoys running, cycling, swimming, and boating—embracing the very lifestyle that makes Southwest Florida such a special place to call home.

With her background in local government, her passion for sustainable growth, and her dedication to environmental stewardship, Michelle McLeod is well-positioned to make a meaningful impact on the Collier County Planning Commission. Her leadership will help ensure that Collier County continues to thrive while preserving its natural beauty for generations to come.