## **Kudos&Kicks**

Reviewing the good, the bad and the questionable

NAPLES DAILY NEWS EDITORIAL BOARD

**Kudos:** Government should be in the sunshine, not in the shade — unless perhaps that shade is blue.

One of the largest employers in Collier is county government itself, with some 1,800 workers under the county manager.

So it was a big boost to see Collier commissioners this week unanimously support becoming the latest government and major employer in the area to commit to earning a Blue Zones designation.

The Blue Zones Project was introduced to Southwest Florida by NCH Healthcare System to promote well-being. It's been embraced by the city of Naples, supported in Bonita Springs and launched as a pilot project in Collier County Public Schools. Medical device manufacturer Arthrex, a major private employer in the region, also is shaded blue.

"Our mission is to help people live longer, healthier and happier lives," NCH chief executive Allen Weiss told commissioners.

"It's about healthy choices and healthy living," Naples Mayor Bill Barnett said.

To earn the Blue Zones designation, there's a point system with various ways and programs to accumulate points.

County officials say Collier government first began promoting healthy initiatives 15 years ago and in 2008 added an incentive program for employees to promote well-being.

As occurred when Collier school district officials considered the program, some came to the commission meeting to sing the blues about government overreach.

Barnett rejected that notion, calling Blue Zones "the most nonpolitical" initiative he's seen in his decades of government service.

With its track record, county government already is off to a running start and close to the point total of joining the dozens of agencies and businesses in the Naples area that have embraced the Blue Zones Project.