

Alachua County Historical Commission Minutes June 10, 2019

Members Present

Melanie Barr, Kali Blount, Penny Dodd, Bonita Dewiliby Moore, Karen Kirkman, Peggy MacDonald; Pat Moore (Chair), Robert Moore, Tina Sessions, Linda Vlacos, Ashley Wood

Members Absent

Charles Horn

Others Present

Kathleen Pagan (County Staff Liaison); From Florida Public Archeology Network—Jeff Moates M.A., RPA; FPAN Central Region Director; Nigel Rudolph, FPAN Central Region Public Archaeology Coordinator; and Rebecca O’Sullivan, M.A., RPA; FPAN West Central Region Public Archaeology Coordinator II

Meeting was called to order by Chair Pat Moore at 6pm. Staff noted since FPAN staff were here that the order of the reoccurring business item on cemetery could be moved to immediately after or coincide with the new business FPAN item. Agenda was approved with this change. Some corrections were noted for the minutes (Linda was present, misspelling of Barr, addition of JT Glisson’s daughter and Waldo Area Historical Society). Minutes approved with corrections as noted.

Citizen Comments

None

New Business

A. Presentation by FPAN Staff

Following brief self- introductions by the members of ACHC, Jeff Moates began meeting discussion by providing background on the work of FPAN since it was established 15 years ago. He is Director of both the Central Region (includes Alachua County) and also West Central Region. The website provides the regions shown on map- <https://www.flpublicarchaeology.org/regions.php> . Jeff explained that basic cemetery management and maintenance is critical effort of FPAN and noted the Cemetery Resource Protection Training (CRPT)- <https://www.flpublicarchaeology.org/workshops/CRPT.php> (Karen Kirkman attended the most recent training and she and others have participated in past trainings). Karen mentioned that the work led by Jim Powell resulted in an extensive list of Alachua County cemeteries yet not all have Florida Master Site Files (FLMSF) completed. (<http://www.wizardofar.org/>)

Jeff explained that FS Chapter 497 allows that local government can offer some services for cemetery maintenance but not necessarily in perpetuity. While Jeff said that this law is critical for sites, unless the cemetery is owned by a government he is not aware of any Florida government applying it thus far. <http://m.flsenate.gov/Statutes/497.284>

There was mention of the recent bill in Congress regarding historic African American Cemeteries. Jeff noted if passed it will compile a list of African American cemeteries including of abandoned cemeteries, and some owners are not aware of the human remains on their property. This is written to include funding but more co-sponsors are needed. H.R. 1179 (116th) : African-American Burial Grounds Network Act. Text is here- <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/hr1179/text> . Karen Kirkman noted that ACHC has recommended in a March 2019 motion for the County to consider cemetery maintenance as part of reparations for 'Truth and Reconciliation.'

Jeff described FPAN projects underway in Hillsborough and Manatee counties, with some grant funding. He recommends that ACHC compare the "Virtual Cemetery" list with FLMSF. The Master Site file is reviewed for all 'development or ground disturbing activity.' Jeff further explained that protection is a County issue, and the local Sheriff has jurisdiction. He said while a Cemetery Management Plan is a goal, sometimes lack of funding may not allow this so the 'Best Management Practices' approach is an alternative. Cemetery maintenance costs are sometimes shared between the public entities who manage the land as well as families who manage individual grave plots. If there is no surviving family this can become difficult and maintenance is not accomplished. Nigel Rudolph spoke of the Ocala Cemetery where vandalism at an African American site required community action, and one grave with serious damage was repaired by a volunteer mason.

There was opportunity for questions and discussion of ways FPAN staff can assist ACHC efforts on historic cemeteries. Consensus agreement is to create Florida Master Site Files for all the known cemetery sites (Jeff noted this is possible without involvement of property owner). Also sometime during mild weather FPAN will schedule a CRPT event here, possibly in Archer. FPAN will also contact Dr. Marty Hylton at UF regarding the recent grant application on behalf of Archer BME Cemetery.

Staff note: Note this information about Pensacola cemetery protection is shared on FPAN website- <https://www.flpublicarchaeology.org/projects/PACT%20Manual.pdf>

Chair Pat Moore asked new member Kali Blount to introduce himself further. Kali mentioned his interest in history was sparked in part by a book, *They Came Before Columbus* by Lerone Bennett. A native of Detroit, Kali moved to Gainesville in 1987 and works part time as a nurse. He also volunteers as a community activist and on multiple County volunteer boards. All welcomed Kali.

Ashley Wood asked staff to find out if any Advisory Board policy in writing mentions that 2 terms is the direction for number of terms of volunteer service.

B. County Proclamation regarding 400 years of African American History

Staff Kathleen Pagan reported that this will be read as a Proclamation rather than a resolution as was previously mentioned. Former City Commission Yvonne Hinson was the person who requested this matter. Discussion by the group resulted in several necessary edits including add Andrew Mickle, correct typo (Clary), add enslaved at first clause, and delete Josiah Hall. Staff will coordinate with County Manager staff.

Reoccurring Business

Truth and Reconciliation

Kali asked if the Historical Commission is working directly on community efforts. Staff Kathleen Pagan noted that the group focuses on research and outreach to historical societies, and will address reconciliation with other programs as directed by BoCC. Staff reported that it is her understanding the website work will be completed when the Equity Officer added in the new budget is hired.

Lion Statues

Staff noted a digital photo of the Lion in the Criminal Courthouse was circulated.

History Reading

Kali Blount asked if the reading could be a larger geography than the County, but was advised the purpose is to report on County history using primary sources. He recommended the book “Rebels and Runaways: Slave Resistance in Nineteenth-Century Florida” by Larry Eugene Rivers (Author). It is about the North Florida Underground Railroad.

Penny Dodd spoke about the difficulty of finding complete information on the history of a Waldo law Marshall, 22 year old Josiah Hall, who was shot and killed in 1912. The newspaper accounts report a black man named Lonnie Lewis was found afterwards outside Florida, and that gambling and boot legging were occurring, but there were no witnesses to the shooting. Karen Kirkman recommends this Library of Congress website for research with old newspapers- <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> . The group thought more research is needed before this topic could be a reading. Bonita Dewiliby Moore mentioned that the Waldo Cigar Factory Building is important for another Waldo topic.

Ashley Wood mentioned the topic of the railroads in Alachua County. He will research more--- noting that a history museum in Colorado includes a train mail car.

Staff Kathleen Pagan mentioned that review of a narrative by Charles Horn can occur when he is ready.

Dr. Peggy MacDonald stated she will work on a local history of woman’s suffrage.

State Historic Markers

Staff Kathleen Pagan reported she spoke with Mary Reichert at Butler Enterprises. The marker location is near retail space that is still under construction so it will not be installed before Spring 2020. She reminded Mary that fabrication takes around 3 months, and resent the narrative the ACHC recommended in order to resolve the text matter. Melanie Barr noted the historic marker will be in an area that is all new buildings which is unusual for most historic markers.

There was discussion of the Negro League Marker. Robert Moore noted perhaps another letter should be considered. Staff will circulate the County letter for ACHC review. Motion (Ashley Wood, 2nd R. Moore)- *ACHC send a letter to the Wild Spaces & Public Places Citizen Oversight Committee recommending us of funds for the purchase of the property used by Negro League.* Motion passed.

Rochelle Buildings

Pat Moore noted a discussion with a local preservationist.

Historic Cemeteries

As discussed previously with FPAN staff.

Staff Report

In addition to the information noted on the agenda, Staff mentioned she is researching the Seagle Building and New Deal history.

Member Briefing Points

Robert Moore reported on the 5 scholarships the Hawthorne Area Historical Society awarded to Hawthorne Middle and High School students. A newsletter provided the student names and information about the ceremony.

Bonita Dewiliby Moore reported that she attended the Historic Roundtable meeting in Palatka, and the discussion about National History Day. This website provides info on the 2020 theme- <https://www.nhd.org/breaking-barriers-history>. Bonita noted that in other Counties the students participate in National History Day. There was discussion of how ACHC could help promote the program here. Peggy suggested to contact Donna Jones (SBAC Assistant Superintendent). Penny noted that in 2023 the Waldo School will celebrate a Centennial and in February 2023 there will be several events. Melanie Barr noted that Pleasant Street Historical Society holds an essay contest. Staff mentioned that Alicia Antone, now Outreach Services Manager at Headquarters Library, would be a good contact for this discussion (email aantone@aclib.us).

Melanie Barr stated she attended the June 1 event at the Alachua County Medical Society. She also completed a State grant on behalf of the Pleasant Street Historical Society.

Linda Vlacos reported that Waldo Area Historical Society may acquire the old Library for their use. The decision will be made by the Town Commission.

Ashley Wood reported a new 501©3 has formed at "FairOaks" and plans are underway for a Plein-Air Paint Out in November 2019.

Kali Blount announced he performs in a band at Cypress & Grove in Gainesville on June 21 in evening.

Karen Kirkman talked about her participation at recent CRPT with FPAN in Charlotte County and noted that there are Charlotte County Historical Markers also fabricated by Sewah Studios, with the County logo included.

Dr. Peggy MacDonald announced budget cuts to the Florida Humanities Council, and therefore the Speaker Series is on hold. No future events are scheduled for 2020. https://floridahumanities.org/who-we-are/2019-funding/?fbclid=IwAR2phkKx_q7mVnFp8po41Mthv99wKiwBf32C_cpjMEDdaCXD7z0sGG-ZDNo

Dr. Peggy MacDonald also mentioned the idea of an Op-Ed in the newspaper regarding the Truth and Reconciliation efforts could be considered. [Staff note: This can be discussed at next meeting]

Meeting adjourned at 8:05pm

Next meeting is August 12, 2019.