

Alachua County Historical Commission Minutes August 12, 2019

Members Present

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

Members Absent

Charles Horn; Linda Vlacos

Others Present

Kathleen Pagan (County Staff Liaison); Pastor Richard Harrison; Mrs. Josie Harrison

Meeting was called to order by Chair Pat Moore at 5:15pm. Staff and Chair noted since the Harrisons were present to discuss the Simmon Grove Bethelite Baptist Church Marker this item could be moved forward. Motion to approve agenda with this change passed unanimously. Minutes approved with corrections as noted.

Minutes of June meeting were reviewed with the following corrections noted. Add Kali Blount to Members Present list (he is mentioned otherwise). In Briefing Points, correct the comment by Robert Moore to refer to Hawthorne Area Historical Society, and Hawthorne Middle and High School student scholarships. Minutes were approved with corrections noted, by motion and passed unanimously.

There were no citizens to speak on matters not on the agenda.

Reoccurring Business

State Historic Markers

Simmon Grove Bethelite Baptist Church- Both Pastor and Mrs. Harrison were present to represent the Congregation. Mrs. Harrison noted she has worked with State Staff (Michael Hart) and Pastor Harrison mentioned his keen interest in completion. The staff draft text was discussed and the following noted:

Beginning line 6 the list of early Reverends--- suggestion to remove all the duplicate "Rev." through the list of 9 without dates noted.

Also beginning line 8 the same suggestion regarding the 3 men with service dates noted. This will reduce the character count.

There was also a comment to correct the sentence beginning “Twelve years later” to change to past tense—...the Church had...Bro. Curtis Jackson was a very active member who served...

There was discussion of whether there is any record of when the name changed from Persimmon Grove to Simmon Grove. Pastor Harrison said this is not known, and there are no longer any persimmon trees. The Historical Commission wondered if the change occurred when the trees were gone, or if it could be simply the speech of the people. If there is space when the edits above are made you might add some mention that the reason for the name change is unknown.

There is also no information regarding when the original building was lost and the new construction occurred. Kali asked if there is any record of post-Civil War activism but there is none documented.

One outcome of the discussion was mention that the Hawthorne Area Historical Society maintains records of churches, and can help Simmon Grove with scanning photos and records.

Staff Kathleen Pagan will share the ACHC comments with State Marker Council staff Michael Hart who will complete the final edits for the State Historic Marker Review Council’s next meeting in November.

New Business

A. Citizen Request- Building Naming

Comments to BoCC by Bruce Borders- Hope Powell Waldo Fire Station; Road Memorial Sign/ Consider Motion to Support

Discussion included the following points: Ashley Wood noted the County policy adopted several years ago requires family members approval for any application to name a street. This info should be shared with Mr. Borders. Also Penny Dodd mentioned there is at present a street in Waldo named “Hope’s Place.” Penny shared the following photos with staff after the meeting.



Photo by Penny Dodd



Photo by Penny Dodd



Photo by Penny Dodd

Tina asked about the street grid numbering in Gainesville, and when the numbering changed from the historic numbers/names to the present system. Someone noted this info may be in Sanborn Map records. Staff mentioned there was also an update to the street numbers County wide some years ago.

[Info below from Public Library Website- <https://www.aclib.us/local-history>]

Gainesville's population was less than 14,000 in 1936 when [this map](#) was created--a time when most streets had names (not numbers) and everybody knew their way around town. But the end of World War II changed everything. The GI Bill, promising the opportunity of a college education, brought thousands of young men with wives and children to town, creating seriously overcrowded schools and chaotic traffic problems. One solution to the chaos was to change the street names to numbers in a grid system (University Avenue and Main Street remained the same), and the intersection of University and Main became the zero point for counting off streets and numbers.

- Gainesville 1936 map: [jpg](#),
- [Gainesville Street Name Conversion Chart](#)
- [Gainesville Street Name with Numbers Conversion Chart](#)

B. Citizen Inquiries

1. Cellon Farmhouse (circa 1917 or 1918)- Group discussion noted that contact info for Frank Cellon could be shared with Mrs. Ann J. Burch who made inquiry. Staff will contact her with this info (fcellon@gmail.com; PO Box 92, Melrose FL 32666).

Staff shared some information from County Clerk website records. These are later years—Pansy Bell Cellon and Alexander B. Cellon, Jr., are mentioned--

<http://www.alachuaclerk.org/archive/AncientJ/FrontPage.cfm?BID=1484&DID=068&SN=Cellon&GN=Alex&SAIIFlag=Y&NAIIFlag=N>

<http://www.alachuaclerk.org/archive/AncientJ/FrontPage.cfm?BID=1484&DID=072&SN=Cellon&GN=Pansy&SAIIFlag=Y&NAIIFlag=N>

<http://www.alachuaclerk.org/archive/AncientJ/FrontPage.cfm?BID=1487&DID=408&SN=Cellon&GN=Pansy&SAIIFlag=Y&NAIIFlag=N>

Staff also found Mr. Frank Cellon noted here--

<https://archive.org/details/alachuaportraitl11999unse>

2. Willie Lee & Sarah Stuckey (Hague Church/Cemetery) Staff reported a phone message from Debbie Stuckey asking about this history of some persons buried at Hague Cemetery who also asking about cemetery maintenance. Staff left a voice message emphasizing need for use of D2 and never pressure washing (as was mentioned in the voice message left for staff). Karen Kirkman mentioned another approved cemetery product (Orvis). Karen also talked about leaving D2 on the stone for rain to wash. Staff Kathleen asked about the different spelling of the name (Stuckly and Stuckey) and Karen stated she will check the photo records. Some information on the methodology of the Virtual Cemetery was shared. A member noted that much preservation information, including for cemeteries, is online at <https://www.ncptt.nps.gov>

C. Tele tower Review

Tele tower is proposed at 13901 SE 152nd Lane, Cross Creek. There was discussion to review Staff Draft of Comment Letter. Ashley Wood noted that due to proximity to Lochloosa Lake and the early settlements of Native Americans and history of human habitation for thousands of years, there would likely be artifacts including projectile points and hand tools on the site. There was a question regarding any artifacts found during the professional survey mentioned in the letter. Bonita stated the Hawthorne Area Historical Society would be interested in any findings. Staff noted she was not familiar with the protocol but would check with Mike Drummond at EPD. [Note that Mike confirmed any artifacts found on private property remain the property of the owner]. Kali asked about power access and staff noted this level of detail would be reviewed by the Planning Commission during formal project review. ACHC Consensus for approval of letter.

Reoccurring Business

Truth and Reconciliation

Staff Kathleen Pagan spoke about a recent trip to Montgomery AL to Equal Justice Initiative Museum and Memorial and other sites. She will provide additional written information on the historical sites and the 3 staff attending (herself and staff from County EO and IT) will make a presentation to the County Commissioners soon.

Dr. Peggy Macdonald suggested an Op-Ed series in the Gainesville Sun. Staff supports this idea yet cannot lead it without approval of County Manager. Dr. Peggy volunteered to lead. She noted a video of a panel discussion featuring herself, Karen Kirkman, Dr. Tricia Hilliard Nunn and Commissioner Hutchinson. [Note: This video should be linked to County website]

History Readings

Chair asked all present what historical research they are interested to report to BoCC. These topics were mentioned, and others will be discussed in future:

Melanie Barr on Tom Petty history (Sept. 24 meeting was discussed but this will be Oct. 8 instead); Charles Horn on Second Seminole War (Dec. 10); Robert Moore on Chester Shell (Feb. 2020); Dr. Peggy Macdonald on Women's Suffrage (March 2020); Ashley Wood on Mail Delivery by Railroad; Pat Moore will work with Nigel Rudolph (FPAN) on casket industry.

Rochelle Buildings

Pat reported on meeting with Ann Stacy and Guida McIhinney, who is interested to begin a Facebook group to raise public interest in the buildings. Staff noted that ACHC members should not discuss a matter on the agenda on Facebook to ensure compliance with the Florida Sunshine Law. There was discussion of the difficulty faced by historic preservation advocates without the cooperation of the Trustee (owner). Some points raised were it is better use of ACHC time to focus on projects we can accomplish; the problem of the long time the buildings have been without adequate maintenance and the probability of increasing deterioration. [Following the meeting Chair and Staff discussed this matter will not be part of the agenda until such time as the building Trustee establishes some agreement. Staff contacted State Division of Historic Resources to find out if State may have any of the records of the Trust and was advised to consult with County Attorney on this matter. Any forthcoming information will be shared.]

Historic Cemeteries

Karen Kirkman reported on work underway with Nigel Rudolph at the Florida Public Archeology Network to add sites to the Florida Master Site File. Recently five (5) additional cemetery sites were added.

Karen is also working with the Mt. Nebo Church, working with elders to document unmarked graves as possible from their recollections. She is also involved with the Patterson Community Cemetery to reform the non-profit organization to care for the site.

Karen noted there is a need for ground penetrating radar at the Serenola Cemetery site.

Teaching History

Bonita and Dr. Peggy noted that school histories are needed on the School Board website. There was mention of the work done by former ACHC member (the late Verdell Robinson) on Mebane history.

Someone noted there are conversations with Gussie Lee and Albert White on the 'Alachua County Talks' and that the County Communications media resources are a good opportunity for public outreach. Dr. Peggy mentioned telling these histories through the lens of desegregation.

Staff Report

Regarding the point on potential NR listings, Kali noted the importance of A Quinn Jones House. (Staff confirmed this site is already on the NR—added in Jan. 2010-- [National Register Info for A Quinn Jones Home in Gainesville FL](#))

Member Briefing Points

Penny Dodd reported that Linda Vlacos is the new President of the Waldo Area Historical Society. Alicia Vlacos is now Secretary.

Bonita Dewiliby Moore reported on the new banners depicting the history of 'Early Hawthorne.' The banners are 33" x 81", very well designed (a small drawing was shared) and will be on display at the Town Library, City Hall, Community Center and Historical Museum. The project was funded by Clay Electric.

Ashley Wood spoke about the memorial for Harry C. London, Jr. of Evinston, at age 90. Ashley attended the memorial and visited the Boardman Cemetery, since Harry worked on the farm with Ashley's brother Freddie for over 80 years. A person of special abilities, Harry was born at Lake View and lived in the Coleman Settlement. There is a historical marker nearby. Ashley also spoke of the historic Rosenwald School in Boardman (south of McIntosh near the present day Dollar General).

Melanie Barr announced the State approval of the Tom Petty marker. There is effort underway by Pleasant Street Historical Society to host a panel on the topic of historic preservation.

Kali Blount shared information on a discussion of “Heirs Property” on August 18, sponsored by the Community Land Trust ([Website of Communities that Care Land Trust](#)) with speakers from Three Rivers Legal Service. Kali also shared a print copy of a report on the Florida Main Street Program that was presented to the Gainesville Historic Preservation Board by Kyra Lewis.

Dr. Peggy Macdonald noted several recent articles on history in local publications.

Karen Kirkman is working on the new exhibit at the Historic Haile Homestead on an enslaved couple, with research provided by a descendent (Tanya Peterson).

Tina Sessions presented an Architectural Record and a postcard from a historic building (Ohio State Reformatory in Mansfield OH) in her hometown where “Shawshank Redemption” was filmed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm

Next meeting is September 9, 2019.