

Florida Historical Commission
Web Meeting, Zoom, Meeting ID: 897 0663 8603
Friday, June 16, 2023 - 9:36 a.m. to 11:37 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Commission Members Present In-Person: Dr. Judy Bense, Chair; Ms. Kathleen Kauffman; Mr. Steve Birtman; Mr. Tony Cortese; Mr. Parker Destin; Mr. John Phelps.

Commission Members Present Via Webinar: Dr. Clifford Smith; Mr. Rick Gonzalez, Vice Chair; Mr. John Browning, Jr.

Commission Members Not Present: Dr. J. Michael Francis.

DOS Staff Members Present: Ms. Alissa Lotane, Director; Dr. Sarah Liko, Operations Manager; Alexys Johnson, Executive Assistant; Dr. Angela Tomlinson, Assistant Director; Mr. Ruben Acosta, Chief, Bureau of Historic Preservation; Mr. Jeremy Heiker, Historical Marker Program; Dr. Kathryn Miyar, Chief, Bureau of Archaeological Research; Mr. Eric Case, Grants Supervisor; and Mr. John Grandage, DHR Director of Public Engagement & Historic Site Development.

Members of the Public Present: None.

Item I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Dr. Bense called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. and asked Dr. Liko to call the roll. Quorum was confirmed.

Item II. Introduction of Commission, Staff & Guests

Dr. Bense asked the commissioners, staff, and guests to introduce themselves.

Item III. Adoption of Agenda

Dr. Bense asked for a motion to adopt the June 16, 2023, FHC business meeting agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Item IV. Approval of Minutes from February 3, 2023, Meeting

Dr. Bense asked for a motion to accept the minutes from the February 3, 2023, FHC business meeting. Mr. Phelps moved. Mr. Birtman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Item V. Approval of Minutes from Holocaust Memorial Zoom Meeting, April 12, 2023

Dr. Bense asked for a motion to accept the minutes from the April 12, 2023, meeting. Mr. Phelps moved. Mr. Birtman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

After approval of the minutes, Commissioners discussed the Holocaust Memorial. Mr. Gonzalez voiced criticism of the design and placement of the memorial. He made a motion to authorize a letter to the next reviewing body regarding the FHC's objections to the proposed location of the memorial, and the design of the memorial. Ms. Kauffman seconded the motion. Ms. Kauffman expressed disappointment that the FHC's concerns were not properly considered by DMS. Mr. Phelps made a substitute motion to reaffirm the prior position of the FHC and apprise the cabinet. Mr. Destin seconded. The substitute motion passed. Mr. Birtman and Mr. Gonzalez voted nay.

Item VI. Chairman's Comments

Dr. Bense gave her appreciation for the Legislative funding of Special Category grants.

Item VII. Director's Comments

Dr. Bense recognized Ms. Lotane to give the Director's Comments. Ms. Lotane thanked the commissioners for their time. She provided updates on the budget, which was signed by the Governor on June 15, 2023. Ms. Lotane provided an update on the Museum and its progress. She also discussed the Main Street program's future projects. Division positions were discussed; eight were received in the new FY budget including 4 OPS conversions into career-service positions, plus three positions for the new Historic Cemetery Program, and one for an Architect. The Black History Museum Task force was discussed, and it was mentioned that the committee will be appointed at a future time. A Florida Main Street Conference invitation was extended to those commissioners able to attend. Mr. Phelps had a question about the monuments bill, which was answered by Ms. Lotane. Dr. Bense provided her compliments and gratitude to Ms. Lotane's work given her short time in the position.

Item VIII. Committee Reports

Dr. Bense recognized Dr. Miyar to give the Bureau of Archaeological Research report. Dr. Miyar provided updates for each program area, including research on Dog Island, looting cases, and conservation projects. Dr. Miyar touched briefly upon on staff response to a shipwreck in Daytona Beach Shores. She discussed how staff have been working with law enforcement on looting, damages, and other cultural resource crimes. An unnamed looter in Marion County has been arrested and charges against him have been pressed. Mr. Birtman requested an update on this matter in future meetings.

Dr. Bense recognized Mr. Acosta to give the Bureau of Historic Preservation report. Mr. Acosta provided updates on staffing and the Main Street program. In reference to the National Register, 20 properties were nominated last year. He also touched on tax credit projects.

Dr. Bense recognized Dr. Tomlinson to give the Grants Program report. Dr. Tomlinson provided an overview of the Special Category and Small Matching grant funding in the budget. For the Small Matching Fiscal 2024 grants, 54 projects will be funded totaling about \$2.3 million. For the Special Category grants, 33 projects were funded totaling \$8.4 million. The Legislature also funded 19 member projects with three under Small Matching, and 16 under Special Category. The Governor vetoed four member projects (one Small Matching and three Special Category). She discussed grant application submissions and the process for reviewing them. She reminded the commission that the Special Category meeting would be held on September 27-28. She explained that the Legislature had allocated \$1 million to a new Abandoned African American Cemetery grants program; guidelines are currently being drafted for this program. Dr. Tomlinson touched on two grants OPS positions converting to Career Service positions.

Item IX. Business Items

Dr. Bense shared her concerns with being informed during the next legislative session. She felt that the Commission should be briefed on what is going on in proposed legislation concerning historic preservation. For purposes of tracking issues, she brought up having Zoom meetings every two weeks for the first month and every week for the second month of session. Dr. Bense asked for a motion to hold these meetings. Mr. Phelps so moved. Ms. Kauffman seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Cortese moved to add an agenda item to the next FHC business meeting for an overview of state law on monuments and memorials. Ms. Kauffman seconded. The Motion passed with opposition by Mr. Gonzalez.

Dr. Bense asked Dr. Liko to provide the commissioners with upcoming dates for the FHC business meetings.

Item X. Business Items

Dr. Bense discussed the work by commissioners and coalition members to speak with legislators.

Item XI. Public Comment

None.

Item XII. Adjourn

Dr. Bense asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Phelps motioned to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

_____ Presiding Officer

_____ State Historic Preservation Officer and Director, Division of Historical Resources

Approved: _____