

**Florida Historical Commission**  
**500 S. Bronough Street Tallahassee, FL. 32399**  
**Room 307, R.A. Gray Building**  
**Web Meeting, Zoom, Meeting ID: 897 0663 8603**  
**Friday, August 4, 2023 - 9:31 a.m. to 12:31 p.m.**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Commission Members Present In-Person:** Dr. Judy Bense, Chair; Steve Birtman; Tony Cortose; Parker Destin; Dr. J. Michael Francis; Rick Gonzalez, Vice Chair; David Hoyt; Kathleen Kauffman; John Phelps.

**Commission Members Present Via Webinar:** John Browning, Jr.; Dr. Clifford Smith.

**Commission Members Not Present:** N/A

**DOS Staff Members Present:** Alissa Lotane, Director; Dr. Angela Tomlinson, Assistant Director; Ruben Acosta, Chief, Bureau of Historic Preservation; Dr. Sarah Liko, Operations Manager; Alexys Johnson, Executive Assistant; Jeremy Heiker, Historical Marker Program Coordinator; Dr. Ryan Duggins, Underwater Archaeology Supervisor; Dr. Sam Wilford, Conservation and Collections Supervisor; Eric Case, Grants Supervisor; and John Grandage, DHR Director of Public Engagement & Historic Site Development.

**Members of the Public Present:** Taris Kennedy; Derek Miller, Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

**Item I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Dr. Bense called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. and asked Alexys Johnson 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 August 4, 2023, Florida Historical Commission (FHC) business meeting agenda. Kathleen Kauffman so moved. John Phelps seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item IV. Approval of Minutes from June 16, 2023, Meeting**

Dr. Bense asked for a motion to accept the minutes from the June 16, 2023, FHC business meeting. John Phelps so moved. Parker Destin seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item V. Chairman's Comments**

Dr. Bense expressed approval of DHR's legislative budget successes from the last session, including the Special Category Grant funding.

**Item VI. Director's Comments**

Dr. Bense recognized Alissa Lotane to give the Director's Comments. Alissa Lotane provided information on legislative appropriations of note, including: \$8.4 million for Special Category Grants; \$300,000 for a Museum of Florida History master plan; and \$525,000 for Main Street Program Technical Assistance and to develop a Florida Main Street digital marketing application tool. Position updates include four OPS-to-Career Service conversions, which will be used for two Career Service grants positions, a Rental Manager at Mission San Luis, and a Main Street position. Alissa Lotane discussed other restructuring moves to allow for career growth within the division, in addition to other positive outcomes from recent staff promotions. The division is also hiring a Public Information Specialist to work on current division-wide design projects and outreach.

Alissa Lotane discussed specific legislation that impacts the division. House Bill (HB) 49 created the Historic Cemeteries Program, which provided funding for three staff: one SES supervisor and two Career Service positions. The Florida Historic Cemeteries Program Advisory Council, also created under HB 49, is currently going through the DOS appointments process. HB 49 also provided \$1M for an Abandoned African American Cemeteries Grant Program. Grant guidelines/rule development are underway, which will lead to the release of the grant application in the near future.

HB 1441, or Senate Bill (SB) 1616, which created the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force, was also discussed, along with Task Force responsibilities under the legislation.

Alissa Lotane also discussed various construction projects. SB 1506 expands the Capitol Complex to include the R.A. Gray Building. The Elliott Building is projected to be demolished in December to become the location of a memorial garden. DOS is coordinating with other agencies on mitigation related to the demolition. The division is nearing completion of restoration work on the Union Bank building. A new exhibit will open at Union Bank in February 2024, in collaboration with the Black Archives at FAMU. Federally-funded deferred maintenance construction projects are still in progress and require some realignment of these ARPA funds in order to proceed. Additionally, \$3.434 million was received from the legislature for abatement at DOS historic sites.

The Preservation on Main Street Conference, held in Ocala from July 26-29, 2023, was a success and well-received by all involved, with attendance reaching over 300 people.

#### **Item VII. Business Items**

Dr. Bense recognized Derek Miller, Director of Legislative Affairs with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), to present a request for renaming the FDLE's Miami Regional Operations Center to the "Jose Antonio Perez Building" in honor of the late Special Agent Jose Perez. Steve Birtman moved to accept the request to approve the building renaming as presented. Kathleen Kauffman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Bense recognized Kathleen Kauffman to give the Special Category Grants Rule Subcommittee proposed recommendations. The 100-point scale will be kept. Criteria for the three major scoring categories will be revised: 1) historic significance, 2) community impact, need and educational potential, and 3) organization administration and technical ability. Michael Francis recommended eliminating the term "pre-history." Dr. Bense recommended using "historical events." Rick Gonzalez moved to approve the recommendations of the subcommittee as discussed. Tony Cortese seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Bense recognized Dr. Angela Tomlinson to present Monuments and Memorials - Review of Statutory Language. She provided a brief overview of the requirements for design and placement of monuments at the Capitol Complex as set forth in *Section 265.111, F.S.*

Dr. Bense recognized Alissa Lotane to provide updates on new considerations involving grant funding awarded to archaeological projects.

Dr. Bense requested that staff provide the commissioners with the next meeting dates. Staff provided those dates as November 2, 2023, for the National Register Review Board meeting and November 3, 2023, for the FHC business meeting. The Special Category grant review meeting dates were also provided as September 27 and 28, 2023.

#### **Item VIII. Committee Reports**

Dr. Bense recognized Dr. Ryan Duggins and Dr. Sam Wilford, on behalf of Dr. Kathryn Miyar, to give the Bureau of Archaeological Research report. Dr. Ryan Duggins provided an update on Public Lands Archaeology (PLA). The discovery phase in the Kearney Island looting case appears to be complete. DHR staff have been deposed as a result of their damage assessment and jury selection is moving forward. An Archaeological Resource Management webinar was created by Public Lands Supervisor, Dr. Paulette McFadden. Previously, this was an in-person training program designed for law enforcement, which will now also be available digitally to help participants who cannot attend in person. PLA assessed 11 new applications for the Florida Forever program, the state's premier conservation land acquisition program. These evaluations, which included on-the-ground field visits, examined approximately 32,000 acres of proposed conservation land and resulted in the recordation of several new archaeological sites.

Dr. Sam Wilford provided updates on the Collections and Conservation Section. A kick-off meeting for the new DOS Artifact Facility was held and a review of the initial programming guidelines was completed. Conservation's annual audit was completed as well, per the audit collection requirement of reviewing objects valued at over \$1,000. Sam Wilford also stated that Collections is working with the Ministry of Culture for Spain and the City of Saint Augustine on an upcoming

exhibit featuring underwater archaeology. Dr. Ryan Duggins then presented the Underwater Archaeology Program updates. Fieldwork that focused on two coastal barrier islands in the Gulf of Mexico has been completed for the Department of Environmental Protection Coastal Zone Management grant. Work on Dog Island has also been completed. BAR recently took possession of a new research vessel. On position updates, two new BAR staff members have been hired. As a final BAR update, staff have been working with the Seminole Tribe of Florida on a request to help them identify shared and split collections housed across the state, and to conduct consultations and repatriations regarding human remains and associated funerary objects in these collections. Florida State University and the Florida Museum of Natural History have been involved in the consultations and repatriation efforts.

Dr. Bense recognized Ruben Acosta to give the Bureau of Historic Preservation (BHP) report. Ruben Acosta provided updates regarding staffing, the Preservation on Main Street Conference held in July, and the National Register Review Board (NRRB) meeting. The NRRB Meeting resulted in four approved nominations. BHP is working with the National Park Service (NPS) to adjust nominations based on how NPS is reviewing these nominations at the federal level. Main Street received a legislative appropriation to build a smartphone app for their program that will allow residents and visitors to explore all that Florida's Main Street communities have to offer.

Dr. Bense recognized Dr. Angela Tomlinson to give the Grants Program report. Dr. Angela Tomlinson provided an update on applications for the Small Matching and Special Category grant programs. Staff completed the full review of Small Matching Grants and released applications to the panel. Special Category applications should be released to the Commission by the end of August. Out of 74 Small Matching applications received, 71 were eligible for a requested amount totaling \$3.1 million. For Special Category applications, 47 were received with a requested amount of \$12.9 million. For the Historic Cemeteries Grant program, the DOS General Counsel's Office assisted with posting the Notice of Rule Development on August 3, 2023. The next step is posting the Notice of Proposed Rule, which starts the 21-day public comment period. Once this process is finalized, the application cycle can open.

#### **Item IX. Other Business**

Dr. Bense called for other business. John Browning inquired about the status of the Holocaust Memorial project. Sarah Liko reported that she spoke with staff at the Department of Management Services (DMS). She was informed that the deadline for memorial name suggestions had passed and that over 1,000 names were received. Final design for the memorial is pending. Rick Gonzalez advised that he has forwarded the design provided by DMS to the director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.


#### **Item X. Public Comment**

Taris Kennedy, a member of the public, was recognized to discuss having a county road renamed. She provided a description of the road location and was advised by Parker Destin and Steve Birtman to reach out to local officials. Contact information will be given to her after the meeting to assist her.

**Item XI. Adjourn**

Dr. Bense asked for a motion to adjourn. Kathleen Kauffman so moved. The meeting adjourned at 12:31 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Presiding Officer

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State Historic Preservation Officer and Director, Division of Historical Resources

Approved: 2/7/2024