

**TASK FORCE ON ABANDONED AFRICAN-AMERICAN CEMETERIES**  
**Tampa Theatre, 711 N. Franklin Street, Tampa, FL 33602**  
**Thursday, September 2, 2021; 9:30 am -12:30 pm**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Task Force Members:** Dr. Timothy Parsons (*Chair*), Dr. Kathryn O'Donnell Miyar, Ms. Yvette Lewis, Dr. Antoinette Jackson, Ms. Althemese Barnes, Mr. Jeffrey Moates, Mr. Keenan Knopke, Senator Janet Cruz, Representative Fentrice Driskell, and Mr. Jaha Cummings.

**Task Force Members Present:** Dr. Parsons, Dr. Miyar, Ms. Lewis, Dr. Jackson, Mr. Moates, Senator Cruz, Representative Driskell, and Mr. Cummings attended the meeting in person; and Ms. Barnes joined the meeting remotely.

**Task Force Not Present:** Mr. Knopke.

**Department of State Staff Members Present:** Ms. Jennifer Kennedy and Mr. Ryan Ash.

**Members of the Public Present:** Dr. Marvin Dunn, Mr. Ray Reed, Ms. Robin Nigh, Mr. Jack Anderson, Mr. Devin Bleich, Mr. Daryl Richardson, Ms. Lucile Malone, and Ms. Skoervitch Emile.

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

Dr. Parsons called the meeting to order and called the roll.

**Item II. Opening Remarks**

Dr. Parsons requested a motion for the adoption of the meeting agenda for the second meeting of the Task Force, which was adopted unanimously. Subsequently, Dr. Parsons requested a motion for the approval of minutes for the previous meeting held on July 20, 2021. The meeting minutes were approved unanimously with one technical change per comment from Mr. Moates.

Dr. Parsons provided opening remarks and invited the Task Force members to make introductory comments.

**Item III. Summary of Methods for Collecting Public Input**

Dr. Parsons informed the Task Force members that members of the public may provide their input regarding abandoned African-American cemeteries in the state of Florida through the following methods that the Department of Historical Resources has established:

1. Send email to [AfricanAmericanCemeteries@DOS.MyFlorida.com](mailto:AfricanAmericanCemeteries@DOS.MyFlorida.com). This email address will be available on the website that the department has created for information relating to this Task Force (<https://dos.myflorida.com/historical/archaeology/human-remains/abandoned-cemeteries/abandoned-african-american-cemeteries-task-force/>).
2. Submit information through the Historic Cemetery Inventory, which has been developed in partnership with the Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN) over the last several years. Although this form was not specifically created for this Task Force, the timing allows for this form to be utilized to collect public input regarding abandoned African-American cemeteries. The Historic Cemetery Inventory, headed by the FPAN, is now live and is available at: [www.FPAN.us/HCI](http://www.FPAN.us/HCI). There are a couple of ways to provide input to the FPAN and the Division of Historical Resources:

(i). Visit [www.FPAN.us/HCI](http://www.FPAN.us/HCI) and fill-out the *Historic Cemetery Inventory Online Form* (<https://casweb.wufoo.com/forms/x10hc1xq16lf4at/>).

(ii). Fill out a postcard-sized Historic Cemetery Inventory Card and mail the card to the Division of Historical Resources so that the information can be reported in the Florida Master Site File. This card may be handed out at churches, libraries, or other locations to collect public input.

Dr. Parsons mentioned that the submission of information through the two methods described above may trigger a follow-up from the FPAN or the Division of Historical Resources staff.

#### **Item IV. Overview of Chapter 98-268, Laws of Florida; and Related Summary of Findings and Recommendations from the Final Report of the 1998 Task Force on Abandoned and Neglected Cemeteries**

Dr. Parsons provided a summary of the findings and recommendations reported by the 11-member Task Force on Abandoned and Neglected Cemeteries that was established in 1998 under [section 13, chapter 98-268, Laws of Florida](#). A complete list of the Task Force's findings and recommendations are included in the final report submitted by the Task Force, which is available at: <https://www.coj.net/city-council/docs/brcemeteries-1999-statetaskforce-finalreport.aspx>.

#### **Item V. Overview of the Role of the Division of Historical Resources under Florida Law Regarding Cemeteries**

Dr. Miyar presented an overview of chapters 497 and 872, Florida Statutes, which include provisions relating to cemetery type, management, ownership, protection, and relocation. Additionally, Dr. Miyar also provided a summary of the Division's role in protecting cemeteries and managing historic preservation programs.

#### **Item VI. Summary of Initiatives in Other States**

Dr. Miyar provided an overview of initiatives undertaken in other states that have cemetery programs and highlighted the differences in program administration.

#### **Item VII. Presentations, Thoughts, and Input from Task Force Members**

Representative Driskell, Mr. Moates, Ms. Barnes, and Mr. Cummings presented to the Task Force a summary of information that they had compiled regarding abandoned African-American cemeteries, which was followed by a discussion among Task Force members regarding the need to continue exploring ways to identify and maintain abandoned African-American cemeteries, and raise public awareness to help with such efforts.

#### **Item VIII. Update on Public Comment**

Dr. Parsons emphasized the methods by which members of the public may submit comments to the Department of Historical Resources, as discussed under item III of the agenda for this meeting.

#### **Item IX. Public Comment**

Members of the public provided their comments.

#### **Item X. Adjourn**

Dr. Parsons requested a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously. Dr. Parsons adjourned the meeting at 12:18 p.m.

An archive of this meeting is available on the Florida Channel at:  
<https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/9-2-21-task-force-on-abandoned-african-american-cemeteries/>.



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Presiding Officer

11/22/21

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Date Approved