

Alachua County Historical Commission April 13, 2023, Minutes

Members Present In-Person: Melanie Barr, Barry Baumstein, Kaitlyn Hof-Mahoney, Dr. Jacob Gordon, Karen Kirkman (Chair), Mike O'Loughlin, Michelle Seitzmeir, Cynthia White, Ashley Wood.

Members Absent: Mike Hill, Gwen Thompson.

Others Present In-Person: Staff Liaison Kathleen Pagan.

Others Present Virtually: Dr. Michelle Rutledge.

Karen Kirkman, Chair, Called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm with a quorum present.

A Motion (Ashley Wood, with 2nd) to approve the agenda was made, and passed unanimously. The draft minutes of March 2023 prepared by staff were discussed, with several corrections noted as follows [delete typo pg. 1; existing Ft. Clarke marker is about fort history and Baptist church has good records; include information from email from Ashley @ book and share with ACHC.] : A Motion (Mike O'Loughlin, with 2nd) to approve subject to these changes, passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments—Dr. Michelle Rutledge was observing the meeting, she had no comments.

New Business

NEPA review on a proposed telecommunications project. The proposed site is 15416 NE County Road, Waldo. EPD staff provided a map indicating the closest structure shown on the Florida Master Site File is approximately ¼ mile distance. There are numerous structures further away, in the Waldo Historic District. Ashley Wood noted these towers have a light that may be disturbing to residents, but there was discussion that this concern should be noted at the development review. The Historical Commission reviews any potential impact to the nearby structures, and there was consensus that the proposed tower would not have an impact. Following a motion (Jacob Gordon, with 2nd) and vote, the letter drafted by staff was approved. (Note: The letter was emailed to the project representative on April 18, 2023).

Continuing Business

Truth and Reconciliation project website is <http://truth.alachuacounty.us/index.html> ; Chair Karen Kirkman announced several events. The High Springs Soil Collection Ceremony, 10am on April 22nd has a virtual option. The Livestream link is here- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhQaYnaSf_Y

Karen noted there is one lynching victim, [insert name], on the list from Equal Justice Initiative. The soil collection will also honor a victim who was an 'innocent bystander', Mr. Walker, who

witnessed the beating of a white female city clerk, a crime the City Marshall was later arrested for and convicted of a life sentence. Unfortunately the Marshall was later granted parole under the condition that he not return to Alachua or Duval counties.

Karen explained that soil collection events do not require extensive research documentation to EJI and can acknowledge related local history and other lynchings and murders.

Karen also announced the Alachua/Newnansville Marker Unveiling will take place on Saturday, June 3, 10 am. The location announcement is pending. She also mentioned most of the staff at EJI are not assigned to work on this work now as they are focused instead on review of death row cases to prepare appeals.

History of Former County Commissioners (since Mid- 20th Century)- Michelle Seitzmeir has completed narrative histories for every Commissioner on this list. She asked about emailing the draft to the individuals for review. Everyone agreed this is a good idea, there may be practical challenges in finding the emails for the list. There was discussion to include earlier time periods, but staff and others think the work should be completed as initially assigned and staff thanks Michelle for all the work she did for this project.

Karen Kirkman encouraged everyone to delve into the BoCC Minutes transcriptions on the Ancient Records website. There are records from the 1800s about payments to paupers, as well as the coroner. It was agreed that Cyndi would join Michelle to continue this research. Here is the link to the webpage that includes the Ancient Records, including the Commission Minutes-- <https://www.alachuaclerk.org/archive/default.cfm>

History Readings- There was brief discussion yet a next topic and volunteer is still needed.

State Historic Markers-- Staff explained a communication received from Chris Monaco, Ph.D., reviewing the Cuscowilla Draft. It was noted that per BoCC Motion there is more interpretive information needed about the Indigenous people of Florida, as the motion followed the first historic reading by former member Prof. Nicole Nesberg. There was consensus to focus on the indigenous history and the Chair asked staff to communicate with Gwen Thompson.

For the Ft. Clark Missionary Baptist Church marker work, Karen Kirkman reported the church Pastor and his brother have drafted a one-sided marker (same text on both sides). She will share the text when it is more complete.

[Melanie Barr arrived at 6:18pm, after attending the beginning of the City of Gainesville Historic Preservation Board to hear the City Parks staff discuss the Thelma Boltin Center.]

Historic Cemeteries-- Staff mentioned she is working on a report about the site in the Kincaid Loop subdivision shown as an African American Cemetery on some deeds. Karen Kirkman

noted a WPA record noted it may be site for deceased veterans yet had no names. This source called it the 'Scott Cemetery.' Karen also mentioned the work of Dr. Ngozi, with a Facebook page "Illumination in Darkness-- African American Cemeteries Project." Staff will share the draft report on the Kincaid Loop cemetery site.

Work at the New Beginnings Church of God by Faith, in the Copeland Community, will be led by FPAN staff and a community meeting will be organized in the summer.

Staff mentioned citizen inquiries about funding/assistance for cemeteries-Haynes Memorial (Micanopy) and Providence (Windsor). [Note: A history of Haynes is online-- [HAYNES MEMORIAL HISTORICAL CEMETERY \(wizardofar.org\)](https://wizardofar.org/HAYNES%20MEMORIAL%20HISTORICAL%20CEMETERY)]

Karen Kirkman mentioned recent research by independent historian Te-Erika Patterson that discovered that in 1883 a Black Marshall, Amos Barber, was appointed in Micanopy. He was killed in the line of duty in 1885 and will be recognized by law enforcement in a ceremony in 2024.

History of County Historical Commission (Dr. Gordon's Outline)- Dr. Jacob Gordon is continuing work and will compile relevant sources. He envisions this work as part of the County Bicentennial in 2024. There was discussion about when the number of members was set, and Melanie Barr stated around 1967 the number was 15 members.

Staff asked Kaitlyn Hof-Mahoney to check any Matheson records for information.

Michelle Seitzmeir questioned whether attempting to include all County history is advised.

Dr. Jacob made a request for other members to take Chapter assignments.

Karen Kirkman will search Ancient Records for information. Staff Kathleen Pagan will draft some 'milestones.'

Announcements

Staff Report- Staff mentioned the recent news of the death of George Buchanan, MD, and asked if anyone knew if he was related to the historic Buchanan family. Mike O'Loughlin stated the obituary noted he was born in Alabama.

Kathleen Pagan also noted the Florida Public Archeology Network website has information on the historic cemetery bill.

Ashley Wood reminded staff to share information about the book by James M. McPherson, "Battle Cry of Freedom."

Karen Kirkman mentioned her workshop on April 15, "Finding your Ancestors."

Dr. Jacob Gordon announced the UF Interns he is working with plan a poster session on April 25. He sent details via email that were circulated to ACHC.

A motion (Dr. Jacob Gordon, 2nd) to adjourn, passed and meeting ended at about 7:10 pm.