

Alachua County Historical Commission May 8, 2023, Minutes

Members Present In-Person: Melanie Barr, Barry Baumstein, Dr. Jacob Gordon, Karen Kirkman (Chair), Ashley Wood.

Continuing to Serve In-Person: Kaitlyn Hof-Mahoney, Mike O'Loughlin, Cynthia White.

Member Present Virtually: Gwen Thompson.

Members Absent: Michelle Seitzmeir

Others Present In-Person: Staff Liaison Kathleen Pagan; Kali Blount

Others Present Virtually: Sue Blythe

Karen Kirkman, Chair, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 5:38 pm with a quorum present, including 3 persons 'continuing to serve.' The start was delayed slightly due to some technical issues with equipment in the meeting room. Since Gwen Thompson was attending virtually the Chair following the procedure to determine remote participation, and there was unanimous consensus to allow Gwen to participate (due to medical situation).

A Motion (Ashley Wood, with 2nd) to approve the agenda was made, and passed unanimously. The draft minutes of April 2023 prepared by staff were discussed briefly and a Motion to approve (Jacob, with 2nd) passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments— None. (Kali Blount arrived later, attending in-person)

New Business

Climate Collaboratory Project- Sue Blythe presented information to the group, yet the unfortunate tech problem prevented the group from seeing the visuals. The project envisions telling the climate story of Alachua County, looking 200 years to the past, at the future and 200 years into the future. Staff forwarded the presentation file via email. The presentation includes this link-- <https://gardensofglobalunity.org/climate-collaboratory/> Sue said a partnership including a Central Florida youth organization will seek letters of support for a project budget of \$100K annually. Staff asked if the local River Phoenix Center for Peacebuilding is still involved, Sue noted the group is a fiscal sponsor. One idea is to include Alachua County as a demonstration gallery in a virtual museum project. Consensus of the ACHC members was to wait until June when more detailed information is provided in order to decide on a general letter of support.

NEPA review on a proposed telecommunications project. There was discussion of the data of Florida Master Site File sites in the vicinity (ineligible for NRHP) as well as the Florida Railroad Corridor information. Although an earlier survey noted the rail corridor is potentially eligible for historic designation, this has not been achieved and there is extensive change to the

historic environment following development. The proposed teletower site would not be the best location for any interpretive information about the railroad (better sites noted are the bicycle bridge over 13th Street or an area further west where some evidence of a rail embankment still exists). Ashley Wood stated he thought that no action is needed, and the rest of the group agreed. (Staff K. Pagan sent an email on May 9 to Trileaf representative).

Continuing Business

Truth and Reconciliation project website is <http://truth.alachuacounty.us/index.html> ; Chair Karen Kirkman announced several events. On June 3 there is a ceremony planned at Newnansville. Karen also discussed the work by UF students in Museum Studies on a planned display of the soil collection jars in the County Administration Building. She noted that the jar count needs to be considered to determine space needs.

History of Former County Commissioners (since Mid- 20th Century)- Michelle Seitzmeir completed narrative histories for every Commissioner on this list, as discussed in April. Staff mentioned she edited the document to include mention of Shellie Downs signing the first County Scenic Road ordinance. At the last meeting it was discussed to reach out to the former BoCC to ask for any recommendations to edit the document. Staff will send print copies of the draft to people with known mailing addresses.

History Readings- There was brief discussion of the list of previous readings that staff provided. It was mentioned that the Windsor reading may be a draft of work (by Robert Moore). Staff will review the file information, and mentioned the planned Historical Commission website will include the reading narratives and presentations.

Melanie Barr volunteered to make a presentation on the history of the Thelma Boltin Center Building, and the draft will be reviewed at the next ACHC meeting for a planned presentation to BoCC on June 27.

State Historic Markers--

Ft. Clark Missionary Baptist Church marker--Karen Kirkman is awaiting a revised draft.

Cuscowilla Marker—The group discussed Dr. Monaco's correspondence with Dr. Jacob Gordon. Gwen continues to work on a second side narrative and reminded staff to please attempt to contact Dr. Weisman.

Buchanan Trails—A volunteer is needed. Gwen expressed interest to lead this work since the late Joel Buchanan was a student of her late mother. Karen Kirkman suggested to reach out to Garlenda Greene Grant to determine if she will share her important research.

Historic Cemeteries—Staff Kathleen Pagan noted she has yet to send the draft report on the Kincaid Road abandoned cemetery and will soon. There is no certain evidence of any burials on a one-acre lot shown on deeds as a Black Cemetery. However, there is evidence of long

term illegal dumping. Staff reported that Public Works will hold a community meeting to discuss a planned road project and other County staff are discussing if the cemetery can be briefly discussed coincidental with this meeting. Karen Kirkman mentioned that she had heard (a rumor) about an adjoining owner expressing interest in purchasing the property.

Ashley Wood noted that HB 49 did pass the Florida Legislature and is pending signature by the Governor.

Here is a link to the Florida bill-- [CS/CS/CS/HB 49 \(2023\) - Abandoned and Historic Cemeteries | Florida House of Representatives \(myfloridahouse.gov\)](#)

Karen Kirkman noted the FB group 'CRPT Alliance.'

She mentioned that if anyone plans to participate in the clean up at Haynes Memorial Cemetery in Micanopy that water is needed for cleaning the headstones. Also it is always important to bring drinking water for hydration. Staff also noted that insect repellent would be advisable.

Karen noted that FPAN staff Nigel Rudolph has submitted the FMSF form for Rhuda Branch cemetery. Regarding another site, Gwen Thompson asked about a sign at the Phoenix Company building and Karen noted she previously (several years ago) was asked to investigate when some headstones were found during a site excavation. It was mentioned that the WPA (Church project) records show a white congregation, yet the names of trustees were African American. Therefore, the cemetery was likely an African American burial site. Work was done to locate remains that were disinterred and reinterred, following the legal process.

Dr. Jacob Gordon noted all the Black cemeteries in Alachua County were documented as an intern project. Karen noted that USF Professor Dr. Antoinette Jackson has started the Black Cemetery Network. [Black Cemetery Network](#)

History of County Historical Commission (Dr. Gordon's Outline)-

Karen Kirkman provided more links (until 1965) to Minutes transcriptions on the Ancient Records website pertaining to Historic Commission. Melanie Barr noted that in the 1970s the group has 15 members and asked staff to check on resolutions circa 1966 and 1972.

Dr. Jacob Gordon has reached out to academic scholars about the book project on the history of the Historic Commission and his proposed outline (mentioning Chris Monaco, Ph.D, and former ACHC member Nicole Nesberg, Ph.D). Gwen again mentioned the work of Dr. Weisman. Staff noted that perhaps an alternative to working on a book with persons outside of the ACHC advisory board that a panel on the local history could be planned and the academic scholarship could be shared with the public in this manner.

Some general discussion of academic work about Alachua County and Florida followed. Gwen Thompson noted the importance of the Sq. 7 map, an area of 20 miles x 20 miles. The map indicates around 1835 there were five (5) forts contiguous to plantations in the County.

In other areas of the state, Mike Hill noted an historic marker for Abrahamtown at CR 98 and 971 near Green Swamp Road near Lakeland. Gwen mentioned that Dr. Jane Landers will present at Fort Moses. Staff note: Other work by Dr. Landers may inform local research--
<https://www.slavesocieties.info/>

Ashley Wood noted that Joe Knetsch's book, *Faces on the Frontier, Florida Surveyors and Developers in the 19th Century*, examines that two states were once considered—East Florida and West Florida.

Announcements

Staff Report- Staff

Alachua County Historical Commission Announcements May 2023

Come see and learn! Church History elder Karen Kirkman will present the "The History of Kanapaha Church" on Sunday, May 21 at 11 AM in the historic 1886 sanctuary. Learn about one of the oldest churches in Alachua County, dating back to the 1850s. Kirkman is currently Chair of the Alachua County Historical Commission and President & Historian of Historic Haile Homestead Inc. The presentation is free and open to the public. Kanapaha Presbyterian Church is located at 6221 SW 75th Terrace, just west of the Archer Rd and Tower Rd (75th St) intersection, on the south side Archer Road. For more information call 352-378-9080.

Matheson Events- Kaitlyn Hof Mahoney
<https://mathesonmuseum.org/events/>

More Information on Haynes Memorial Cemetery Clean Up (from FB)
SATURDAY, MAY 20, 2023 AT 9 AM – 11 AM
901 Memorial Ln, Micanopy, FL 32667
FPAN Contact Nigel Rudolph- snrudolph@usf.edu



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