

Annual Accomplishments Report & Work Plan FY2023-2024

Board/Committee Name: Alachua County Historical Commission

2022-2023 Chair: Karen Kirkman

2023-2024 Chair: Gwen Thompson

Staff Liaison: Kathleen Pagan, Senior Planner Growth Management, until July 2023;

Michael Castine, Senior Planner Growth Management after July; 352-374-5249

Recommendation: Accept Annual Work Plan

Mission: **“To promote, preserve and protect Alachua County’s historic resources.”**

Major Accomplishments FY 2022-2023

- Ongoing work on documenting historic cemeteries; Includes coordinating with State staff (FPAN); Keep Alachua County Beautiful, others for clean-up events.
- State Historic Markers- Participated in dedication events for the St. Peter Cemetery marker (October 2022) and the Bethlehem Methodist Episcopal Cemetery marker (written by Karen Kirkman) Assisted with marker work for Cuscowilla, Buchanan Trails and Ft. Clarke Missionary Baptist Church.
<http://apps.flheritage.com/markers/map/> - link to State Historic Marker website
- Assisted County Ancient Records Clerk with transcription of documents.
- Historic Ad Valorem Exemptions (staff administration)- one in City of Gainesville completed.
- Work on “Truth and Reconciliation” including ongoing historic research on lynching history; participation of staff and some ACHC members on the Alachua County Community Remembrance Project (ACCRP) and attending events of group; Karen Kirkman is research lead. Melanie Barr has participated on the Micanopy Truth and Reconciliation Committee.
- Member presentations and attendance at public history events. (Including Historic Haile Homestead’s Tracing Your Ancestors workshop, Cotton Club’s “In the Shadow of Plantations” panel discussion, Melanie Barr tabled exhibits for two Juneteenth events, one at Cotton Club and one at the Sankofa statue unveiling.
- Assisted State Parks historic and cultural efforts.
- Members assisted with various local history societies and organizations. Dr. Jacob Gordon organized the first Biennial Roundtable of African American History, members participated as panelists and participants--
- Quarterly Historical Readings at BoCC regular meetings.
- Provided technical information and grant letters of support to National Register nomination of Church of God by Faith in Gainesville; Provided letters of support for work on Old Mt. Carmel Church preservation.
- Participated as observers in the unveiling of the Sankofa Statue at County Admin. Bldg., a tribute to Patricia Hilliard Nunn, Ph.D. Melanie Barr operated a table display at this event.

- Completed research BoCC Assignment on history of BoCC from at least 1950; wrote narrative.
- Research into the history of the Historical Commission using BOCC historical meeting minutes.

Alachua County Historical Commission Goals & Objectives for FY2023-2024

- Participate in planning the observance of the Bicentennial of Alachua County Incorporation, and assist with events celebrating the history.
- Assist County Manager with BoCC Assignment on “Truth and Reconciliation”; Assist Real Rosewood Foundation on museum effort in Archer as requested. Assist with Black Heritage Trail Website if needed.
- Continue Research BoCC Assignment on history of Florida Indians/Indigenous people.
- Discussion of research of any inquiries submitted by BoCC or County Manager.
- Continue work with EPD on Black Lake ACF project and Parks on possible Cuscowilla Museum.
- Provide support as possible to community effort to preserve the Old Mount Carmel Church
- Keep apprised of the current condition of the Rochelle School and Church. If requested assist any community effort
- Continue work to add all documented cemetery sites to Florida Master Site File. Work with FPAN to assist the Copeland Community with their historic cemetery.
- Begin development of Historic Preservation Master Plan.
- Finalize process for the local designation of historic structures (an Alachua County Historic Register) as part of Draft Historic Preservation Ordinance. Receive public input at a meeting of the BoCC to consider Certified Local Government status and establishment of County Historic Pres. Board.
- NR nominations & more; Assist with letters of support for NR nominations and sites as requested.
- Work on Trail Town histories: Research Railroad History for Archer Interpretive site(s); Collaborate with Hawthorne Area and Waldo Area historical societies.
- Explore options for updating historic tours of County small towns, coordinate with VisitGainesville.
- Assist local property owners with research and preservation as possible.
- Continue Historic Ad Valorem Exemptions administration (staff & Gainesville HPB)
- Continue to assist Ancient Records Coordinator with transcriptions; etc.
- Assist local County organizations and agencies with grant searches & writing when possible, and letters of support for grant efforts.
- Continue 3 Minute Historical Readings at BoCC meetings.
- Continue to research and write State Historic Markers/Organize dedications; Assist others as well.
- Continue efforts for County scenic roads and vistas; assist Old Florida Heritage Highway efforts.

- Continue collaboration with State Byway program and community support organization. Consider possibility to extend Old Florida Heritage Highway to include Barr Hammock access (Jubilee Rd.) and Gainesville Sweetwater Wetlands Park (portion of Williston Rd.) if community supports
- If directed by County Manager consider criteria/ alternative location for (one) Lion Statuary.
- Participate in community discussions of local history & interpretation.
- If needed advise the City of High Springs with advice or recommendations for the restoration of the Priest Theater (building received state appropriation from 2023 Legislature)

List of ACHC Appointed Members as of October 2023

Melanie Barr; Barry Baumstein; Jerald Cheesborough; Jacob Gordon, Ph.D.; Kaitlyn Hof-Mahoney; Karen Kirkman; Michelle Seitzmer; Gwen Thompson; Cindy White; Ashley Wood; + 2 pending.

Previous members serving 2022-2023- no longer active with ACHC:

Garlenda Greene- Grant; Mike Hill; Nicole Nesberg; Mike O'Loughlin

A brief listing of other Local History Activities of Current Members of the County Historical Commission:

Individuals lead or participate in local history efforts including Wood and Swink Preservation Society, Micanopy Historical Society, Alachua County Community Remembrance Project Steering and Subcommittees, Alachua County African & African American Historical Society, Inc., Alachua County African American History Task Force, Alachua County Virtual Cemeteries Project, Historic Haile Homestead, FPAN Cemetery Resource Protection, Bethlehem Methodist Episcopal Cemetery Organization, Matheson History Museum, Friends of Thelma Boltin Center and more