

Alachua County Historical Commission

November 4, 2024

Members Present: Karen Kirkman, Ashley Wood, Jerald Cheeseborough, Jacob Gordon, Kaitlyn Hof-Mahoney, Barry Baumstein, Melanie Barr, Cynthia White

Members Absent: John Mclean, Gwen Thompson

Others Present: Staff Mike Castine, Ben Chumley, Camisha Alexis

I. Call to Order – Review Agenda and Minutes (October 2024)

Melanie Barr, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:32pm. A quorum was present.

Review of the Agenda- Jacob Gordon suggested the word “History” be replaced with the word “Identify” in Continuing Business-Section B. Ashley Wood moved that the agenda be approved as corrected, Jacob Gordon seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The draft of the October 2024 meeting minutes prepared by staff were discussed. One minor spelling mistake was corrected: Bill Harlan. An additional correction was made to a book title- *The Heat Will Kill You First: Life and Death on a Scorched Planet.*

Melanie Barr noted that she would like her contributions to the Tom Petty Marker unveiling to include her efforts in writing the marker, speaking at the event as the author of the marker, and organizing the ceremony.

Jacob Gordon moved to approve the minutes with corrections, seconded by Ashley Wood. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Citizen Comment

- A. Members of the public are invited to speak on any item not on agenda.
There were no citizen comments.

III. New Business

A. Volunteer Service Recognition

Mike Castine explained to the Historical Commission that the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) wants to recognize all volunteer boards better therefore they intend to host a thank-you event. Additionally, the BoCC would like feedback from all

boards on how to recruit to fill vacancies and ways to widen the diversity of board members. Lastly, Mike Castine informed members of the historical commission that staff will begin tracking volunteer hours of individuals serving on boards.

B. Discuss FY 2024/25 Workplan and Accomplishments

Melanie Barr suggested that events sponsored by the Matheson be identified as such in the Workplan and Accomplishments document. Melanie Barr asked Mike Castine for clarification as to whether he wants her to send in a list of all of the speakers that presented to the Micanopy Historical Society since she is the vice president of that society and the person who organizes, source, and procure speakers. Mike Castine advised Melanie Barr that she is welcome to send in the requested information.

IV. Continuing Business

A. Truth and Reconciliation- Updates from Community Remembrance Committee work
<http://truth.alachuacounty.us/index.html>

Melanie Barr informed the members of the historical commission, that the Micanopy Historical Society had a meeting recently and one scheduled for December 2024 to discuss next steps. Jerald Cheeseborough updated the board about the work they are doing in Newberry. They had a fundraiser for the old Newberry jail back in October. Funds will be used to replace the plaque that is currently on the Newberry jail. Additionally, Newberry has received a \$50,000 grant for African American Cemeteries through the Abandoned African American Cemetery Program.

Karen Kirkman informed members that Alachua County will soon kick off their program called “The Other Book”- Black History in Alachua County. Registration is required for the classes and will be held in different locations within Alachua County. Each class will focus on a different topic with a different speaker. More information can be found on the Truth and Reconciliation website or by contacting Latoya Gaaney.

Melanie Barr recapped the Montechoa marker ceremony which occurred Saturday. The event was well attended and broadcasted on TV-20. At the event, Melanie discovered a historic building at the back of the park. She commented that it looked great on the outside however the inside was less than ideal and will require a lot of work.

B. Identity of Former County Commissioners (since Mid- 20th Century)

Review status of Commissioner listings

Ashley Wood brought and passed around his list of county commissioners from 1910-1920 and 1930-1954. Additionally, he informed members of the review he

conducted of H. D Wood to show that it is possible to identify these commissioners in the same way as was done previously. H.D Wood's replacement as the chair on the commission was William Whitehurst. He was elected in 1930 and remained on the commission in 1954. Ashley Wood posed a question as to why Mr. Whitehurst's picture is not present in the report because he is probably the longest commissioner that Alachua County has had.

Karen Kirkman informed fellow members of the Historical Commission that in 1846, Alachua County commissioners were called a "commissioners court" and the chair was called the "president of the board". These commissioners made \$2.00 per meeting and once the president was paid \$3.00.

Karen Kirkman and Cynthia White, in addition to Ashley Wood, brought a list of the county commissioners who served during their agreed upon pre-1954 time frame. Mike Castine suggested Karen Kirkman send him the methodology she used to compile her list and he will distribute it to everyone on the commission, in accordance with the Sunshine law.

C. State Historic Markers-

Michelle Rutledge and Chief Rosa Rutledge of the Female Protective Society were present and introduced themselves. Ms. Michelle Rutledge informed the historical commission of the soil dedication by the Archer Subcommittee that was held on October 12th. Additionally, November 12th, the Archer subcommittee will be giving an update at the BoCC meeting during the 11:30 a.m. proceedings.

Members of the Alachua County Historical Commission reviewed the Female Protective Society marker text, provided by Michelle Rutledge, prior to the meeting. Members went line by line and offered their improvement recommendations, comments, and suggestions for the Female Protective Society marker.

D. Historic Cemeteries

Karen Kirkman notified members of the cemetery cleanup at Kanapaha. Jerald Cheeseborough mentioned the grant for the Davis cemetery by the City of Newberry.

E. Historical Commission Website- provide input to Staff

No update

F. Storage of Historical Commission documents

No update

G. Certified Local Government status

Ashley Wood informed Mike Castine, that he will attend a commission meeting as a way to inform the BoCC that the Alachua County Historic Commission would like to get the CLG conversation on the docket.

H. History of Alachua County Historical Commission

No update

V. Announcements

A. Staff Report –

Mike Castine informed the commission that staff will begin bringing the attendance reports to all of the meetings.

B. Member Announcements – attached separately.

Karen Kirkman passed around information regarding the Homestead decorations, which will start December 7th.

Melanie Barr informed members that she attended the friends of the library book sale and presented the commission with her book haul.

Additionally, Melanie Barr went to the Old Florida Heritage Highway and secured brochures for everyone at the meeting. She also informed members that the Micanopy Historic Society will meet in December with guest speaker Nick West, owner of West Farms Landscaping, which has been in operation since 1917.

Jacob Gordon informed members of the Bicentennial Symposium which will occur December 7th.

Ashley Wood informed members that he recently went the reunion of everyone who attended Reddick High School. He was in the first class that graduated from the new high school. Ashley noted that a historic marker is needed to be placed at the school's location due to its history.

C. Adjournment/ Next ACHC Meeting **January 13, 2025** (no December meeting)

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