



Agenda Item Summary

File #: 25-00346

Agenda Date: 5/27/2025

Agenda Item Name:

Certified Local Government Program Discussion Item

Presenter:

Michael Castine, Senior Planner, Growth Management, 352-374-5249, x.2367

Description:

Discussion of Alachua County and responsibilities as Certified Local Government for Historic Preservation

Recommended Action:

Receive staff presentation.

Prior Board Motions:

January 10, 2025: **Commissioner Cornell moved** to refer to staff the issue/idea of Alachua County becoming a local certified historical government. The motion carried 5-0. 2nd Commissioner Wheeler

Fiscal Note:

This item is not currently budgeted in the County's FY 2025 adopted budget. Staff estimates that there would be additional cost to the County for establishing a Certified Local Government (CLG) Program, including one-time costs for initial program setup and ongoing costs for CLG program administration. The County does not presently have the necessary historic preservation expertise available on staff to establish and manage a CLG program.

The initial program setup - including updating the County's Historic Preservation Ordinance, appointing a historic preservation review body, identifying the responsibilities of that body, and possibly updating the County's 2000 historic resources survey - would require the assistance of a historic preservation consultant at an estimated cost of at least \$50,000 up to \$100,000.

There will also be ongoing program administration costs to the County associated with the CLG program. Staff estimates that the ongoing administration of a CLG program – including scheduling and advertising meetings and filling vacancies of the historic preservation review body, preparing periodic program reports as required by the State, processing applications for alterations, relocations, demolitions, new construction or other activities that may affect locally designated properties - will require the addition of up to 0.5 FTE, with an annual salary and benefits expense of \$64,692. Alternatively, existing staff would need to be reassigned from other current duties to focus on the CLG program. Current programs that would need a reduction in staff resources to cover CLG would come from Comprehensive Planning and include Affordable Housing, Intergovernmental

Coordination, and a reduction in staff capacity for the Evaluation and Appraisal process.

Strategic Guide:

All Other Mandatory and Discretionary Services

Background:

The Certified Local Government (CLG) Program was enacted as part of the National Historic Preservation Act Amendments of 1980. The program links three levels of government -federal, state and local- into a preservation partnership for the identification, evaluation and protection of historic properties. Designation as a certified local government, either as a municipality or a county, makes historic preservation a public policy through adoption of a historic preservation ordinance. The ordinance establishes a historic preservation board to develop and oversee the functions of its historic preservation program.

The Board of County Commissioners has been asked to consider becoming a CLG in the past. In May 2024, the Alachua County Historical Commission approved a motion to recommend the BoCC direct staff and the Historical Commission to begin the process to become a Certified Local Government (CLG) for the purpose of Historic Preservation. Subsequently, in January 2025, the BoCC passed a motion directing staff to bring information to Board regarding the issue/idea of Alachua County becoming a CLG.

Previously, in November 2011, the BoCC received a presentation on the Annual Report of the County Historical Commission. The Board passed a motion that included direction to staff and the Historical Commission to work to complete a Historic Preservation Master Plan, including a Local Historic Registry. Staff was directed to return with the fiscal consequences of pursuing Certified Local Government status for Alachua County. When considered by the BoCC in 2013, the Board chose not to pursue Certified Local Government status.

The Alachua County Comprehensive Plan includes a Historic Preservation Element, and within that element is a Policy 1.1.2, which sets out the components to be included in a Historic Preservation Plan, consisting of: identification of a lead agency, coordination between County departments for the preservation of historic resources and properties, consideration by Alachua County to become a Certified Local Government for Historic Preservation, a mechanism for pursuing grants, a methodology to qualify a historic resource or property as significant based on established criteria, maintaining an inventory of historic resources and properties and creation of a Historic Preservation Ordinance to provide regulatory protection of historic resources and properties.

The following steps are required for Alachua County to be designated as a Certified Local Government:

1. Adopt a qualified Historic Preservation Ordinance (HPO).
2. Establish a qualified Historic Preservation Board.
3. Enforce designation and protection of historic resources as required by the Historic Preservation Ordinance.
4. Maintain the 2000 Survey of Historic Resources and update at intervals.
5. Provide for public participation in the Historic Preservation program.

Chapter 406, Article 13 of the Unified Land Development Code specifically addresses historic structures and sites and implements the Historic Preservation element policies. The Article provides for the general mapping of known historic structures and sites, which were last comprehensively inventoried in 2000. The article further provides standards for authorized investigation of historic

structures and sites, prohibits development activity on historic sites or structures without appropriate analysis, and establishes standards for protection including preservation, restoration, or rehabilitation of historic structures, and encourages acquisition and adaptive reuse of historic structures to prevent their demolition.

The Historic Structures Survey of Unincorporated Alachua County was completed in 2000 and funded by Alachua County with assistance from the Florida Division of Historic Resources. Research to document the structures included reviewing historic literature, field surveys, photography, confirmation of building dates, and preparation of data for the Florida Site Files. The initial survey estimate was 1,500 buildings, and ultimately a total of 967 buildings were identified in the final report which did not include structures within any of the incorporated municipalities, some of which have established historic districts.