



Present: Julia Cramer, Cynthia Cheatwood, Jerry Casale, Cynthia Stone, William Randall, Carolyn Morgan

Excused-Haddock

Meeting called to order 6:08 PM by Cramer. A quorum was declared.

Minutes were read. Stone moved to accept them and Casale seconded. Vote was unanimous to approve.

Discussion of Green Cove's historic spring followed. Haddock attended the meeting but no one else from the board. Casale gave a report on the progress. He suggested the board recommend that the spring be covered in keeping with the history of the place. Since the board does not have jurisdiction we can at least draft of a letter to ask that the historical flavor be maintained. Since the pool was enclosed originally it would be appropriate to do so again. Stone moved that Cheatwood generate the draft and send it to the Mayor and Town Manager of Green Cove Springs to advocate historic preservation/restoration. Randall seconded, moved unanimously.

Morgan shared Article 12, the zoning code that explains the powers and duties of the preservation board. Purpose is to certify the designation of individual properties as historically significant, to protect the integrity of local historic properties and encourage preservation. The board serves as advisory for BCC regarding historic preservation policy. We can propose rules and procedures necessary to do these things. We can delay a demolition as long as it takes to have a public hearing.

The state and national register files can keep historic buildings from being destroyed but there is nothing to stop people from making alterations to the property to detract historic value. There are county initiatives that can do that and this board can so designate. Morgan suggests historic districts be explored at the county level.

This board can propose and recommend financial incentive programs to further preservation. We can see expertise in areas we lack. We should be maintaining an inventory of historic properties that are compatible with FI Master Site File.

Stone suggested the next meeting's agenda include local historical designation procedures. A public hearing before the BCC is needed for each petition to designate something as historic. Once designation is made there will have to be a Certificate of Approval for any alterations made to the property. We can suggest an incentive to be offered to owners of historic properties.

Casale asked about Sunshine Laws. Members can send things out to everyone but there cannot be dialog between members.

FPAN is providing a luncheon tomorrow related to preservation but members are not available to attend at this time due to work conflicts. There is a Florida Trust for Historical Preservation conference in May in Miami. Casale thinks he might be able to attend and represent the board.

Cramer wants to create a state historical marker to recognize the history of Fleming Island. Morgan said she thinks there is one there already.

Discussion of the state marker for Geiger came up. The state did not list the project on its released list of markers to discuss. The board is unaware as to why the Geiger project was not included. Cheatwood emailed the state and is waiting for a response.

The subject of calendars was discussed. Stone suggested that there is a need for particular focus on specific groups in the county's history. There is a need to emphasize these histories until they are more commonly known. Casale suggested that Americans don't know their own history. At the last board meeting a vote was taken to change the calendar to one of the county's history rather than just African American history. Reverend Randall stated that not supporting the calendar would be suppression of black history. The calendar is already planned and focuses on "Firsts" among African Americans in Clay County. Stone moved to restore the previous pledge for the African American calendar. Cheatwood seconded. Discussion ensued. Randall will get three bids and include a mention of the board's contribution on the calendar. This calendar will celebrate Emancipation Proclamation, 1955 Civil Rights act, MLK and 1964 Equal Voting Rights. Vote passes unanimously.

Stone reported that the flowers for Lee Bentley, from the board, were sent. She suggested a county proclamation in recognition of Bentley's contributions to the county. Morgan suggested it would need to be submitted well in advance of the BCC meeting. Cheatwood moved and Randall seconded that a subcommittee be formed with Stone, Haddock and Mueller to pursue such recognition on the form of a proclamation. Vote was approved. Stone will add it to the website for public to come if they wish.

Regarding the sign for Middleburg's Ft. Heileman, debate centered around the content of the sign which has been reviewed by Morgan, Casale, and Stone. Since the property is county-owned the verbiage needs to be politically correct. Stone conceded and the language for the sign is attached to these minutes.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.

This is the proposed new wording of the Ft. Heileman sign. The section in bold is new.

Fires lit up the north Florida sky in 1835 as the Seminoles resisted government pressure to leave their lands and move west to Oklahoma. Fort Heileman was established as a supply depot for north Florida during the Second Seminole War, 1835- 1846. Eighteen wooden buildings were spread over 100 acres, from modern Hill Street to the far edge of the boat ramp. The fort had no defensive stockade fence, but it had soldiers and they had weapons and 1,000 civilians camped on the grounds as Seminoles attacked neighboring counties. They overwhelmed the Army, caused sanitation problems, and waves of measles, smallpox, and fevers killed more people than any attacks elsewhere. The fighting moved steadily southward as the Seminoles retreated to the Everglades. In 1841 the fort was abandoned, and in 1842 a storm washed away the wooden buildings. Only a cemetery remained. In 1846 the Army moved some of the bodies to the Federal Military Cemetery in St. Augustine. According to military records in Washington, D.C., the bodies of thirty veterans and an unknown number of civilians remained. In 2005 a developer bought the land behind the Main Street Park, including the cemetery, to build a gated community. **In spite of county efforts to purchase the cemetery, the property owner bulldozed the land, desecrating the graves. The work of the veterans was not in vain, however. Although the Seminoles never surrendered and hundreds of them steadfastly refused to be re-located to Oklahoma, the fighting stopped when the tribe withdrew to Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades. There, they remained isolated from contact with all but a few traders for more than fifty years. In their absence, American settlers freely moved into Florida. The Second Seminole War was neither a victory nor a defeat, but it paved the way for Florida's development. The three conflicts played a role in the careers of two generals who went on to serve as presidents, Andrew Jackson and Zachary Taylor. Each year on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend a commemorative gathering is held here at the site of Ft. Heileman. The ceremony begins at 10:00 am and includes a reading of the names of those buried on this hallowed ground. Please join us to remember and honor those who gave their lives so that we can enjoy living in the Sunshine State.**

