

**Historical Advisory Committee (HAC)
Minutes May 11, 2022**

Meeting held at the Mid County Regional Library, Meeting Room A/B.

Committee Members

Dianne Munson
Theresa Murtha
Pat Spence
Valerie Colbert
Clare Riggs
Stephen Valdes

Present

Pat Spence
Clare Riggs
Stephen Valdes
Theresa Murtha
Valerie Colbert

Not Present

Dianne Munson

BOCC Liaison:

Commissioner Stephen R. Deutsch

Guests

Libraries & History Staff

Jennifer Zoebelein
Tina Ranney

9:00 a.m. Roll Call: Dianne Munson Absent

Approval of April meeting minutes: Clare Riggs motioned to approve, Theresa 2nd. All in favor.

Agenda Items: Discussion to change ordinance, Marker Program, Historical Tourism

Theresa began with explaining issues with the current ordinance, and some of the things the group wanted to do, "the ordinance doesn't allow". She doesn't see where in the ordinance that these are clarified. For instance, page 2 Sec. 1-11-73. Functions, powers, and duties of the committee. This is one of the key sections she believes needs to be reviewed. Her view is that this section is very general. Her first concern deals with the recommendation of historical markers and that she believes the group has been told in the past that they are not supposed to be making these recommendations. Jennifer stated that, it's not that they can't; the way the marker program was designed, is that the recommendations are supposed to be community driven rather than a single group deciding on what markers are most important. Commissioner Deutsch shared that most committees in the County are advisory, and he and his colleagues appreciate the value of these committees, and it's rare that the Board does not go along with their recommendations. Theresa then said she agrees with Jennifer that the community should come forward with their thoughts and ideas. The other aspect is that this committee should be consisting of people with historical expertise, and they should be able to recommend markers, as we aren't getting a lot from the public. Jennifer then said that we do have 3 right now. Theresa then said that one of those will not going through. (The one for Rotunda). Pat, then said that she doesn't think it's up to them to go to a place and say that they need a marker. Theresa said she agrees with that, she just wants to be more proactive, and maybe being more proactive means identifying where a marker should be and talking to someone. They then must be able to do the legwork to make that happen. She gave an example of putting a marker on Marion Avenue in Punta Gorda or in Englewood, and would we want that to happen, wouldn't we want to drive that? She then went on to say that she had coaxed someone into applying and now they don't want to follow through because of the work involved. If we could do the paperwork and fund some of these (another issue), it could happen. If we could go back to them and say that the county is willing to fund this, then maybe we could get them to agree. This is what we're focused on. They aren't. Stephen Valdez then said, he read through it and, it outlines what someone thinks we should do, but it doesn't

say what we can't do. Theresa said that's how she read it also. Jennifer then, said that what the ordinance says, is what you can do. Stephen then repeated that it doesn't say what you can't do. Therefore, anything we do that isn't outlined, can we do it? Jennifer then reminded him, that the committee is advisory and if it's not in the ordinance, it would not be advised on by the committee. Theresa then asked about fund raising for the preservation of historical structures and if that is advisory, she said she doesn't consider that advisory. She believes there are things in there, that aren't advisory, and she disagrees with Jennifer. Commissioner Deutsch then asked if this has been discussed with the County Attorney's office? Is it the current official document and if so, he has a couple of concerns on it? Theresa then asked if they could stick to the first section, and they could come back later and address other issues. So again, Theresa feels that they have the authority to say that there should be a marker at "x" location. Commissioner Deutsch said that the process would then go through staff etc. and if everyone was on board, he is ok with the process of doing markers that way. Jennifer then spoke to the fact that the marker program itself has its own separate document. Theresa then stated that she didn't think that it was a legal document, and that it was procedural. Jennifer then told her that it is, and it was approved by the board. Theresa then said that the was another issue to be worked on. Commissioner Deutsch then explained again, how the process works. Jennifer then said that her reading of the document, says that it should not be an executive decision to decide what or where markers go, and she's not saying that the committee can't recommend them. It should not be just the people in this room. Theresa then said based on that, she would like to make a motion that as a group they start looking at areas where they think they are missing markers. Valerie seconded the motion. All in favor. Stephen then suggested that they need a marker at the military base at the Punta Gorda airport. Commissioner Deutsch agreed and Jennifer mentioned they will need to reach out to the airport. Theresa then asked, what do they do next? What are the steps? Jennifer said she would send the marker application paperwork to Stephen, so he could fill it out. Theresa then questioned that *anyone* could fill out an application and Jennifer replied yes. In the past, applications have been filled out by other committee members. There was further discussion on how to fill it out and what to include for information. Pat also requested that Jennifer send her an application also. Jennifer then reminded the group, that she doesn't fill out application, her only role is to review. Commissioner Deutsch feels it is very important for the historian to review the applications and give input. Theresa then asked if anyone had anything further to discuss regarding the previous mentioned section of the ordinance. No one had any further input.

Commissioner Deutsch mentioned he is frustrated with the membership process and how the qualifications are determined. How do we define the groups that are represented? He wants to make sure that the committee is as inclusive as possible. Theresa agrees that the guidelines to be a part of the group are too narrow. Theresa also mentioned that she had someone who wanted to apply to be in the HAC however, after reading the guidelines, felt that they might not be qualified per the guidelines stated in the following section of the ordinance. Sec. 1-11-69. Appointment, composition, and term of office.

- (a) The committee shall be composed of nine (9) members. Six (6) members will be appointed by the board of county commissioners (hereinafter referred to as the "board") from six (6) different Charlotte County historical organizations. In addition, there shall be three (3) at large members appointed by the board representing disciplines of architecture, history, urban planning, archeology, or related disciplines such as American studies or American civilization.

Theresa then suggested that this section of the document needs to be revised. The committee is short members and if they could identify the right person with an interest and passion for local history, that she be enough to qualify them. Stephen then brought up that he feels that the committee should be a collection of every historical group in the county. Discussion followed regarding the technical details of how people apply and the process of being approved. Most of the current members did not see or know about the above guidelines until they were members. After further discussion, Clare then motioned to have "Interest and Passion" added to the at large definition. Stephen Valdez seconded the

motion. Stephen then suggested conversation about some other words to add. The revised section should read as follows.

- (b) The committee shall be composed of nine (9) members. Six (6) members will be appointed by the board of county commissioners (hereinafter referred to as the "board") from six (6) different Charlotte County historical organizations. In addition, there shall be three (3) at large members appointed by the board representing disciplines of architecture, history, urban planning, archeology, or related disciplines such as American studies or American civilization. Or a general interest and passion for history.

Highlighted section represents what the committee would like the wording to be. Motion on the floor was voted on and all were in favor. Theresa asked if there were any other changes that anyone else wanted to make. There were no other changes. Theresa then opened discussion about markers. Jennifer said she did receive a request for marker information regarding Mr. Lamp. She explained everything to the person that requested the information and there is nothing further to report at this time. Theresa then asked about the process to review and approve markers. What are the criteria? She would like to see something in writing regarding what the criteria are. Jennifer said everything is laid out in the marker program document. Further information is in the application. Theresa is concerned about whether the county will pay for the markers if they recommend them. Jennifer advised that traditionally the group that is applying for the marker usually pays for it. The county has paid for some in the past and they do occasionally pay for them, but that is not the standard and it is not how the program was setup. Theresa does not agree with this and feels the county has money budgeted for markers. She feels that some markers won't be placed if the county won't fund them. Jennifer said in certain circumstances they can and or will pay for them; Valerie also brought up that they used to be able to have the county pay for three a year. Theresa said she wants to get back to doing that. Valerie mentioned that most markers are sponsored by group and those groups usually do fund raising if necessary to pay for it. Theresa then said she wants to drive public history, not wait for it. She wants to have separate criteria for markers that are funded by sponsors vs markers funded by the county. Valerie suggested putting them on a list and published to be identified as to who might be able or interested in funding it. Theresa agreed this is a good way to organize this. Theresa said there is not enough time to discuss the final item on the agenda although she mentioned the task of coming up with the 15 points of interest for the website mentioned by Sean from tourism, she then invited everyone to come up with a list for the next meeting. Discussion of different locations followed. Clare mentioned she would like to have a printed map/literature. Theresa said she would like to discuss in more detail at the next meeting and invite tourism to following meeting. No further business.

Member Input: None

Public Input: None

Meeting Adjourned: 10:00 a.m.

Next HAC Meeting: - Wednesday, June 8th, 9a.m. at Mid County Regional Library, 2050 Forrest Nelson Blvd., Port Charlotte, FL.

cc:
Commissioner Ken Doherty
Commissioner Stephen R. Deutsch
Commissioner Bill Truex
Commissioner Joseph Tiseo
Hector Flores, County Administrator
Emily Lewis, Deputy County Administrator

Commissioner Christopher Constance

Tommy Scott, Director, Community Svcs Dept.