

Historical Advisory Committee (HAC)

Minutes December 13, 2023

Meeting held at Centennial Park in Port Charlotte

Committee Members

Valerie Colbert

Dianne Munson

Theresa Murtha

Clare Riggs

Pat Spence

Stephen Valdes

Present

Dianne Munson

Stephen Valdes

Clare Riggs

Pat Spence

Not Present

Theresa Murtha

Valerie Colbert

BOCC Liaison: Commissioner Stephen R. Deutsch

Libraries & History Staff

Jennifer Zobelein, Joe Guerzo

Public Attendees

None

Roll Call

Dianne calls for roll call: Theresa Murtha and Valerie Colbert are absent.

Update on Historical Markers

- Jennifer says there is no news on the markers or their arrival time.

Discussion on Frequency of HAC Meetings

- Dianne asks if there is any interest in changing the monthly meeting into meeting every other month.
- Commissioner Deutsch asks if we should take a role in educating the community in Local History.
- The members agree with Dianne. Stephen thinks they can accomplish things with an annual meeting.
- Pat brings up the Boat Club and how come they can get a commercial building while the Water Office has not while lobbying for one for over two years.
- Clare suggests we meet in January and get the opinions of missing members.
- Jennifer says she'll need to talk to Janette on whether this move will need to go before the Board. She'll talk to her after a vote at the January meeting.

Building Discussion

- While members talk about how they have nothing to discuss, Commissioner Deutsch says they used to spend time going over the evaluation of buildings.
- Jennifer says nothing has come up in the last few years about a building needing a historical evaluation. She has only received inquiries about telecommunication towers.
- Commissioner Deutsch says they used to get 12-15 a year.
- Pat says we have no power to stop them from tearing things down. Jennifer says all we can do is advise them.
- Jennifer says anything that comes to her would come from Planning.
- Commissioner Deutsch asks if regulations have changed. She says no. Storm damage is a different thing and she dealt with those after Hurricane Ian.

Approval of November Minutes

- Pat calls to approve minutes, Stephen seconds it. They are approved.

History Group Consolidation

- Dianne starts a discussion on the need for a clearing house for all the historical groups in town. Commissioner Deutsch agrees it would be helpful just to avoid having event scheduling conflicts, and to support each other.
- He asks if we have a responsibility to educate the public on the significance of our history. Jennifer says that it's not the purpose of the committee and it would require a complete change of what the committee is.

- Dianne asks if we can add it as a duty. Jennifer says you can, but Advisory Committees are not Educational Committees.
- Dianne suggests a newsletter with all the groups' upcoming events, etc.
- Claire would like to see more collaboration of the groups.
- Stephens says it's like "herding cats". He says no one cares unless it's profitable. He asks if there's a chance we can re-form as a central meeting place for these ideas.
- Clare asks if we could discuss the possibility of bringing these groups together at our January meeting. Jennifer points out that's why they originally had 9 members. The original purpose of HAC was to have people from across the county, from all organizations, to come together to have a discussion. It's no longer the case with this group. Several groups don't want to participate.
- Clare asks if that means that it's up to us to go out and see and hear what other groups are doing. Jennifer answers that you can go out and try to organize something, but as an Advisory Committee, that's not what this group does. The HAC has a very specific and limited purpose. A full-scale change would involve the whole ordinance being re-written and Jeanette being involved.
- Commissioner Deutsch says Jeanette's purpose isn't to tell us what to do, but to show us what path to follow.

Return to Building Discussion

- Pat says that nothing was done to save the El Jobean Fire Tower. Commissioner Deutsch suggests putting a marker at the location.
- Stephen says there should be a marker at the EAA building, the last building standing from the WWII era at the Punta Gorda Airport.

Meeting adjourns

- **Next meeting is on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, at 9am at Centennial Park**