

**University of Florida Historic St. Augustine, Inc. (UFHSA)**

**A direct support organization to UF as provided, Chapter 267.1736 Laws of Florida**

**UFHSA Board of Directors Meeting**

**10:00 A.M., May 29, 2015**

**Government House, 48 King Street, St. Augustine, FL**

Board Members Present: Chair Allen Lastinger, Kathy Deagan, Michael Gannon, Rick Gonzalez, Roy Hunt, Arva Parks, Danny Ponce, William Robinson, Herschel Shepard, and Don Slesnick

Board Members Absent: Craig Dezern, Michael Francis, Bill Proctor, Larry Rivers, and Tracy Upchurch

Staff Present: Ed Poppell, Jane Adams, Lora Smith, Linda Dixon, Jan Matthews and Billy Triay

Mr. Lastinger, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

**Action Items**

Roy Hunt introduced Elsbeth “Buff” Gordon, author of “Walking in St. Augustine”. Buff presented signed copies of the book to all of the UFHSA Board Members. She thanked the board for publishing the book and discussed the success of it. She told the board the Chicago Tribune recently gave the book a lengthy review. Chair Lastinger discussed how interesting the book was and described it as a real treasure.

Chair Lastinger then introduced and welcomed new board members Bill Robinson (present at meeting), Craig Dezern (absent), and Michael Francis (absent). Short bios and term letters were sent out prior to the meeting.

Chair Lastinger discussed the appointments of UFHSA Board Members. Members can only serve up to 8 years. Rick Gonzalez, Arva Parks, Tracy Upchurch and Chair Lastinger were all up for reappointment. The motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved.

Minutes of the November 7, 2014, meeting, were provided to the board prior to the meeting. A motion for approval of these minutes, seconded and approved unanimously.

**Informational Items**

**Committee Reports**

- Development Committee - Chair Lastinger called on board member Slesnick and Mr. Chris Needles for an UFHSA development update. A list of what has been accomplished

to date. In November 2014: documentary premiere and VIP reception, December 2014: 25 qualified donor prospects capable of making major gifts to UFHSA initiatives, January 2015 to present: continued cultivation visits with these major gift prospects, May 2015: A partnership is in discussion currently with Flagler College on a possible Historic Preservation Institute that would be based in St. Augustine. An example given is the Nantucket Preservation Trust. It was also stated that a joint program between Flagler and the University of Florida would be an exciting program. The discussion was closed with a presentation informing the board members that there is still continued donor cultivation and would continue monthly visits to the region. It was then asked to the Chair if there was any committee structure. The Chair informed the board that he and Mr. Poppell would work on it and have something by the next board meeting.

- Chair Lastinger then asked board liaison Ed Poppell to introduce the new board liaison and board assistant. Mr. Poppell introduced Jane Adams, VP of University Relations for the University of Florida who will replace Mr. Poppell in the future as the board liaison and her assistant Lora Smith who is now the board assistant. Chair Lastinger suggested a decree be made for Sue Cobb, past board assistant, with gratitude and for all the service that she did for the board. The Chair asked for a motion, motion made, seconded, approved unanimously.

#### Financial Report

- Colonial Quarter (CQ) - Mr. Poppell presented a business report regarding the CQ. UFHSA does not have any financial risk with Pat Croce's company, Colonial Quarter, LLC, the operator of the CQ. UFHSA is receiving the monthly commission consistently, guaranteed \$100,000 per year. The enterprise is breaking even now. It took well over \$3 million to restore and Mr. Poppell noted that it's strong and things are finally looking up for CQ. No action was required for this item.
- First Colony Museum Exhibit – Mr. Poppell reported that the exhibit will be leaving Government House at the end of September. The exhibit will be moved to the Florida Museum of Natural History. It will stay there for one year. After the year is over the exhibit will travel the southeast. The exhibit has not made the money it was projected to make. It has been noted and accounted that \$100,000 a year was actually lost on the exhibit while in St. Augustine. It has been a challenge to get visitors to come and see it. Mr. Poppell noted that they marketed it as well as possible and still they only receive about 800 visitors on average a month. Mr. Poppell stated that he looking forward to sharing the exhibit with other communities and hopes that it might do better financially. Board Member Kathleen Deagan mentioned that people don't really know what Government House is. It was then discussed on how to make Government House a tourist destination. Mr. Poppell stated that he meets with the City of St. Augustine monthly about signage and it is a challenge. Board Member Don Slesnick stated that in Coral Gables it is the same way, but there is a way, and then suggested changing the name of Government House to something else with Museum in the title. Board Member Arva Parks thought the word Historic needed to be added to the title. Chair Lastinger agreed that it was a challenge and the subject of the name has come up repeatedly and the board

needed to continue to explore its options. Mr. Poppell added that was why we are doing this in depth research study.

- Financial Update – Ms. Linda Dixon, from UF Planning, Design and Construction presented the financial report/budget update. She stated at the end of April the current budget was where they thought it would be. Building projects, repairs and maintenance have gone over, but building operations have been less expensive. It was explained it went over simply because we they were spending out of carry-forward funds with some projects that had been committed in the previous year, but paid in the current year. The board then reviewed the 2014-15 budget information provided to the board members prior to the meeting noting the following updates:
  - Project costs were consistent with prior years.
  - The Research Program salaries were moved to their own category and administrative salaries are in their own categories now as well.
  - An overview of the budget structure showed the DSO funds, flexible spending, wedding events at Government House, parking, and funds spent day to day. Also, the funds for grounds maintenance and custodial work. (spread sheets were provided prior to meeting)
  - Mr. Poppell reviewed other budget to actual data provided to the board members. He explained that the Documentary Film is being funded through multiple sources. He explained that the DSO is doing well with good tenants. He feels the St. Augustine economy is strong
  - Chair Lastinger told the board the documentary was seeking private donors and asked the board to approve allocations of \$100,000 of reserve money. The board has about \$800,000-\$900,000 in reserve. Board member Selsnick made a motion to approve, it was unanimously approved.
  - Ms. Dixon showed the projection for FY 2015-2016 budget, which reflected similar to the year before.
  - Mr. Poppell told the James Moore, had been hired to do the audit for FY ending June 30, 2015.
  - The board approved the draft budget spending plan for FY15-16 and the \$100,000 from reserve for the documentary.

Mr. Poppell then asked Jane Adams to explain the Legislative budget. Ms. Adams stated that we are aiming at the House and Senate Economic Development Committees. We met with offices (without trying to compete with UF for funds). Mr. Poppell stated that Rep. Proctor has been very helpful with his contacts. We have made rounds in the House, the Senate and the Governor's Office and have done everything to date that we can. Ms. Adams added that UF President Kent Fuchs is going to Tallahassee on June 3<sup>rd</sup> and St. Augustine is on his agenda. Ms. Adams then stated that we have an online advocacy program called UF Gators for Higher Ed. Mr. Poppell told the board that Jane will tell you, request for one time money is more successful than asking for repeat money. Ms. Adams agreed. The board members were then requested for their input for new legislative requests for the 2016/2017 session.

Chair Lastinger then opened the discussion about the Microfilm Library at UF and Flagler. He said there are many restrictions and we are trying to digitalize other archives that would relate to Florida. Board member Deagan wanted to know if funds couldn't go to that where would you use them. Mr. Poppell said they would have to look. Deagan then wanted to know if it could go towards documents, Mr. Poppell stated no, that pot of money is restricted.

## **Informational Items**

### Committee Reports

- Education, Interpretation, Facilities Committee – Chair Lastinger opened up the discussion to Board member Roy Hunt. Mr. Hunt let the board know that a Collection Policy was now a policy in place. One issue for well over a year was to get an Educational Activities and Collection Policy. He stated that Linda Dixon has had to deal with three different agencies about this. Mr. Hunt thinks it would be proper to send a letter explaining about the objects with Chair Lastinger's signature. He thinks this could help solve the space and objects problem and could be a reasonable solution. Chair Lastinger stated that he would be happy to sign a letter and asked Mr. Hunt to draft it. Linda Dixon mentioned that the letter also needed to include something about the library collection. It was decided that Linda and Roy would draft the letter. Mr. Hunt then mentioned the \$40,000 interdisciplinary grants received. Two \$10,000 for College of Engineering proposing to do research on coquina and make a video to use as an educational tool. Mr. Poppell stated that it would also be used in the documentary. The video is slow motion framing of a musket ball hitting coquina wall. He thinks the National Park Service and others will find it interesting.

Mr. Hunt then stated Dean Michael Reid and Dr. Janet Matthews are working on a research project that will be the topic of a presentation by Professor Don Fesenmaier from the College of Health and Human Performance.

- Presentation: Revisioning the Colonial Quarter: Data collected over 3 years. The data is used to identify the markets with the quality of visitors. Area included for the survey is the distinct Historic District attractions. The study found that History/Culture is the most influential factor for visiting St. Augustine. 72% of the visitors come for history, while only 34% come for the beaches. 8.8 out 10 people say that their Colonial Quarter visit has a high satisfaction rate. The Colonial Quarter is part of an integrated Historic District experience. The average itinerary includes 7 attractions. The Colonial Quarter offers 3 distinct products that serve market segments. The initial findings told the board that repeat visitors were essential. Out of 350,000 + visitors a year, 18.7% report visiting the Colonial Quarter. Partnerships are Key: Each Colonial Quarter market (food & beverage, social venue, museum) has a unique DNA of what activities they do in St. Johns County. The key to increase visits and to create high value visitors. Influencing Factors, in the Colonial Quarter: Plaza de la Constitucion, Castillo de San Marcos, Info provided by lodging, Ponte Vedra Shopping, Government House, Historic District art gallery/antique shop, Potters Wax

Museum. Influencing Factors by History Visitors: Motivated by nature, Motivated by attractions, Info=Travel Guides, Purpose=Passing Through, Purpose=Vacation, Castillo de San Marcos, Previously Visited Historic District. Takeaways and Opportunities are: 1) Rebrand the Colonial Quarter to include three distinct Historic attractions 2) Three inter-related marketing strategies 3) Reconsider partnerships to support core products 4) Create seasonal exhibits, performances and special events that will draw repeat visitors back to the Colonial Quarter 5) Emphasis on high quality experience.

Professor Fesemaier closed his presentation by adding that he would continue his analysis of the St. Johns visitor's survey. He and his team are also going to do new visitor intercept surveys in the Colonial Quarter and Historic District. They will start looking at Social Media opinion mining and web site server log analysis. This includes market segments, online marketing, and experience. Experiential Mapping, which is a biometric analysis of visitor's physiological response to the Colonial Quarter. And conclude with revisioning Colonial Quarter and Museum Space. They will use focus groups and a design charrette for this.

Board member Ponce wanted to know what the level of cooperation of other groups was. Mr. Poppell told him that since we have been here, it has been wonderful. But, what is the next step we need to take? How do we bring all of the historic stakeholders together to talk about the challenge we have? Chair Lastinger then thanked Professor Fesenmaier for him and his team's hard work. He then thanked Board member Shepard for getting the conversation started that led to this study. Board member Hunt invited the presenters to stay for the remainder of the meeting in case anyone had questions. Board member Shepard stated that terminology "Colonial Quarter" when we talk about Colonial Quarter they will think about the museum. This study is about more than that. Mr. Poppell stated that this is just the beginning.

Chair Lastinger then called Dana St. Claire from the City of St. Augustine. Mr. St. Claire is actively involved with the 450<sup>th</sup> Celebration in September. . Mr. St. Claire presented a book by Michael Francis to the board. Mr. St. Claire discussed the exhibition at the visitor's center called Tapestry: Cultural Threads of America. He then shared with the board copies of the passport program that takes you on a tour of St. Augustine. It tells a unique story with a visual and oral history. It has been very successful. The Celebration of the 450<sup>th</sup> takes place September 4-8. There will be food, music, festivals, and soldier reenactments. Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup> is the celebration day. At 8:00am the reenactment of the landing will take place and then the procession down San Marco, then there will be a commemorative mass. There are many other events that day as well. Following the events of the 450<sup>th</sup> Celebration, on September 18 – 20 the US/Spain International Summit will convene. The King and Queen of Spain will be in attendance. There will be several events during the summit.

Break for lunch at 12:20pm – Chair suggests a working lunch to keep on schedule. Agreed.

- First Colony Exhibit:

As the exhibit is soon departing we are looking at a replacement for it. Canoes, the costs would be \$70,000 for a 14 month exhibit. Mr. Poppell asked the board for direction. What to do after the Canoe exhibit is gone? Do we charge to see the canoe exhibit? Could it be possibly used as an art gallery or a meeting room? The board members then discussed other possible exhibits that could possibly be displayed, but pricing is an issue. A motion was made to present the Canoe Exhibit and that there be no admission fee. Approved unanimously. Board member Gonzalez stated that he felt it was really good that the exhibit would be free to the public, especially with the 450<sup>th</sup> celebration coming up. Board member Ponce suggested that every few years a new exhibit should be brought in or a policy on exhibits for future conversation. Board member Slesnick suggest making the First Colony exhibit free for the last 2 weeks in September. Mr. Poppell stated that overhead to run the exhibit was expensive and that we were currently allowing free admission on Thursdays to St. Johns County residents.

- Construction Update - Linda Dixon:

Government House Phase II consisted of a portion of the upstairs and the current Phase III addresses the remaining portions. We are looking at how to use that as a useable space and make the building more useable. In Phase III a chair lift will be added. Historic restoration projects. 3 grant funded projects. Phase III; exterior stabilization; general infrastructure; (will affect the Sala) A/C units, electric systems, plumbing, etc. Launching a number of projects with the historic society. The parking lot and window restoration is ongoing now. Exterior lighting project to showcase Government House will be completed by the 450<sup>th</sup>. In the West garden the lights will be re-lamped. Board member Hunt suggested new plants for the courtyard. Board member Deagan then asked Ms. Dixon about the basement space. Ms. Dixon stated that currently it's being used for storage space and utilities. Board member Deagan asked if at some point it could be used for lab space. Ms. Dixon replied that is was possible and they would need to assess that later. Ms. Dixon then stated that Phase III also included water proofing the basement. Chair Lastinger thanked Ms. Dixon.

- Historical Society – Susan Parker

Susan Parker from the Historical Society to present to the board. Ms. Parker stated that the Historical Society just completed its 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a long term lease with UFHSA. The Historical Society offers assistance with students in the library, they have helped with the script for the documentary and at the end of March they held a book signing for Steven Berry. The UFHSA repairs things that keeps their buildings going. The Historical Society has been managing the Oldest House and have presented it as a tourist attraction since 1918. On their lease are 3 Spanish buildings. July 6<sup>th</sup> starts the excavation on the “Tovar” House across the street from the Oldest House. Board member Kathy Deagan will oversee that project. There is an upcoming publication, History of St. Augustine that has added

information on women, restoration, etc. The book will be out in the fall and it will be printed in St. Augustine. Chair Lastinger thanked Ms. Parker.

#### Digitalization Project – Tom Caswell and Matt Armstrong

Completion of the NEH Grant: photos, reports, scrapbooks, drawings and maps were targeted for the project. The target number to be digitalized was 10,000 actual items digitalized were 25,168. This is only 10% of what needs to be scanned. This is just the Government House collection. The official launch date of the site is set for July 2, 2015. They showed pictures to the board of the storage area used to house these items prior to the start of the project and the room was cluttered and chaotic. After the project it was organized and clean. The reason for this project was to bring a resource to the community. UF students would be able to use this as well as Flagler students. So far the collection consists of archival, books, flat files, photographs, slides, and negatives. To date the users have consisted of: UF-Dr. Jan Matthews preservation class, Flagler College-student projects and class visits, Florida Public Archaeology Network, St. Johns County Archaeologist, City of St. Augustine-Archaeologist and Preservationist, Archaeological Consultants, Inc., Florida National Guard historian, St. Augustine Historical Society, Lighthouse Archaeological Maritime Program and St. Augustine Amphitheatre. To close the presentation they then shared a few emails from groups who have utilized the archives. The program has received very positive feedback and is a great resource for a lot of people. The next targets for the digitalization project is to target the mid 70's, FLANGO and National Guard, and to have more community involvement. They are located in Government House, room 209 and welcome anyone who is curious to check out what they are doing. They recently received a \$95,000 grant to buy equipment for their space in Government House and in the Gainesville office. Chair Lastinger thanked them and praised their good work.

#### Documentary Film Update – Allen Lastinger and Ed Poppell

Chair Lastinger told the board they were still waiting on WNET to make the presentation to PBS. He explained if the film is accepted it will most likely be 2016 when it is shown on a national basis. When PBS gives the greenlight we will have access to the education platform. It looks like now the 4 episodes will be completed and sent to PBS at the end of September. The reenactment of 1702 seize of St. Augustine will take place on June 26<sup>th</sup>. They are looking for people of all ages to participate.

#### Local Heros – Ed Poppell

Mr. Poppell started by saying we are currently in a dispute with a bar called Local Heros. Their fence is on our property. The city is also in a dispute with them due to the 50/50 bar-food issue. We are working on a resolution and they are planning on moving their fence off of our property.

Next, Mr. Poppell told the board that James Moore had been hired to do the annual audit. Mr. Poppell also told the board about a UF Board of Trustees lawsuit brought against them claiming access issue ADA. He told the board that the person who filed the lawsuit has also filed the same kind of lawsuit in 6 different states and also against Flagler College. They have asked the state if

they could mitigate these properties and the state has said it would materially impact the historic character. Mr. Poppell wanted to clarify that we are sensitive to accessibility, in situations like this and will find alternate mitigated methods.

Tenant & Rate Discussion – Ed Poppell

Mr. Poppell stated that they were thinking about having a tenant reception and possible workshop. They are trying to build better relationships with the tenants. Soon we will start negotiating rates and end dates. The properties are in 4 different categories: St. George Street that opens onto St. George Street, here we charge about \$50 a square foot. The 2<sup>nd</sup> is on St. George Street, but your door does not open onto St. George Street, here we charge mid \$40 a square foot range. 3<sup>rd</sup> category is on Cuna Street, we charge \$25 a square foot and have had mixed success with them. The last is the Spanish Military Hospital and there is no comparative number. Rent will increase 3% in 2016, but if you sign up for 5 years only 2% for the last 4 years.

Chair Lastinger asked if the board had any additional comments or questions. Board member Slesnick suggested that any future donors should receive a copy of the Michael Francis book that the board was presented today as a thank you. He also wanted to know if we will be changing the name of what is now called Government House. Chair Lastinger told the board that after the completion of the research study in the fall of the year the board should discuss changing the name.

Chair Lastinger, Ed Poppell and Lora Smith looked at dates for the upcoming board meeting and Friday, November 13, 2015 was chosen. All board members present agreed. With no further business to discuss, with no further business a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. Unanimously agreed upon. Meeting was adjourned at 2:31pm.

A refreshment reception followed the formal board meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

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Lora R. Smith  
Senior Administrative Assistant  
UF Development Corporation  
University of Florida