

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

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UFHSA Board of Directors Meeting

10:00 A.M., November 13, 2015

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

Board Members Present: Chair Allen Lastinger, Kathy Deagan,, Michael Francis, Roy Hunt, Arva Parks, Danny Ponce, Bill Proctor, Herschel Shepard, Don Slesnick, and Tracy Upchurch

Board Members Absent: Craig Dezern, Michael Gannon, Rick Gonzalez, Larry Rivers, and William Robinson

Others Present: Ed Poppell, Lora Smith, Linda Dixon, Jan Matthews and Billy Triay

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

Action Items

The minutes from the May board meeting were approved unanimously. The motion was made by Don Slesnick and seconded by Kathleen Deagan.

Chair Lastinger asked Ed Poppell to give the financial update. Mr. Poppell informed the board that Colonial Quarter has increased its total income for the quarter and year to date income was up. He informed the board that the Canoes exhibit would be taking the First Colony exhibit's place at Government House. The First Colony exhibit will be traveling around for the next 3-5 years.

Chair Lastinger called on Linda Dixon for the budget report. She told the board there were a few adjustments: no state grants and the lighting project that was originally budgeted for \$85,000 came in around \$170,000, they are cutting it back to \$130,000. Don Slesnick made a motion to approve the budget changes, seconded by Danny Ponce, approved unanimously.

Informational Items

Committee Reports

- **Education, Interpretation, Facilities** - Chair Lastinger called on board member Roy Hunt to discuss the building plaques. He gave the example of Casa Averro plaque which is located on St. George Street. A photograph was provided to board members. He then called on Dean Michael Reid and Jan Matthews. Jan informed the board that students have been doing research on several of the sites here in St. Augustine since 2012. They

have been working on identifying buildings and have had board member Herschel Shepard join them on field trips. Board member Arva Parks asked about the images on the plaques. Dean Reid told her it would make historical data more freely available to the public. Chair Lastinger thanked them for their presentation.

At this time Professor Daniel Fesenmaier, Director of the UF Tourism Institute and Jason Stienmetz, Research Coordinator, briefed the board on their Phase II Research Summary. The data sources consisted of consumer surveys, in-depth interviews, social media data mining and physiological response and eye tracking. They found that St. Augustine is a healthy growing market for tourism, but it is highly dependent on repeat visitors. The Castillo San Marcos area is the major hot spot. The overall experience for tourist was found to be quite positive. The Colonial Quarter experience was perceived as slightly above average compared to other attractions. In key findings for restaurants they learned that it is a very competitive and diverse market. Tourists are interested in unique, local, and authentic food experiences. They are also looking for a place to relax and escape the elements (heat,rain). The Historic District is a “food destination” for day and overnight visitors. Visitors expect to see interpretations of historic buildings even when they are “modern” inside. When looking at Performance Venues, they found that performance venue/evening entertainment currently does not appeal to the main History/Family markets. Visitors will pay for a quality experience. The Museum findings of Colonial Quarter told them that 84% of CQ visitors were there for the first time and 52% of CQ visitors have been to St. Augustine before, 75% of CQ repeat visitors are motivated by history. The Authenticity, preservation and interpretation of architecture is very important. Visitors are weary of “touristy” traps. The tour guides are the most memorable part of the experience. The Colonial Quarter is not attracting a number of repeat visitors. Most visitors are going to the Castillo and the Trolley tours before visiting the Colonial Quarter. The Colonial Quarter got many positive reviews and experiences and is a historical asset. It is in a prime location, the demonstrations are engaging and it has a diversity of products. The weaknesses are that the Colonial Quarter brand is muddled, it’s not meeting the expectations of “living history” and people have a low awareness of the museum. A very competitive market requires high quality experiences. Most visitors are turned off and disappointed by inauthentic exhibits. School groups are highly sensitive to price and perceived educational value. These elements have to be put into the equation as well. The Research Summary suggests Colonial Quarter rebrand components. Improve the Castillo Drive entrance to attract more Castillo and Trolley tour visitors. Make the museum more interactive. Include seasonal exhibits that attract repeat visitors. Coordinate schedules with other attractions. Build strategic tie-ins with other SA products. Conduct evening programs other than concerts. The board should expect a full written report for Phase I findings by the end of the year. In Phase II they will be evaluating re-branding options for each product and have focus groups and student projects. The Chair thanked them for their work and presentation.

He then asked Robbie Gordon, a producer for the documentary to address the board. Ms. Gordon explained that making a film is a complicated process. Part 3 and 4 are almost completed. When WNET has given them the okay it will be submitted to PBS. The working title is “America: Revised”. Mr. Poppell informs the board that UFHSA will own the copy rights. The Chair adds that he has been very happy with the progress that has been made.

The Chair introduced new board member Dr. Michael Francis. He is the Hough Family Chair of Florida Studies at the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg. Members welcomed him to the board.

Susan Parker from the St. Augustine Historical Society was asked for her report. She informed the board that on December 6th the Oldest House will be on the Garden Tour of Homes. They recently applied for approval of a marker to recognize that St. Augustine was on Anastasia Island in the early years. On May 18th the marker will be unveiled. She was asked to do a talk on the 5 most influential women in St. Augustine and recognized board member Kathleen Deagan. She updated the board on the excavation of the Tovar House. Board members Herschel Shepard and Kathleen Deagan along with Susan worked on that project. Greg Smith was the investigator on site. Ms. Parker also mention that they have cleaned the outside of a couple of houses as well.

At this time the Chair asked Roy Hunt to speak about the documentary being done by the College of Engineering. Mr. Hunt told the board that he has watched the film many times and the first 7 minutes are beautifully done, then the film shifts to Flagler. He tells the board that the Casa Monica was not originally called that and he thinks it needs to be referred to by its original name.

Mr. Poppell informed the board that the Audit Report was complete and explained that there was more spending this year due to the documentary film. Mr. Slesnick made a motion to approve the Audit Report, seconded by Danny Ponce, unanimously approved.

The Chair called on City Commissioner Todd Neville to give the city report. Mr. Neville informed the board of what was accomplished in FY15. The 450th Celebration was very successful. There is a downtown improvement project currently that is very close to completion as well as the shipyards project. The City is becoming more active in Tallahassee; they have hired a lobbyist to help achieve their goals and establish long term plans and relationships in Tallahassee. Top priorities are a mobility plan, implement capital improvement plan and active diversity program. The Chair thanked Mr. Neville.

- Construction Update – Ms. Linda Dixon, from UF Planning, Design and Construction presented. The Exterior and Interior rehabilitation projects that will be done on Government House are 2 year grant funded. The rest of the building will be made ADA compliant as part of this project. They will be adding a chair lift and making it code compliant.
 - Government House Exterior Preservation (\$1m)
 - Government House Interior
 - Phase 3 Architectural (\$1m)
 - Phase 3 MEPF (\$800k)
 - Other Building HVAC, Electric and Plumbing Replacements (\$200k)

For FY16 Projects, other significant projects completed or in the works include:

- Repairs for the 450th Celebration
- SAHS Kirby Smith Building Windows and Roof
- Government House Landscaping and Irrigation
- Sign Project
- Ribera House north yard
 - with open access to St. George Street

Mr. Poppell then updated the board on the Slip –and- Fall legal suit. It’s a 3 party suit: City of St. Augustine/UFBOT/White Lion: In April of 2013 a woman stepped off the low retaining wall on Cuna Street and injured her ankle. They are currently deposing people. Florida Risk Management is managing the legal matters on behalf of the university and state.

- Legislative Report - Mr. Poppell informed the board that 3 items were vetoed last year and that UFHSA will not have any legislative requests for 2016. HHP is taking a larger version of the presentation heard today to Tallahassee to ask the legislature for funding.

Board member Don Slesnick mentioned the renaming of the Government House Building. This was mentioned at the May 2015 board meeting. They asked Dean Michael Reid and his group to come up with some ideas by the next meeting.

The Chair thanked everyone. He asked Lora Smith to send out a doodle poll to find a date for the spring board meeting. The board was then asked to adjourn upstairs for a viewing of Episode 2 of the documentary. At 1:50pm the meeting concluded.

Respectfully submitted,

Lora R. Smith
Executive Assistant
UFHSA Board/University Relations
University of Florida

Approved May 20, 2016