

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

**UFHSA Board of Directors Meeting
December 1st, 2023**

**Time Convened: 10:00 a.m. Time
Adjourned: 1:14 p.m.**

**The Governor’s House Cultural Center and Museum
48 King Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084**

Board Members Present via in-person and virtual meeting: Allen Lastinger (Board Chair), Roy Hunt (Vice Chair), Kathleen Deagan, Charles Ellis, Michael Francis, John Fraser, Rick Gonzalez, William Robinson, Herschel Shepard, Don Slesnick, Tracy Upchurch, Doug Wiles

Board Members Absent: Buff Gordan, Don Slesnick, Fthr. Tom Willis

Staff/Others Present: Ed Poppell, Jim Cusick, Ken Smith, John Reagan, Billy Triay, Linda Dixon, Haley Williams, Laura Marion, Casey Wooster, Jessica Long, Mike Croce, Roger Smith, Magen Wilson, David Birchim, Cleary Larkin, Jamison Hooks, Emily Moran

Welcome

Chair Lastinger called the UFHSA meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Action Items:

Approval of Minutes – May 2023. *Roy Hunt made a motion to approve the minutes of May 2023; Kathy Deagan seconded; Motion passed unanimously.*

1. Financial Reports

• **Colonial Quarter and Update**

Mike Croce presented that the Colonial Quarter is implementing sustainability and conservation initiatives partnering with “Green Places.” He stated that they are trying to remove single use paper items from the restaurants and switch to metal washable ones. They are also recycling used oyster shells for beach refurbishment and composting vegetable scraps.

The Music Park has been a great place for charity organizations and community events. Museum admissions are up compared to last year (2022) largely due to school groups returning. The Gallegos House exhibit is now available to the public. The Colonial Quarter will continue to partner with IFAS on its monthly interactive public education program with bee-keeping, livestock, landscaping, and agriculture. The Quarter is increasing its participation in the History Festival by doing more reenactments, colonial games, live music, and the UFHSA documentary film playing in loop at The Colonial Oaks. They launched their first kids summer camp last year and are working on improvements for 2024. They will be looking for 2024 internships and summer camp attendants. Jamison Hooks, Communications Director, is working on the social media marketing. Working on moving the visitor center to a more appealing location. She will be doing the signage and drone footage for that. *No action was required.*

- **Budget Report**

Linda Dixon provided a review of the UFHSA budget reports for year end FY23 and first quarter of FY24 including State recurring funds for plant operations and maintenance on the state owned buildings and SAHS leased properties, and DSO Funding. The new fiscal year started July 1st, 2023. She mentions that the budget ended up with a small carry over balance in the state funds and significant balance in the DSO funds. DSO revenues were strong, and spending tracked generally as planned.

The FY24 first quarter spending is going as planned and a lot of funds carried over are committed to ongoing projects. *Kathy Deagan made a motion to accept the FY23 and FY24 Q1 budget reports; the motion was seconded by Hershel Shepard and passed unanimously.*

- **Accept 2022 Audit Report**

Ed Poppell introduced the FY22 Audit Report that was completed earlier this year. He mentioned that numbers in 2022 rental may reflect lower of the previous years due to covid. UF lowered rental properties payments to help relieve the burden of financial strains that a lot of people were experiencing. *Tracy Upchurch made a motion to accept the FY22 Audit Report; the motion was seconded by Kathy Deagan and passed unanimously.*

2. Education Committee – GH Nomination Update – Roy Hunt (No Action)

Roy Hunt reported on the lack of progress on nominating Governor’s House as a National Landmark. Rick Gonzalez reported that he has spoken to the SHPO about this but not gotten any traction. Don suggested enlisting help from the Friends of Florida History for the Secretary of State. Susan Parker will provide board members with a copy of the nomination report.

3. Student Housing Development Campaign – Ed Poppell (No Action)

Ed Poppell mentions the student housing project at the Coquina Warehouse, 46 Cuna St., that was discussed at the May meeting. There had been hope of legislative support, but that did not come about. Now we will pursue this project as that is tangible for donors to see. This will kick off a campaign with the help of Jessica Long, our UFHSA Development Officer. Ed Poppell stated that he would like all the members of the UFHSA Board to compile a list of potential contacts in the area and statewide to put on the donor list. DSO money will be used as well. Funds will go toward renovation of the building to include a small dining area, three bedrooms, and two restrooms to house up to nine individuals.

4. Development Committee Update - Don Slesnick/Jessica Long (No Action)

The committee is focusing on marketing, fundraising, and donations and hoping to gain from the Gator Giving Day on February 15th, 2024 that would be mainly online using social media and sending the link out to the past and potential donors. So far, this fiscal year starting in July of 2023, \$22,000 has been raised. The previous year the committee raised close to \$14,000. Donors can support future exhibitions, the Coquina Warehouse renovation, the History Festival, PISA program, and other initiatives. They will be seeking more prospects and creating a donation inventory that will list all the projects that potential contributors can choose from so that they will know where their funds are going.

5. Director Reappointments/New Directors

Ed Poppell introduced incoming board members Jim Cusick, Ken Smith, and John Reagan, who will be appointed by the UF Board of Trustees in December. He thanked outgoing board members, Kathleen Deagan and Rick Gonzalez, who were on the original UFHSA Board of Directors. Jim Cusick is replacing Kathleen Deagan as the required archaeologist on the board. Ken Smith is replacing Rick Gonzalez as the required architect on the board. John Reagan is fulfilling Joe Joyner's appointment since he resigned last spring. Additional members of the UFHSA Board will have their terms expire in 2024 but will serve until replacements are appointed in December 2024.

6. Committee Assignments

Allen Lastinger stated that Tracy Upchurch and John Regan will serve on the Development Committee while Ken Smith and Jim Cusick will serve on the Education Committee.

Discussion Items:

1. PISA Update - Cleary Larkin

The director mentioned that the PISA program really wants to focus more on St. Augustine community outreach and education. Every year the funding that is received through the UFHSA Board goes toward a graduate assistant in the Historic Preservation Masters program who work with Cleary Larkin and Linda Stevenson on creating historic structure reports for the state-owned buildings. This year will focus on the Watson House and funding a Masters of Historic Preservation student to prepare a StoryMap on the Quadricentennial celebration of 1965. PISA's Clarissa Carr with Laura Marion have prepared a grant proposal for the Mars Corporation to research and tell the story of chocolate and its long history in St. Augustine. They will be producing an exhibit as well if everything goes as planned with tasting of local chocolate the opening night. The primary project for this year is looking at resilient landscapes on the state properties focusing first on the De Mesa Sanchez House to prevent flooding and water damage. Community outreach includes an October public tour and lecture with Geoffrey Steward, IFACS, a February NPS training and guest lecture, and planning for a late spring conservation guest lecture. PISA is seeking conservator expertise, so they are focusing on creating relationships with guest conservators to do lectures to teach our students and use the lab.

Also, Ed Poppell mentions there will be a business meeting in April of 2024 with the College's Board of Advocates. The group will be brought over to St. Augustine to see what UFHSA and the College of Design, Construction, and Planning are doing in the city.

2. History Festival 2024 - Roger Smith

Roger mentioned that the 3rd History Festival will be going from 17 venues to 32 participating in 2024, and hoping to bring in two additional venues (Lightner Museum and The Alligator Farm). Historic houses of worship and historic gardens will be added to the program. The annual gala will change locations from The Governors House to the Colonial Quarter. It will be to honor the employees who help make the Festival possible, and will be held on Tuesday May 7th, 2024.

3. Report from the City – David Birchim

Dave Birchim, the City Manager, updated on city initiatives including mobility (public

parking/transportation), resiliency, and the fire station. In November, the city commission approved a city parking garage with approximately 750 spaces at the Broudy Liquor store property on the west corner of King St. and US 1. It will include a free shuttle to the downtown historic district, ride share hub, vehicle charging stations, and bicycle racks. This site is identified as a possible future site of JTA passenger rail from the Prime Osbourne Center in downtown Jacksonville, FL. In response to a board member question, Dave confirmed that there will be no change to traffic flow on Cathedral Place or the portion of St. George Street in front of Governor's House as part of the anticipated King Street reconstruction project.

4. St. Rehab-Parking Further Expansion

Davide Birchim reported that construction on Spanish Street is on schedule between Cuna St. and Orange St. to be completed in February 2024. The project includes brick pavers, concrete curbing, sidewalks, and decorative lighting fixtures. Ed Poppell noted that we expect to retain the parking lot on Spanish Street rather than expanding the Ribera Park since City regulations will not allow UFHSA to generate income from special event rentals on the property.

5. Ft. Mose Update – Charles Ellis

Charles Ellis reported on activities at Ft. Mose Historic State Park including the upcoming Jazz and Blues Series in February 2024.

6. Construction Update

Linda Dixon reported on ongoing building maintenance projects that have largely focused on routine paint/patch/repair with the regular upkeep required for these wood structures near the coast. She also reported that the permanent generator has now been installed to support the exhibit space in Governor's House. UFHSA has completed installing the building name plaques that recognize the University of Florida and UFHSA. The signs include interpretive information about the buildings as prepared by the Education Committee with assistance from Susan Parker. Other projects have included roof replacements and a refresh of the Ribera Park that was installed in 2020.

7. Vickers Update / Art Studio at The Governors House

The Vickers collection has been very successful with more visitors in St. Augustine than the larger collection of Vickers art in Gainesville at the Harn Art Museum. The number of attendees is almost reaching 100,000. The exhibit was refreshed in May 2023.

Ed Poppell discussed potential uses of the 2nd floor room above the Sala including a possible new exhibit display. Other ideas include turning it into an art room for local artists or extending the rental venue options. Considerations include additional staffing for the building for security reasons and ADA access.

8. Doc. Film Update-2024 Marketing Direction

The exclusive arrangement with PBS in Dec. 2017 had a 7-year marketing right. Next year, in Dec. 2024, that exclusivity ends. Ed Poppell has reached out asking if they will extend it or drop us but there is still no response from PBS. If they do not extend, UFHSA will need to address marketing and distribution on our own.

9. FPL Solar Proposal Update

Ed Poppell provided an update on the potential partnership with FPL. It would be a subscription with FPL that will slightly increase our bill to support alternative energy generation but generate a return on investment over time. The University is negotiating this program for multiple university properties including St. Augustine.

10. Library Staff Report - Laura Marion and Casey Wooster

The George A. Smathers Libraries Digital Collections website has gained almost 40,000 views this year. Staff have been working with the digital services team at UF to get new things uploaded such as a post card collection and a slide show collection of 16,000 photographs. With the help of Daniela Ortiz, the library team has been working for several years on a community pro-bono project with the National Guard to digitize their newsletter "4 Guardsmen."

- Progress has slowed on transferring the deaccessioned artifacts, but there are 86 items slated for transfer to the Florida School of the Arts at St. Johns River State College. A total of 292 items have been transferred to date.
- UFHSA will be opening a new loan to the Florida Museum of Natural History's Native American exhibit with Seminole canoes.
- Library continues to assist researchers and students, and partners with the UF Fine Arts Library.
- Two exhibits have been curated including a new digital collection of Zora Neale Hurston's time in St. Augustine.

11. Public Archaeology

An update was provided about public archaeology programs including monthly active demonstrations that are conducted in the small gallery near the lobby in Governor's House.

12. St. Augustine Historical Society – Magen Wilson

Megan Wilson provided updates on SAHS activities including their library collections, supporting student research, and exhibits including the Surf Museum and a new exhibit. Building preservation projects are focused on the library and routine maintenance.

13. Spring Meeting Update

Friday during or near the History Festival in May were discussed but not confirmed. Staff will poll the members to find the best time for the next meeting.

14. Meeting Adjourned at 1:14 pm

Adopted March 15, 2024