

**Historical Advisory Committee (HAC)  
Minutes March 9, 2021**

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  
Dianne Munson  
Theresa Murtha  
Valarie Colbert

**Not Present**

**BOCC Liaison:**

Commissioner Stephen R. Deutsch

**Guests**

**Libraries & History Staff**

Jennifer Zoebelein  
Tina Ranney

**9:00 a.m. Roll Call** (Roll Call not taken) All Present

**Approval of January and Feb meeting minutes:** Dianne requested motion to approve. Clare motioned to approve, Stephen 2<sup>nd</sup>. All in favor. Minutes approved.

**Agenda Items:**

**Discussion of/vote on strategic plan draft for historical tourism for submission to BCC:**

Theresa asked if the document was reviewed and if there were any thoughts or comments. Do we want to move on this? Theresa read and reviewed document for those that hadn't read it. Stephen commented that he feels the whole document teeters on the communication of the other historical groups in the county. If they can't get that, the whole document is fluff. Everything that was spoken about, are things that need to be spoken about in a group. To accomplish anything, all the groups need to work together. Theresa does not disagree. However, presenting the document to the commissioners is the role of the HAC. There have been discussions by another group about creating a larger all-encompassing county group. Commissioner Deutsch commented, each group represented at the HAC, and their varying personalities is what sets the direction for where the group goes. He mentioned previous years examples of participation in certain events and stated that each group and communication between them is important. Theresa mentioned that hadn't happened in a while and that the committee's role is advisory and that this proposal is outside of that. She stated she is supportive of other groups be involved. Commissioner also mentioned that all county volunteer groups are advisory and that their recommendations are always considered by the board. Theresa continued with moving forward, she has two recommendations; 1. A task force to address economic historical tourism. Then asked the group what their ideas were and if more time is needed to decide. Stephen commented that anything that goes before the board needs to make money. Commissioner

disagrees. He stated the first thing is, is it good and beneficial for the county? To which Stephen replied, that means, will it make a profit? Commissioner Deutsch stated that is irrelevant to him. Once they decide to do something, they do it. He then provided an example of this. Stephen replied that he does agree, but we are talking about historical, cultural, tourism, and tourism is about money. Theresa then asked, how would you do that? Because she would like to act. How would you change this current document to be presented to the board? What would be another recommendation we could make to move this forward? Stephen asked is there anything we can look at that shows net gain in tourism dollars with a similar program? Both Commissioner Deutsch and Theresa replied with yes. Commissioner Deutsch mentioned Heads on Beds. And gave some examples. He also suggested maybe they should plan an event and asked Jennifer to name some historical events they have had. Stephen asked again if there's anything that can show soft dollars, because he believes that is a necessary piece to present to the board. Theresa said there are studies out there that will show this, and she doesn't think that it's something that needs to be proven. Commissioner Deutsch mentioned several Veteran programs that bring in tourism and that it doesn't always have to bring in a dollar if it can be appreciated and is informative. Stephen suggested focusing on an educational point and that there must be something presentable to the board to motivate them to help or why bother. Valarie asked if there must be a committee outside of this group due to Sunshine Laws and Theresa said no, they are looking for a cross, because they want to have tourism involved. Theresa reiterated that she would like to make a recommendation to the board for a task force dedicated to historical tourism. Commissioner Deutsch suggested working with other county departments and come up with a definitive plan to be presented. Theresa feels that getting people involved at level could be difficult and that they should be able to put something together. Jennifer then suggested taking the document and consolidate it into a single paragraph, putting in what is necessary to present to the board, bring it back here and everyone will vote on it, Theresa then replied that she doesn't want to do that until she gets some commitment from everyone here in the group. Jennifer then said to make it as clear and concise as possible with the most important points. If the group feels it should go to the board, it needs to be voted on. Theresa is seeking more input and suggestions from the rest of the committee. Stephen said without the backing of other groups it won't go anywhere. Theresa then said let's move on to something else then. Stephen asked how do we get everyone together? Theresa then said she has reached out to others to join and the restrictions on who can join are frustrating. Valarie asked for clarification on what Theresa wants from the rest of the group and she replied that she wants more input and suggestions. Valarie made a motion that the document be tidied up and brought back next month for voting. Theresa said she understands but is still wanting more suggestions or changes from the group. Dianne said she can't think of anything new to add to it. Theresa said she doesn't think anyone will disagree with anything in in the document, she is still looking for the group to provide input on what to keep or add. Commissioner Deutsch then suggested connecting with tourism and agree on a program or plan of action that the board would be more receptive and maybe even include dollars and funding if necessary. Theresa stated that that's one strategy, the other is exploring an idea for a heritage and cultural center. Commissioner Deutsch then pointed out that that would require funding. Theresa then said these are things that need to be discussed. Stephen said he thinks they should take these items to tourism or even economic development to get these departments on board and then create a group where all the different entities can meet once a month to discuss these types of suggestions. Theresa then asked how many people are allowed on this committee, the answer is nine; there are currently six. Jennifer mentioned that one option is to ask tourism to come to the next meeting and discuss these items with them. Then, take the recommendation to the board.

Theresa agreed this would be a good idea. Stephen also agrees having Sean back is worthwhile and Commissioner Deutsch mentioned that after discussing with Sean, it may not even need to go to the board. Jennifer will email Sean and ask him if he can attend. Discussion about different historical events followed.

**Discussion/edit of/vote on HAC ordinance for submission to BCC:**

Theresa then asked about the ordinance and Jennifer replied that the group had wanted to revise and vote on changes that would be presented to the board. It was decided that there would not be enough time to discuss that today. Jennifer then asked if Sean was able to confirm that he can come to the next meeting, would that be the sole focus for that meeting. It was decided yes.

**Discussion/edit of/vote on Historic Marker Program resolution for submission to BCC**

Theresa, then asked about the marker program that was on the agenda, again Jennifer stated that the group had wanted to review and recommend changes to that also and that any changes would have to be voted on and presented to the board. Theresa believes that the group should be able to make suggestions for markers. Pat mentioned that it's important for the group to get out in the community and talk to people for suggestions. Commissioner Deutsch agreed. Theresa asked about how to go about writing up desired changes. Jennifer suggested that everyone should read the document, then have a conversation about it. Theresa then asked if it's possible to meet more than once a month. Jennifer replied no, not under the current ordinance. Theresa said she doesn't understand why they can't meet on a specific topic. Commissioner Deutsch said they may be able to add an extra meeting, but it would have to be posted and advertised. Jennifer said she would check with the county attorney. Theresa said she believes this is a problem and Dianne agreed. Theresa suggested that each member read the ordinance and the following meeting after the next should be dedicated to just the ordinance and changes, specifically, memberships and having extra meetings. Theresa believes this is necessary for the group to be able to accomplish their goals. Jennifer agreed to dedicate the May agenda to discussing the ordinance. Theresa then asked for suggestions from the group about other items in the ordinance that need to be addressed and she also mentioned the marker program and the committee role in that program and problems she has with that. Theresa asked if the county attorney should be at the May meeting. She would like someone to be there to help put the language together. It was stated that the committee would write the changes and then the attorney would review.

**Member Input:** Stephen mentioned that the large Indian by the Blanchard house may have to be moved. Theresa asked where the information was coming from, and Stephen said it was in the paper.

**Public Input:** None

**Meeting Adjourned: 10:00 a.m.**

**Next HAC Meeting:** - Wednesday, April 13th, 9a.m. at Mid County Regional Library, 2050 Forrest Nelson Blvd., Port Charlotte, FL.

cc:  
Commissioner Ken Doherty

Commissioner Joseph Tiseo

Commissioner Stephen R. Deutsch  
Commissioner Bill Truex  
Commissioner Christopher Constance

Hector Flores, County Administrator  
Emily Lewis, Deputy County Administrator  
Tommy Scott, Director, Community Svcs Dept.