

Historical Advisory Committee (HAC) Minutes  
March 12, 2025  
Meeting held at Centennial Park in Port Charlotte

**Committee Members**

Katherine Adamo  
Deborah Fitch  
Karen Hartman  
Dianne Munson  
Theresa Murtha  
Clare Riggs  
Pat Spence  
Stephen Valdes

**BOCC Liaison**

N/a

**Libraries & History Staff**

Jennifer Zobebelein, Cal Keene

**Public Attendees**

Jason Valickas  
Captain Marion Snyder

**Roll call**

Dianne does the roll call; Theresa Murtha is absent

**Approval of minutes**

Clare calls for approval of January minutes

**Update on time capsule**

Jennifer states History Services does not have the time capsule the board has been searching for. HS does have two time capsules in the archives from the schools.

**Update on El Jobean fishing pier**

During the last meeting Pat asked about the fishing pier that had been extensively damaged in Helene and Milton. Parks & Rec states it will be fixed, but they have to go through FEMA and it will take time.

**Plant signage at Hickory Bluff Cemetery**

Last fall member Katherine asked about the signage at Hickory Bluff Cemetery. Jennifer spoke with the Master Gardeners who offered to do the signage, they just need a list of plants. Katherin confirmed that they have a list of plant names that need signage, and also some plants that need to first be identified. MG are welcome to visit the site and identify them. Jennifer stated they have a laser engraver for the signs. Possibly DAR would contribute to the supplies

needed. DAR gets an opportunity for the Keep Charlotte Beautiful grant and she will check to see if the signage would fall under the guidelines.

Pat and Katherine discussed DAR fundraisers and conferences.

### **DAR Marker @ Gaines Park**

DAR recently placed an American Revolutionary Patriot marker by the Liberty Tree in the William R. Gaines park. The event had a bagpipe player, high school color guard, and state level reps for DAR were present.

The Liberty Tree marker was cleaned up by the County.

### **Citizen Input**

Citizen John Valickas delivered an emphatic speech about the importance of restoring the Bunk House and moving it back to its original location in Placida, Florida. He discussed the historical significance of the Bunk House including how it housed railroad workers, served as a post office, school, and home to many families. Mr. Valickas made a dedication to Captain Marion Snyder who saved the Bunk House from demolition in 2005. Mr. Valickas urged the HAC to rally the community and fundraising efforts to save the Bunk House.

Member Karen Hartman doesn't think it's financially realistic to do a full restoration, whereas citizen John Valickas disagrees, and believes the community can be rallied for funding and donations, including a contractor willing to put a new roof on it.

Libraries & History liaison, Dr. Jennifer Zoebelein, clarified that she has no say in the restoration or relocation for the Bunk House – This would be in the hands of the BOCC.

Member Clare Riggs points out that establishing an official non-profit account would be the first step in fundraising. Dr. Zoebelein clarifies that the Historical Advisory Committee cannot take part in fundraising but can raise awareness for the issue.

Member Katherine Adamo recommended that the citizens bring this issue to the board and inform them of the desire to start community-based fundraising. Mrs. Adamo considered the responsibilities of relocation and restoration. Mr. Valickas states he has been to board meetings and doesn't feel a solid decision has been made regarding this issue.

During a previous meeting, the Board was in favor of moving the bunk House back to Placida, however, there is due process such as assessing the proposed site. This could take longer than a year. Dr. Zoebelein clarified neither her nor the HAC can make the decision, but the HAC can support Mr. Valickas' efforts.

Citizen, Captain Marion Snyder, believes the Bunk House can be taken apart and moved. 10 years prior, Captain Marion tried to save a bridge tender's house but could not find proper interest. She took it apart and relocated it herself, so she knows the possibility is there for the Bunk House. Katherine points out that if it's taken apart, it would have to be rebuilt to current building codes with ADA compliancy.

Clare points out that a GoFundMe could possibly be created as opposed to establishing a 501(c)(3). The committee agrees this would be a good idea.

Member Stephen Valdes inquired about the current and future location of the Bunk House. He mentions his success in raising donations for several historical Punta Gorda houses, and wonders if the same template could be applied to the Bunk House.

Karen compliments the Punta Gorda Historic Society, including their venues and events.

Captain Marion asks for more information from Stephen on how they could generate donations for the Bunk House. Stephen expands on converting historic buildings to restaurants, and hosting vendors like glassblowers, wood-turners, and fabric artisans.

Clare would like Mr. Valickas and Captain Marion to keep the HAC updated on their efforts.

Clare makes a motion to approve support for the preservation and restoration efforts by the Friends of the Placida Bunk House. Motion was unanimously approved.

### **Update on BOCC Liaison**

Deborah asks if a commissioner will continue to be present at the HAC meetings. Dr. Zobebelein clarifies that per the board, a new BOCC liaison will be appointed but we don't yet have the timeframe on that. The liaisons are meant to observe, act as a guide, and answer questions, but not necessarily actively participate.

### **Member Input**

Pat Spence: Many people in El Jobean have left the area due to fear of storms.

Stephen Valdes: Working on the original sculpture of Toth in Punta Gorda. Stephen is searching for a group committed to public art statues. The Visual Arts Center may be a resource.

Jennifer Zobebelein: Hosted the Florida Conference of Historians banquet at the Punta Gorda Library. The Friends of the Library donated money for food. Pioneer's Pizza catered the event, commemorative coins created in the MakerSpace were given to the guests, and Jason Vuic was the speaker.

Dianne Munson: The 21<sup>st</sup> Hibiscus Festival takes place the first weekend in May at Gilchrist Park. The Festival has free admittance with live music, food and craft vendors.

### **Meeting adjourns**

Next meeting is on April 9th, 2025, at 9am, in the Centennial Park large conference room in Port Charlotte. All HAC meetings throughout 2025 will be held here.