

**FLORIDA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA
MAY 20, 2006**

MINUTES

Commission Members Present: Dr. Judith Bense, Chairman; Marion Almy; Joseph Amon; Margo Dundon; Mimi Reid Hardman; Lex McKeithen; Dr. Angelo Perez; Ellen Uguccioni

Commission Members Absent: Carter Quina; Ernestine Ray; Dr. Larry Rivers

Department of State Staff Present: Frederick Gaske, Director, Division of Historical Resources; Alissa Slade, Historic Preservation Grants Program; Laura Kammerer and Scott Edwards, Compliance Review Program; Susanne Hunt, Publications and Awards Program.

Chairman Bense called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

Commission Members and Department staff introduced themselves.

Chairman Bense called for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 30, 2006 meeting.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Amon to approve the minutes as written.
Motion seconded by Commissioner Dundon. Motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Bense asked that the Department of State Update agenda item be addressed. Division Director Gaske introduced Malinda Horton, who discussed the past legislative session – Grants; transfer of Old Capitol to Legislature from Museum of Florida History for management purposes; exemption of archaeological site location information from Sunshine Law. All grants were approved without Legislative Conference except for Special Category. The Conference decided that 49 projects would be in the budget for approval by the Governor. This is an increase from the 43 projects recommended by the Florida Historical Commission.

The Commission discussed the surplus in this year's state budget. Commissioner Perez inquired on the status of "Special Member Projects" in the Department budget. Ms. Horton conveyed that these are still in the budget and it is not known if the Governor will veto these items as he has in the past. Commission members discussed the possibility of extra funds being made available from the budget surplus for the repair or restoration of hurricane-damaged historic properties and archaeological sites. Ms. Horton discussed the potential funding for this purpose from the proposed Department of Financial Services budget.

Commission members discussed the process for emergency stabilization of state owned historic properties damaged by hurricanes, e.g. Mission San Luis. Division Director Gaske stated there are funds in the Department's Grants and Donations Trust Fund which could be used to cover damages. They would need to get a budget item to spend these funds to use them for hurricane damage. Chairman Bense noted that this occurs on the county level as well, with later state reimbursement. She also noted that, unfortunately, these funds are not always reimbursed.

Chairman Bense asked Ms. Horton to explain the salary rate issue for the Division of Historical Resources and what can be done to raise the rate. Ms. Horton explained that the Legislature employs a rate formula based on budget and staff numbers. She further explained that rate was not a problem until last year when a legislative bill was passed which stipulated that state agencies are required to be under their rate cap. As a result, when a professional position in the Division becomes vacant it is being replaced with a lower paid clerk position until the agency is under rate. There was extensive discussion on the rate issue and what can be done to increase Division rate and salary line items. Commission members agreed that this needs to be a priority, and there was extensive discussion on the importance of having professional staff and the need to pay them adequately. Ms. Horton was asked to research this issue further and explore possible strategies for action.

Commissioner Dundon made a motion to request salary information, current funding and staff levels, and what is needed to bring salaries up to appropriate levels for the Division of Historical Resources. Motion seconded by Commissioner Amon. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Amon stated that several years ago the Florida Department of Transportation faced the same issue with engineers leaving and going to the private sector. Steve Martin, of the Florida Park Service, stated that the Florida Department of Environmental Protection also faces this turnover issue with its employees leaving for better-paying private sector employment. Chairman Bense noted that this has been an issue with many Departments.

Chairman Bense asked Ms. Horton to discuss the potential for increased funding for "program" (small matching) grants. This was followed by extensive Commission discussion on the need for additional small matching grant funding.

Commissioner Dundon commented that she believed that Grant Review Panel meetings need to be scheduled prior to the legislative session. Commissioner Dundon also

discussed the Florida Association of Museums (FAM) Task Force which will be established to make recommendations to the Department and the Commission regarding the History Museum Grants program, and that the scheduling of Panel meeting dates will be one of the issues addressed.

BREAK

Division Director Gaske continued with the Department of State Update Report. He informed Commissioners that Mission San Luis won a prestigious "Preserve America" Award. Mission Director Bonnie McEwan, Secretary of State Sue Cobb, and Florida First Lady Columba Bush went to a ceremony in Washington to receive the award from President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush earlier in the month.

Chairman Bense asked Alissa Slade to discuss the Grants agenda item. Ms. Slade distributed lists of fiscal year 2006-2007 grants. She mentioned that the Division of Historical Resources is considering on-line applications. Division Director Gaske stated that the Division of Cultural Affairs would be the Department "guinea pig" for this process. Commissioner Dundon discussed her concerns with the on-line application process. Commissioner Perez also expressed his concern. Commission members discussed the need for this to be implemented slowly and carefully.

Division Director Gaske discussed a memo from David Gregory which was prepared in response to a request from the Commission at its March meeting regarding multi-year funding for History Museum Grants for operating support. Mr. Gregory's research concluded that this could be accomplished but would require an amendment to the History Museum Grants Administrative Rule. This issue will be further explored by the FAM Task Force. Commission discussion regarding extensions of Grant Award Agreements and the current shortage of Division grants staff due to the rate situation ensued.

Chairman Bense asked Laura Kammerer to address the Compliance Review agenda item. Ms. Kammerer discussed Compliance Review Section activities. This was followed by extensive discussion of the heavy Section workload and staff turnover rate, and possible alternative funding sources such as the positions which are now funded by the Florida Department of Transportation. Commission consensus was that this is an issue which again directly relates to the Division rate and salary issues.

Chairman Bense asked Scott Edwards to address the Historic Building Insurance agenda item. This was followed by extensive discussion on the difficulty of often obtaining insurance for historic buildings. This was followed by discussion on the restrictive covenants required for Special Category grantees and how the state could recoup grant

funding if a grantee were to abandon the property following a natural disaster. Commission members also discussed adding a question regarding insurance to the historic preservation grant application, but did not reach a consensus on this issue.

BREAK

Chairman Bense asked for other Commission business.

Commission McKeithen asked about recognition/awards for volunteers in historic preservation. Commissioner Uguccioni suggested that the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation Awards Program is the best venue for these. Division Director Gaske noted that the Department also administers the Secretary of State Awards in Historic Preservation on an annual basis.

Commissioner Uguccioni stated that she would like to see a workshop on issues relating to the 50-year old threshold for historic properties. Commission members discussed the possibility of having the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation sponsor an educational workshop or a session at next year's annual conference in Sarasota on this issue. Commissioner Uguccioni stated that a historic context on post-1950 historic buildings would be very helpful and useful. Commissioner Almy recommended that a special non-matching grant be awarded to accomplish this. Commission consensus was to include a request for this in the next Historic Preservation Grants solicitation letter. [Note: Language for this proposal has been prepared by Division staff and Commissioner Uguccioni and will be included in the October 1 solicitation letter.]

Chairman Bense introduced Becky Clarke, President of the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, who provided an update on the Hays-Hood House project in Tallahassee.

Chairman Bense invited public comments.

Dr. William Lees, from the University of West Florida, gave an update on the Florida Public Archaeology Network. There are currently four Centers established, and four others are to be added in the upcoming year. Commissioner Almy asked Dr. Lees to elaborate on working with river divers and others regarding underwater archaeological sites. Dr. Lees stated that there are both terrestrial and underwater archaeologists involved in the program at various Centers.

Steve Martin, with the Florida Park Service, discussed historic vernacular landscapes that need to be incorporated into consideration by state and federal preservation programs. Commissioner Uguccioni volunteered to look into this subject and report back.

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Division Director Gaske announced future Commission meeting dates:

September 18-21, 2006 in Tallahassee - Business Meeting on Monday; Special Category Reviews through Thursday.

November 30 - December 1, 2006 in Jacksonville – National Register Review Board on Thursday; Full Commission Meeting on Friday.

Meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.