

ST. JOHNS COUNTY

Cultural Resources Review Board

CULTURAL RESOURCES REVIEW BOARD MINUTES

Robert Olson
Nick Jonihakis
Janet Jordan
Susan Schjelderup

Blair Knighting
Christine Newman
Dr. Leslee Keys



REGULAR MEETING

4040 Lewis Speedway
Conference Room 1

Commissioner Krista Joseph, BCC Liaison
Ryan Mauch, Staff Liaison

Monday, October 14, 2024

10-14-2024 CRRB Meeting audio recording: <https://youtu.be/vGJ3tIw16fM>

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Nick Jonihakis, Chair
Christine Newman, Vice Chair
Janet Jordan
Susan Schjelderup
Robert Olson
Dr. Leslee Keys

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Blair Knighting

STAFF PRESENT:

Ryan Mauch, Environmental Supervisor
Megan Wright, Environmental Specialist
Michael Lagasse, Environmental Manager

PUBLIC PRESENT:

Sallie O'Hara, Hastings Main Street, Inc
Ed Slavin
Others in attendance did not sign in

- ❖ Called meeting to order at 1:30pm
- ❖ General public comment for items not on the agenda – 3 minutes per speaker
 - Ed Slavin: to re-establish the cultural resource/historic department in this building.
- ❖ Approval of meeting minutes from August 12th meeting
 - August Minutes, Motion by Susan seconded by Dr. Keys (motion passes 6/0)
- ❖ Approval of current agenda
 - Motion by Rob Olsen seconded by Dr. Keys (motion passes 6/0)

AGENDA ITEMS

Public comment for items on the Agenda will be held after each item is addressed by the Board (3 minutes)

1. O'Brien Estate – 99 Kelley Lane, Moultrie, FL, presentation by Paul Weaver

Paul Weaver brought BEHST Builders, Inc. owner John Benoit to the presentation. Benoit is interested in preservation and maintains the O'Brien Estate as a contractor for the owner. The home has unique Queen Anne features. The existing structure sits on 12 acres to be preserved. The historic home is proposed to be used for bed & breakfast/dock "boatel" aka boat motel/corporate retreat. The house was previously "The Dixie Home for the Aged & Infirm Deaf". The structure's foundation, tower, window and door surrounds as well as its structural walls are poured concrete with a coquina aggregate. It has an irregular ground plan, multiple roof styles and three massive coquina concrete chimneys. It features a belvedere and elaborate Eastlake wood detailing on the main (east) facade. An intricately detailed wrap around porch is located on the east and south facades. The interior is divided into three floors. The first floor contains public spaces; the second contains bedrooms; and the third contains servants' quarters and storage. The second floor contains bedrooms with themes such as, "The Virginia Room, The Florida Room" and so forth. Interior materials and features are of outstanding quality and maintained to this day. Weaver included a film of Dr. Robert C. Fletcher who signed ASL and was the primary fundraiser for The Dixie Home for the Aged & Infirm Deaf. The Florida Department of Historical Resources staff and NRHP review board recommended to forward the nomination for the Henry S. O'Brien House to the National Park Service with a recommendation for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A: Exploration and Settlement, Social History, in the area of Disability History, and Criterion C: Queen Anne - Eastlake architecture at the local level of significance from 1885 to 1945. Archival photos enabled Benoit to understand where the old kitchen, artesian well, aeration system, and staircase were for servants' living quarters. The house has great elevation and did not flood from the ground but rather from the outside walls and windows during Hurricanes Matthew and Irma in 2016 and 2017. Benoit is researching how to best prevent water seepage from rainfall from the walls and windows moving forward. There is no material that retains moisture inside of the house allowing any water that enters the house to dry completely.

2. Office of County Attorney presentation postponed due to absence by Kealey West

Second agenda item added - Resolution by Robert Olson addressing the County and CRRB's roles in the 2025 Comp Plan (vote of 6/0 to be added to the agenda)

Mr. Olson proposed a draft resolution for the CRRB's consideration. After much discussion, the board members decided not to move forward with the resolution.

Dr. Keys explained that there have been public meetings where citizens could express their interest in topics that they feel require attention from the CRRB and from the St. Johns County consultant in the process of updating the County's 2025 Comprehensive Plan. She stated that the CRRB needs to be able to provide additional feedback on the topic of cultural resources for the Comprehensive Plan update, which is ongoing. Commissioner Krista Joseph also stated that the County's consultant currently updating the comprehensive plan be contacted for a workshop. Christine Newman discussed the cultural resources review and CRRB staff liaison position. Multiple board members stated that the role of the staff position and CRRB need to be outlined in the Comp Plan.

Public Comment: Ed Slavin spoke for three minutes in support of the draft resolution submitted by Mr. Olson.

Dr. Keys made a motion to have a meeting set with the County's consultant updating the comprehensive plan and that if it requires a special meeting, that is adequate. Seconded by Susan. Vote

of yes (6/0).

Public Comment: Sallie O'Hara shared that the meeting with the County's consultant be made as a virtual meeting due to the short notice.

Staff commented that it is good to develop a list of comments and recommended changes to be brought forth to this meeting by the CRRB members.

- ❖ **Board Member Reports:** Dr. Keys spoke about historic and culturally significant structures that were destroyed due to Hurricanes Helene and Milton. Next year is the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, which would be a great opportunity for the county to provide public education. Dr. Keys also mentioned that there is a tentative date set for Nov 20 and 21 for a Florida Department of Historical Resources small matching grant webinar.
- ❖ **Staff Reports:**
 - St. Johns County is assisting the Lincolnville Museum with needed upgrades to their facility which may include parking lot resurfacing, drainage, security elements, etc. with a \$250,000 grant from the Department of State
 - Hastings High School Rehabilitation proposal- staff had preliminary conversations with the School Board, who now own the building. We have yet to receive any scope or drawings of the proposed renovations. This project would be exempt from local County and CRRB review and instead be reviewed by the Florida Department of Historical Resources State Historic Preservation Office, based on regulations involving permitting associated with School Board projects.
 - A pre-application was submitted for the Hastings Potato Growers Association Building for a potential new private school. The applicant proposed some interior remodeling for the new use. A cultural resource management plan may be required depending on the scope of the project. A historic resource consultant will be required to prepare the plan, along with a concurrent review by the CRRB for any development review permitting and building modifications.
 - Main Street Pizza on North Main Street proposed an awning over the outside sitting area. No current design requirements in the land development code, however staff recommended the applicant coordinate with Hastings Main Street plan
 - Staff reviewed a confirmation letter for a potential future Dunkin Donuts on Main Street in Hastings.
 - Public Comment: Sallie O'Hara discussed adding potential historic and main street design review requirements to the Hastings Overlay District to control designs for development applications.
 - Commissioner Krista Joseph asked staff about how to approach potential Hastings design review requirements in future Commissioner's comments.
 - Staff reviewed a change of use application for the Zora Neale Hurston house located on West King St. Proposed was the first floor to be used for a non-profit museum/art gallery, while the second floor will become rental units to financially support the downstairs exhibits.
- ❖ Acknowledgement by a Boy Scout, Harrison Warren, who received his last badge to become an Eagle Scout by coming to a local public meeting.
- ❖ Adjourned at 3:24 pm

Chair

Cultural Resource Review Board