

Historical Preservation Task Force

Minutes of March 31st, 2005

Attendees:

Commissioner Ronnie Duncan
Jan Luth, Director, Heritage Village
Brian Smith, Director, County Planning Dept,
Cyndi Tarapani, Director, City of Clearwater Planning Dept.
Rae Claire Johnson
Linda Fisher, Pinellas Planning Council

Commissioner Duncan chaired the meeting, and thanked everyone for attending. He indicated it was the purpose of the meeting to attempt to define the County approach to historical preservation. He noted there were some good efforts by several municipalities concerning historical properties. He noted Clearwater's and St. Petersburg's efforts in that regard. He noted it would be good to have a file of all the properties that qualified for historical preservation. He further noted that there are other landmarks such as bridges, and even communities that should be recognized in addition to historical buildings.

Cyndi Tarapani noted that the GIS mapping file of historic places that is being established by the County Planning Dept. would help as a basis for a program. Ronnie Duncan indicated that he thought there would be 3 areas to focus on. These would be:

- 1st - Education,
- 2nd - Identifying criteria,
- 3rd - Using that criteria identify structures and places.

He noted the need to have a clearinghouse of information and expertise that could also provide assistance. He said there is a lack of knowledge in the community, and the steps for preservation should be better understood. He noted that he was interested in having Jan Luth of Heritage Village work with Brian Smith of the County Planning Dept. to have a county-wide task force put together to address these topics. He also felt it was important to have a group of key individuals knowledgeable of historic preservation that could work together as a committee. The task force members in general discussion agreed with this approach. Jan Luth indicated that this was an important subject.

Ray Claire discussed the situation with the Belleair Biltmore Hotel, and how it was a key issue for the Town of Belleair. She outlined some ideas that were being pursued as to how preservation of the facility could be considered. She said her knowledge of the subject had increased over time. She now felt that there were feasible ways to consider preservation of the hotel to include not just the restaurant and gathering place facilities, but also the hotel rooms as well.

Following Rae Clair's report the committee discussed in some depth financial investment procedures that were applicable to historical preservation. Ronnie Duncan and Cyndi Tarapani elaborated on the use of façade easements as an investment procedure. Ronnie Duncan indicated that he is familiar with the use of such procedures in other parts of the country. The group then talked about the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation. Cyndi Tarapani indicated she had been the director of this state agency for several years, and that it was a good resource to work with. The Trust for Public Land, a national group, was also discussed as a resource.

Following these discussions, Ronnie Duncan indicated he would summarize the direction to be taken. He said he would suggest to the BCC that a committee focused on historic preservation be set up. He asked the task force in attendance to submit names to him for people to be considered for the committee. Ronnie Duncan said that in addition to setting up a committee, a formal structure should be established for the group to work within. He will work with Jan Luth and Brian Smith on this effort.

Ronnie Duncan concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for being in attendance, and for contributing to the discussion.