

# HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD (HPAB) MEETING

## MINUTES

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**Location:** Pinellas County Planning Department Conference Room

**Date:** Thursday, April 9, 2009

**Time:** 1:10 p.m.

**Attendees:** Commissioner Karen Seel (presiding), Brian K. Smith, Ellen Babb, Sam Casella, Terry Fortner, Charlie Harper, Marjorie Heigler (resident of Palm Harbor), Vincent Luisi, Andrea Manson (City of Largo), Becky Nielsen, Cyndi Tarapani, Gordon Beardslee, Marcel Mohseni, and Colleen Tracy

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- I. **Call to Order** – Chair Commissioner Karen Seel called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m.
- II. **Minutes of Friday, November 21, 2008** – Moved minutes be approved; motion approved and carried.
- III. **Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC) Future of the Region Awards**  
**1<sup>st</sup> place, Countywide Historical & Cultural Resources Study, “Cultural/Sports/Recreation” category**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> place, Historical Background publication, “Public Education” category**  
  
Brian Smith said the TBRPC had its Awards Banquet on March 20, 2009, to recognize deserving projects in the region in the past year. These are two pretty key awards; only a handful of projects were honored. Commissioner Seel congratulated the group on its hard work and said that New South [Consultants] should be thrilled to have been part of the whole process.
- IV. **Review of Draft County Comp Plan Policies**  
HPAB comments on the policies follow.

### Recreation and Open Space Element:

#### 5.3.20 Policy:

**Pinellas County shall cooperate with the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources (DHR) and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to provide them with additional local information on the evaluation of nominated National Register eligible sites.**

OKAY as is.

#### 5.3.21 Policy:

**Pinellas County shall coordinate with and request from SHPO, an evaluation of historic bridges located within Pinellas County that have been recommended eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places by the Florida Department of Transportation (Exhibit #).**

Brian indicated that it's good to have these bridges on the radar screen, so to speak. (Exhibit # to be added.)

#### 5.3.22 Policy:

**Pinellas County shall develop strategies for documenting under-recorded historical and archaeological resources by emphasizing the documentation of linear resources (e.g. canals, railroads, historic road segments), by coordinating with local genealogical and historical societies to conduct surveys of historic cemeteries and unmarked graves in the future cultural resource surveys and by developing contexts for these resources to accurately assess their historic significance.**

Observations were made that there are under-recorded resources due to overgrown road segments, canals, etc. It is necessary to work with local genealogical/historical societies to survey and document historic cemeteries and unmarked graves to accurately assess their historic significance.

**5.3.23 Policy:**

**Pinellas County shall consider coordination with municipalities, as appropriate, to record cultural resources related to the histories of ethnic enclaves (e.g. African-Americans, Greek heritage of Tarpon Springs, etc.).**

Brian said many of these proposed changes are pretty generalized; the matter is how to implement them.

**5.3.24 Policy:** Brian commented “don’t have ‘24’ ” and remarked about “... editing ...” and continued on to:

**5.3.25 Policy:**

**Pinellas County shall continue to conduct oral interviews to gather information about diminished cultural resources within the County.**

In response to Brian’s inquiry, Ellen Babb with Heritage Village indicated oral histories are done as often as volunteers are available to conduct them. Commissioner Seel suggested replacing the word “diminished” with the word “historical.”

**6.1 OBJECTIVE:**

**Pinellas County shall develop cooperative ventures with State and local municipalities and shall develop a collaborative countywide educational system to promote historic preservation programs in Pinellas County.**

This reflects the educational outreach portion of the Historic Preservation Ordinance. Policy 6.1.1 follows through on that.

**6.1.1 Policy:**

**Pinellas County shall work with members of the Ozona and Crystal Beach communities to gauge the level of support for nominating Crystal Beach and Ozona for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and for listing on the Pinellas County Historic Preservation Overlay Zoning District.**

The consensus was to reword the language to include other areas not necessarily in the unincorporated areas, so that Pinellas County could work with them to support their listings.

**6.1.2 Policy:**

**Pinellas County shall consider developing strategies for updating documentation for existing National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) sites.** Brian commented that this statement was straightforward.

**6.1.3 Policy:**

**Pinellas County shall continue to support municipalities, as appropriate, with nominations of eligible sites for listing on the National Register and shall coordinate with municipalities in the review of existing National Register historic boundaries and contributing properties as necessary.**

AND

**6.1.4 Policy:**

**Pinellas County shall support National Register nominations for all individually eligible resources as determined by State Historic Preservation Office.**

Brian stated that the idea with “3” and “4” is to establish a program to prioritize the sites and submit nominations to the National Register on a regular basis. Rephrase and combine these policies because they address the same subject area and put them together in that priority package. Marcel Mohseni indicated that in the past 15 years, the Board of County Commission (BCC) staff has been getting request(s) from a city or cities to support National Register nominations. If the nominations are supported by the BCC, they are forwarded to Tallahassee. The purpose of the policies is to support municipalities with nominations for the National Register listing; likewise all individually eligible resources. Suggestion was made that a priority schedule be developed by this Board, put them [priorities] in ranked order, and that list will be there in terms of priority. As written now, both polices refer only to “support.” It was suggested to change language to “assist” and/or “prepare.”

**6.1.5 Policy:**

**Pinellas County shall develop a countywide historic preservation toolbox that would guide owners of historic properties on the availability of local programs and incentives that would help preserve and promote historic properties in Pinellas County.**

Brian noted that Robert Jeffrey, who headed the toolbox project, has resigned via e-mail. His work is taking him out of state. Robert indicated that there numerous individuals from St. Petersburg who would make a good addition to the

Board. He will be happy to provide names. Commissioner Seel will follow through on this. In the meantime, this policy will remain in the proposed changes for the comp plan.

**6.1.6 Policy:**

**Pinellas County shall encourage municipalities to enact local historic preservation ordinances and programs.** Brian read this policy and moved on to:

**6.17 Policy:**

**To promote local historic preservation incentives available to municipalities, Pinellas County shall work and coordinate with municipalities that have adopted a local historic property tax exemption ordinance.**

Comment was made that some of the cities have a historic property tax exemption ordinance but Pinellas County does not. Marcel informed the group that Pinellas County does in fact have a historic property tax exemption ordinance [1996 ordinance] in place. This ordinance is countywide for any city that has adopted the same ordinance. The City of St. Petersburg is the only one that has done this. Pinellas County works cooperatively with staff every year to provide not only the city portion of taxes but county abatement of taxes. Therefore if Tarpon Springs should adopt the same ordinance, the county share in Tarpon would be abated as well. Other cities such as Belleair and St. Pete Beach have adopted the ordinance. But in going in, the county mileage is part of it. The city takes action and sends the tax exemption applications to Pinellas County, and the County takes action as well.

Marcel also indicated that since 1998 or 1999 the Pinellas County has worked with St. Petersburg, and the value of improvements to historic properties has been around \$8 or \$9 million. This serves as a good selling point for the cities. Comment was made that Pinellas County has done its part, and if a city does its part, there will be an “a pretty big bang for your buck” to property owners. Furthermore, Brian indicated that Pinellas County’s language was such that it could track whatever the city does. In short, Pinellas County mirrors what the city does by way of assigned values, length of time in effect (up to ten years), etc. This is only applicable if a city adopts the ordinance. Gordon Beardslee indicated that there is a process to go through, and it has to be verified that the improvements meet certain standards. St. Petersburg has the staff and expertise to do that, and Pinellas County relies on what city staff has done when doing its review. Marcel added that the City of St. Petersburg handles the review process since it is a Certified Local Government (CLG). If a city is not a CLG, the review process goes to Tallahassee. It is a two-fold review process involving construction: pre-restoration and post-restoration. The project is allowed a two-year time period for completion.

Commissioner Seel suggested that 6.1.7 be modified to reflect that the Pinellas County has a local historic property tax exemption ordinance [1996 ordinance] and reference it by number. Furthermore, Pinellas County shall work and coordinate with municipalities to adopt (“and administer” also as suggested by Cyndi) a matching program.

**6.1.8 Policy:**

**By 2010, Pinellas County shall become a Certified Local Government Program (CLG) and provide technical assistance to increase the number of municipalities participating in the state CLG program.**

Brian indicated that Pinellas County is working to expand an existing ordinance for Palm Harbor – in order not to create a third ordinance. Becoming a CLC will probably require some amendments to the County code(s). For example, a provision is needed allowing for a review board to deny demolitions rather than just being able to delay demolitions. Also, there are certain educational standards for board members.

Marcel indicated that two parts of the CLG requirement are: a review board in place and a means for designating historic properties. The existing unincorporated historic preservation ordinance passed in 1994 already provides for both of these. Presently this relates to the Downtown Palm Harbor District only. Under consideration: the HPAB would be the review authority for that 1994 ordinance. This Board would be able to designate properties as a local historic resource in the unincorporated area. Furthermore, if a municipality has the same ordinance, the Board could make a recommendation to the municipality for the designation of such a resource. The Board could also review the Certification of Appropriateness (COA) for designated historic properties within the unincorporated area; likewise for any of the cities, if they have the same ordinance. Only these two additional responsibilities need to be incorporated as an amendment to the 1994 historic preservation ordinance to qualify the historic preservation program as a CLG. Brian reiterated that a CLG designation would serve as a platform of interlocal cooperation and agreement between Pinellas County and the municipalities. An

amended 1994 ordinance would provide for a CLG Board with countywide review authority for any city that has adopted the same ordinance.

**6.1.9 Policy:**

**Pinellas County shall develop strategies to support municipalities with technical assistance and educational opportunities in historic preservation, and shall continue to provide and support municipal historic property ad valorem tax exemption applications.** Brian read this policy statement and moved on to:

**6.1.10 Policy:**

**Pinellas County shall support local historic preservation educational outreach programs available to all residents and visitors of Pinellas County interested in historic preservation, including owners of historic properties, realtors and developers, preservation commission and historical society members, municipalities, and historic preservation professionals.**

Vincent Luisi asked how educational outreach to the public will be accomplished. Brian indicated that is still a work in progress involving a comprehensive education program and simple documentation such as a brochure that can be distributed. Marcel indicated that a one-page pamphlet is being developed about historic preservation programs (countywide and local) in the area. This can be distributed to historical societies, as part of the toolbox, and so forth. Vinnie mentioned that the Dunedin Historical Society has a pamphlet that needs updating with the Pinellas County information.

**6.1.11 Policy:**

**Pinellas County shall promote the economic benefits of historic preservation to real estate professionals, including realtors, developers, and insurance companies.** Provide reinforcement of economic benefits/incentives.

**6.1.12 Policy:**

**Pinellas County shall coordinate with historical societies and museums to develop exhibits for schools and libraries highlighting cultural resources of the county.**

AND

**6.1.13 Policy:**

**Pinellas County shall support the activities, policies and programs of the Pinellas County Historic Preservation Task Force established in 2005 renamed in 2008 to the Pinellas County Historic Preservation Advisory Board.**

According to Brian: that's pretty well it.

## Future Land Use Element

**2.4.5 Policy:**

In areas of the County having a historic or consistent design character, new development should be designed to maintain and support the existing character **of the area.**

Commissioner Seel commented that 2.4.5 indicates that new development should be designed to maintain and support the existing character of the area.

Commissioner Seel recapped that there will changes to:

- 6.1.1 Expand to other areas or some kind of verbiage
- 6.1.4 Rephrase
- 6.1.7 Add Pinellas County language and refer to the County ordinance
- 6.1.8 Need to refer to amending the 1994 ordinance [in process of Pinellas County becoming a Certified Local Government (CLG)];  
Also how to provide assistance to municipalities to participate in state CLG program

Commissioner Seel asked for any other suggested changes or comments regarding the draft policies.

Cyndi expressed concern that National Register nominations are often mentioned among the proposed changes, but there is nothing that really speaks to the local nominations. She suggested establishing a priority list and a regular procedure

for processing local nominations. Often research done for the National Register nomination (and that research is extremely involved) could also be used as support data for the local nomination. So, there may be a connection between the priorities of the two nomination levels. Commissioner Seel mentioned the Structures Inventory [from the Countywide Culture Resources Survey]. This list details status of sites for: NRHP District Eligibility, for NRHP Eligibility and Local Register Eligibility. This provides a starting point to create a procedure for processing local nominations. Commissioner Seel suggested putting this recommendation somewhere after policy 6.1.8, and specifically address this matter in a new policy statement. Brian mentioned returning to the HPAB with a redraft of these policies before submittal to the BCC. Gordon indicated that they would go in the large scale amendment package for a public hearing in June, July, or sometime during the fall. So, if this group does not review the redrafted policies in the summer, this could be done in the fall.

Charlie Harper mentioned that there is no tie to the School Board mentioned in any of the policies. He expressed concern regarding North and South Ward schools, the potential for Anona, and some schools in southern Pinellas County. Charlie encouraged a policy or at least a coordination effort with the School Board.

Cyndi commented that in Hillsborough County a local historic preservation group obtained a grant and worked with the School Board to develop an inventory of historic schools countywide. The inventory included those schools that preservationists and the School Board agreed ought to be preserved over time. There were also schools lower in priority for whatever reason (historical, architectural, damaged, etc.) There will be a number of Pinellas County Schools at risk due to declining student enrollment. This is a program issue that needs to be addressed on a large scale countywide.

Brian commented that in looking at the demographics the School Board is expecting another surge in student enrollment in several years due to an increased birthrate. So, if the School Board contracts the facilities on too small a scale, it will not be able to handle future demand due to not being able to find school sites. It involves a really complicated projection and planning process. Nonetheless, it would be good to coordinate with the School Board because the first properties to be dismissed are the older ones. They are smaller, substandard, and require more maintenance

Commissioner Seel said that the School Board is hesitant to dispose of school properties, especially the older ones, because of charter schools. If the School Board surpluses the properties, then charter schools have “first right of refusal.” However, if a charter school does want the property, the School Board has to pay to bring it up to certain standards. So, in these times of budget constraints, this is a major reason for hesitancy.

## **V. Report by Subcommittees**

- A. Toolbox Subcommittee Report – None
- B. Program/Education Subcommittee

Commissioner Seel said the subcommittee has met twice. A leading priority is identification of a preservation staff working group. This would include city planners, historic preservation societies, and anybody interested in historic preservation. Cyndi Tarapani put together a very comprehensive list updated from Ellen Babb’s list of three years ago [the meeting at Heritage Village in May 2006]. Vinnie Luisi also has a list, which he will forward on to Cyndi for comparison purposes. Once that is done, the list can be e-mailed out to everybody for possible supplementary information.

The idea behind the list is to have a big educational meeting at Heritage Village to showcase its resource library and educational curriculum. Commissioner Seel, Terry Fortner, and Vinnie Luisi did a recent walk through Heritage Village. Ellen has brought brochures about the education program and the archives and library for those who were unable to attend.

At the last BCC meeting, Commissioner Seel gave out packets that Ellen had put together. She said that Heritage Village has accomplished everything the BCC had asked in regard to creating a “living history” and it is awesome. She urged all the County Commissioners to visit Heritage Village because this has been a wise investment; it is really very special. Charlie Harper mentioned the activities at Heritage Village in the last Largo

Historical Society Board meeting. Everyone was most impressed. As it is, the Largo Historical Society and Heritage Village have a good working relationship.

The historic preservation educational meeting at Heritage Village would prove a good opportunity for all interested parties to donate historical documents and/or oral histories for the resource library. Thus, historic materials could reside together in one location. The Educational Open House would also feature: a “show and tell” at Heritage Village, the HPAB accomplishments thus far, and resources available regarding historic preservation. It would be appropriate to hold this meeting during May, National Preservation Month. HPAB consensus: have the event on a week day in May and members to check their calendars to settle on a date.

Another priority discussed was establishing a committee responsible for future ongoing historic preservation events. The Pinellas County Centennial is in 2012. It’s not too early to start planning and developing a really superb celebration. The Education Open House would be a perfect time to solicit talented people and launch a committee to work on this. Also, ask historical societies and cities to volunteer to do a significant event – one per month – throughout the year. An idea is to have a year-long celebration throughout 2011 leading up to January 1, 2012. The bill was signed in May 1911 for a legal separation from Hillsborough County, and January 1, 1912, is the legal date for the establishment of Pinellas County.

The Largo Historic Society and the Palm Harbor Historical Society have already indicated their support in hosting events. The Palm Harbor Historical Society is especially interested in participating in a themed event highlighting Coastal Living – fishing. Commissioner Seel will contact the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) because there is a very valuable tourism aspect to historic preservation. Cyndi suggested that with its funding, the CVB could publish and distribute brochures spotlighting general themes derived from Pinellas County’s historical background. Returning to the subject of event ideas, some years ago, there was a historic tourism tour. A possibility might be a self-guided driving tour of historic sites, possibly getting Jack Harris to narrate it or something like that. Another idea for the Centennial entails a Chautauqua type event. Florida Humanities would be involved via funding speakers to travel throughout the county for historic preservation programs. Vinnie will contact Florida Humanities. Commissioner Seel suggested putting on a Made in Pinellas exhibit/party/historic properties tour during National Preservation month in May. It would be a perfect fundraiser for Heritage Village.

After the educational meeting in May, there should be better idea how the Centennial will be structured. Commissioner Seel would like to go back out to the cities, describe what has been accomplished thus far, and discuss possible Centennial plans. Items involving outreach to the general public and the preservation staff working group are further down the Program/Education Subcommittee agenda. The subcommittee is working on those. Other items dealt with are the preservation resource library, and the planning and preservation websites. Events and publications have also come under discussion. This subcommittee may not need to meet until June. The next regular meeting for the full HPAB is in June.

C. Demolition/Finance Subcommittee

Marcel met with Becky Nielsen, Sam Casella, Jack Tipton, the Assistant Building Director, and Dave Sadowsky of the County Attorney’s office. After long discussion, the consensus was it would be essential to develop a standard of designation for those structures needing a “delay” or “stop” on a demolition permit. Some standards for designating historic properties are present in the 1994 ordinance. These reflect the National Register criteria established for historic places. The standards are utilized in the ordinance as general criteria for designation. They are in place for the properties in the unincorporated areas – not within the cities. Sam suggested that Marcel circulate this information in writing. It can be presented at the next Board meeting to determine if any additional standards are necessary or if the present ones are sufficient on a countywide basis.

The subcommittee did not discuss finance issues during its meeting. Marcel proceeded to list a broad range of incentives related to historic preservation. Various ones are utilized by different local governments. These are for designated historic properties only – designated by the National Register or by the local government. A few of these incentives are in the county historic preservation program and in the 1994 historic preservation ordinance.

- *The County has the flexibility to work with the applicant of a designated historic property on building fees or regulations.*
- *The County has the flexibility to work with the historic resource property owner on zoning issues, regulations, and fees.*
- *Other incentives are demolition fees where the County would waive that, parking, etc.*  
Besides regulatory incentives, other financial incentives are considered throughout the state. Two of those were implemented by the Community Development Department, and they were funneled through HUD programs.
- *One is commercial building façade improvement; the other is lower interest loans.*  
Both incentives were utilized for some of the historic properties in the Downtown Palm Harbor Historic District.  
  
Other financial incentives include:
  - *Private partnership on city grant funding...over a million dollars in the past few years or so.*
  - *Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program*  
These programs work with properties listed on the National Register or listed on local historic landmark designation. If it is listed on the National Register, the property owner can obtain a 20 percent tax credit. These are for income-producing properties only. If the property is listed by the local entity, the owner can obtain a tax credit at 10 percent. The County has not utilized these incentives but the City of St. Petersburg has quite a bit.
  - *The historic property tax exemption ordinance is on the books.*  
St. Petersburg is capitalizing on that incentive; it is the only city to have such an ordinance.
  - *The preservation easement tax incentive.*  
This has worked well – especially in the North and South Carolina area. The owners of historic properties have worked with local governments to give easements and so forth; in turn, they receive tax incentives.
  - *Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) funds for historic properties in the CRA areas.*  
Some municipalities in Pinellas County have utilized this.
  - *A countywide historic preservation trust fund.*  
Again in the Carolinas this is utilized often. Owners of historic properties would donate their buildings to that trust fund; in return, they would obtain either state income tax or local tax or some sort of incentives from this. The local trust fund would then take over the property.

Cyndi remarked that the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation accepts façade easements for buildings if the local government or local entity does not wish to do so. In accepting such an easement, the local entity assumes “in perpetuity” responsibility that the exterior of the building will remain in its present historic appearance. Accepting façade easements may or may not be an undertaking that Pinellas County would want to implement. If historic designated property owners want to donate a facade easement, put them in touch with the Florida Trust. The Florida Trust usually wants an easement fee because it has to inspect the building every year, maintain the building, and deal with the property owner if it wishes to make some minor changes. In Pinellas, the Florida Trust has an easement on the Snell Arcade in St. Petersburg and eight or ten easements around the state. In regard to financial incentives, an appraiser does a value of the property before the easement and after the easement. There is usually a decrease in value, so that decrease in value is the tax incentive to the property owner. It is really helpful if the zoning is substantially more than the historic use; then there is a bigger decline in value, and there is more tax incentive for the property owner.

Discussion then ensued regarding finding alternative sites to preserve historical resources. An example was the little “cracker” house that was donated and moved to the grounds of the Palm Harbor Historical Society. This was done through the Pinellas County Community Development funding assistance/grant monies. Mention was also made of the Zimmerman house.

Discussion followed regarding the importance of having a local historic resource designation via an example involving the Hall improvement CD block grant. The Ozona Village Improvement Society received \$120,000 funding through Community Development to improve the property which had not been improved in a 100 years. An issue developed due to the building code. The Building Department eventually signed off on it as the property was designated a local historical resource.

**V. Documents Placed on the Planning Department Website AND**

**VI. Link to Heritage Village and Historic Preservation Website(s) from Planning Department**

Brian showed a print out copy of the Planning Department’s web site home page. Listed in the left hand column are the Countywide Cultural Resources Study and the Pinellas County Historical Background publication. Also listed are links to the Heritage Village and the Historic Preservation websites.

**VII. Other Business**

**A. Next Meeting**

Two attendees new to the meeting were asked to introduce themselves. Andrea Manson is a Planner with the City of Largo, who works with the Historical Commission Committee. Andrea was sitting in for Carol Stricklin, Director of Community Development. She may or may not be attending on a regular basis. Margie Heigler, a resident of Palm Harbor, sat in on a meeting or two a couple of years ago. She has been employed in Tampa during the day until recently. However, the architectural firm is not currently doing any preservation projects; she is able to attend the daytime meeting and is looking for preservation work closer to home.

Discussed ensued regarding changes to the Advisory Board membership list especially in light of Robert Jeffrey’s resignation. Vinnie will talk with Deborah Kynes about staying on the HPAB as a private citizen. Cheryl Robinson has not attended for quite awhile. It may be best to send her a “thank you” for her service and open up that membership position. Cyndi noted that Board members reside in many of the local cities, and therefore most of the municipalities are represented, so to speak. One exception is Clearwater. Cyndi suggested Gina Clayton’s name. She is from Clearwater, has an interest in preservation, and has some educational experience. Brian noted that Stephanie Oddo will not be able to attend the next several meetings due to the time of the HPAB meetings, but she still wants to participate. Commissioner Seel commented that another under-represented area was Oldsmar-East Lake. There is an Oldsmar Historical Society. The number of Board members can range from of 7 to 15; and minus Robert Jeffrey and Cheryl Robinson, the HPAB consists of 13 members. Also, someone with a strong educational background is needed to work on the Toolbox Subcommittee. Kim Hinder has worked with Bob on that committee. Bob may recommend some people as possibilities.

Board members decided on Thursday, May 28, at 3:00 p.m. for the Educational Meeting/Open House at Heritage Village.

The next regularly scheduled meeting for the HPAB is Thursday, June 11, 2009, at 1:00 p.m.

This meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m. today.