

TASK FORCE ON ABANDONED AFRICAN-AMERICAN CEMETERIES
Heritage Hall, R. A. Gray Building, 500 South Bronough St., Tallahassee, FL 32399
Friday, October 29, 2021; 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Meeting Minutes

Task Force Members: Dr. Timothy Parsons (*Chair*), Dr. Kathryn O'Donnell Miyar, Ms. Yvette Lewis, Dr. Antoinette Jackson, Ms. Althemese Barnes, Mr. Jeffrey Moates, Mr. Keenan Knopke, Senator Janet Cruz, Representative Fentrice Driskell, and Mr. Jaha Cummings.

Task Force Members Present: Dr. Parsons, Dr. Miyar, Ms. Lewis, Dr. Jackson, Ms. Barnes, Mr. Moates, Mr. Knopke, and Mr. Cummings attended the meeting in person; and Senator Cruz and Representative Driskell joined the meeting remotely.

Department of State Staff Members Present: Secretary Laurel M. Lee, Ms. Jennifer Kennedy, Mr. Mark Ard, Mr. Ryan Ash, Mr. Johnathan Grandage, and Mr. Schuessler; and Dr. Graf joined the meeting remotely.

Members of the Public Present: Ms. Barbara Clark.

Item I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Dr. Parsons called the meeting to order and called the roll.

Secretary Lee provided welcome remarks and thanked the members of the Task Force for their contributions to the task force. Dr. Parsons invited the Task Force members to make introductory comments. Following introductions, Dr. Parsons made a motion for the adoption of the meeting agenda for the third meeting of the Task Force, which was adopted. Subsequently, Dr. Parsons made a motion for the approval of minutes for the previous meeting held on September 2, 2021.

Item II. Discussion of Findings and Recommendations by Task Force members

Dr. Parsons presented a summary of the preliminary findings and recommendations submitted by the Task Force members and invited the members to share their thoughts. The findings and recommendations were grouped under three categories – identification of abandoned African-American cemeteries, maintenance of abandoned African-American cemeteries, and educational resources relating to abandoned African-American cemeteries.

Item III. Discussion on Collecting Public Input

Dr. Parsons drew attention to the avenues that the Department of State (department) has established for collecting public input and assistance with the effort to identify abandoned African-American cemeteries, including the department website and the accompanying email. The department has responded to each of the 12 emails received so far. In some instances, the department coordinated with the Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN) to assist some of the individuals who reached out to the department. Dr. Parsons expressed his hope that the email will continue to serve as a resource for collecting information regarding African-American cemeteries beyond the conclusion of this Task Force. Dr. Parsons also mentioned that to date, 9 submissions have been received through the online Florida Public Archaeology Network Cemetery Reporting Form established by the FPAN. These submissions are included in the Florida Master Site File, which is maintained by the Division of Historical Resources (DHR). In

addition, 2 of the Historic Cemetery Inventory Cards have been returned to the DHR which have also been included in the Florida Master Site File.

Item IV. Task Force Member Comments and Questions

Dr. Parsons initiated the Task Force members in a section-by-section discussion of the findings and recommendations relating to the identification of abandoned African-American cemeteries, maintenance of abandoned African-American cemeteries, and educational resources relating to abandoned African-American cemeteries.

Item V. Public Comment

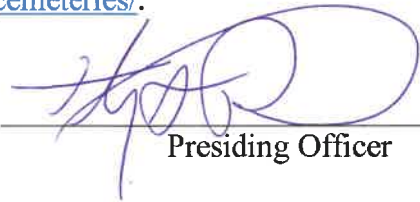
None.

Item VI. Adjourn

Dr. Parsons adjourned the meeting at 12:54 p.m.

An archive of this meeting is available on the Florida Channel at:

<https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/10-29-21-task-force-on-abandoned-african-american-cemeteries/>.



Presiding Officer

12/1/2021

Date Approved