

**Florida Museum of Black History Task Force**  
**Friday, January 12, 2024–9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**  
**R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough St., Tallahassee, FL 32399**  
**And via GoToMeeting Webinar, ID: 202-473-211**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Task Force Members Present In-Person:** Howard Holley; Berny Jacques, Vice-Chair; Sen. Geraldine Thompson, Chair

**Task Force Members Present Via Webinar:** Brian Butler; Sen. Bobby Powell; Regina Gayle Phillips

**Task Force Members Not Present:** Rep. Kiyon Michael (excused); Dr. Altony Lee (excused)

**Department of State (DOS) Staff Members Present:** Alissa Slade Lotane, Director, Historical Resources; John Grandage, Assistant Director, Historical Resources; Jon Morris, Deputy General Counsel, Florida Department of State; Alexys Johnson, Executive Assistant, Division of Historical Resources; Jeremy Heiker, Webinar Facilitator; Alexa Wilson, Grants Specialist, Division of Historical Resources

**Members of the Public Present In-Person:** Members of the public who attended in-person and spoke during the meeting are noted below, where appropriate.

**Members of the Public Present Via Webinar:** Members of the public who attended via webinar and spoke during the meeting are noted below, where appropriate.

**Item I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. Roll call confirmed quorum.

**Item II. Introduction of Task Force Members, Staff, & Guests**

Task Force members introduced themselves. Alissa Lotane introduced herself and Division staff present in person.

**Item III. Adoption of Agenda**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson requested to add a presentation from Eatonville during agenda Item VII. Presentation for Proposed Museum Location. Howard Holley moved to adopt the agenda as amended. Berny Jacques seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item IV. Adoption of Minutes from December 15, 2023, Meeting**

Howard Holley moved to adopt the minutes from the December 15, 2023, meeting. Berny Jacques seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item V. Remarks by Dr. Paul Burns, Chancellor, K-12 Public Schools, Florida Department of Education**

Dr. Paul Burns began by outlining his current position as Chancellor of Florida's K-12 Public Schools and his experience in the education field. He provided background on the Commissioner of Education's African American History Task Force and discussed collaboration between Florida school districts and the Department of Education (DOE) to provide professional learning opportunities for teachers throughout the year. Dr. Burns listed Florida counties that qualify as "exemplary districts," under DOE's reporting standards, in the teaching of African American history. These counties include Alachua, Broward, Duval, Gadsden, Hillsborough, Leon,

Marion, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, Pinellas, and St. Lucie. Dr. Burns outlined the benchmarks needed for a school district to qualify as an “exemplary district.”

Howard Holley asked how Dr. Burns sees the proposed Florida Museum Black History Museum adding value to the mission of DOE and Florida’s school districts. Dr. Burns offered that alignment will occur in multiple ways, including professional development for educators. He added that the proposed Florida Museum of Black History will provide students and educators with opportunities for outside enrichment that connect back to curriculum used in the classroom.

**Item VI. Task Force Discussion of Educational Themes/Topics**

Alissa Lotane reviewed topics listed in the legislation that will be included in the Task Force’s recommendations:

1. The role of African-American participation in defending and preserving Florida and the United States, including, by way of example and without limitation, the contributions of the residents of Fort Mose, the Tuskegee Airmen, and all African-American veterans.
2. The history of slavery in the state.
3. The history of segregation in the state.
4. Notable African-Americans in the state.
5. Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, including the founding of Bethune Cookman University.
6. The history of historically black colleges and universities in this state.
7. The inherent worth and dignity of human life, with a focus on the prevention of genocide.

Alissa Lotane asked the Task Force for additional subjects that can be included in the recommendations and also discussed historians and museum professionals who will be presenting at the next meeting, including:

1. Dr. Tameka Bradley Hobbs - Library Regional Manager, Broward County Library African American Research Library and Cultural Center, Fort Lauderdale, Florida
2. Kathe Hambrick - Founder and former Executive Director of the River Road African-American Museum, Donaldsonville, Louisiana
3. Lisa Barton - Director of the Museum of Florida History, Florida Department of State

The Task Force discussed subjects that could be included in the recommendations.

**Item VII. Presentation of Proposed Museum Location**

Representatives from the City of Opa-locka discussed their community as a potential location for the proposed museum. Representatives who spoke on behalf of Opa-locka included: James Nixon, Vice President of Program, Strategy & External Affairs, Ten North Group (formerly Opa-locka Community Development Corporation); Alex Van Mecl, founder of Discover Opa-locka, and Senior Project Manager at Ten North Group; and Darvin Williams, Opa-locka City Manager.

Representatives from Eatonville discussed their community as a potential location for the proposed museum. Representatives who spoke on behalf of Eatonville included: Angie Gardner, Mayor, Town of Eatonville; Demetris Pressley, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Eatonville; and Shaniqua Rose, Eatonville Community Redevelopment Agency Executive Director; Cobbin McGee, Planning & Zoning, Town of Eatonville; Brittani Gragg, Planning & Zoning.

**Item VIII. Break (Optional)**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson called for a short break at 10:36 a.m. The meeting resumed at 10:46 a.m.

**Item IX. Update on Public Survey**

Alissa Lotane highlighted results from the public survey and reiterated that the survey will be open until February 29, 2024.

**Item X. Update on Museum Design Solicitation**

Alissa Lotane informed the Task Force that responses received for the Museum Design solicitation did not meet current needs and that she has made contact with Andrew Chin, Associate Professor, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University School of Architecture + Engineering Technology, who will be likely engaging with the Task Force at future meetings and offering support for the design deliverables required by legislation.

**Item XI. Presentation of Revised Selection and Scoring Criteria for Museum Location**

John Grandage reviewed the list of prospective locations who have made presentations to the Task Force thus far and discussed materials gathered together from these presentations by DOS staff, which are available to the Task Force via OneDrive. The communities are (in alphabetical order):

- 1) Daytona Beach
- 2) Havana
- 3) Jackson County
- 4) Nassau County/Amelia Island
- 5) Opa-locka
- 6) Orange County/Eatonville
- 8) Panama City Beach
- 9) Quincy
- 10) Sarasota
- 11) Seminole County
- 12) St. Johns County/St. Augustine
- 13) St. Petersburg

Howard Holley suggested combining Orlando and Eatonville into a single shared folder.

John Grandage presented the revised criteria and received feedback from the Task Force. Discussion ensued. The key updates are adding weight to Criteria 2: Appropriateness of Proposed Location, which increased from 10 to 20 points, and changing the title of Criteria 6 to read Local Funding and Other Support, with accompanying changes to the corresponding bullet points. The Task Force discussed closing the window to receive presentations and agreed that the February 19 meeting will be the last opportunity to present. Only locations who presented on or before the February 19 meeting will be eligible to submit a written response to the criteria.

**Item XII. Vote on Revised Selection and Scoring Criteria for Museum Location**

Based on the above discussion, Howard Holley moved to approve the criteria as amended. Brian Butler seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item XIII. Future Meeting Dates and Agendas**

Alissa Lotane discussed future meeting dates and agenda items. The next meeting will be held virtually on February 19, 2024, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. A poll for the March and April meeting dates will be sent out. Alissa Lotane asked whether the Task Force would prefer all virtual meetings in the future and asked the Task Force for suggestions on future agenda items. Task Force members preferred to meet in person in March and April.

**Item XIV. Task Force Open Discussion, Questions, and Announcements**

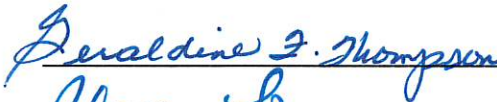
Howard Holley asked about issuing a Request for Proposals to conduct a feasibility study. Alissa Lotane explained that this could be an option for the next fiscal year, if funds become available. Sen. Geraldine Thompson discussed the upcoming Legislative Black Caucus event on January 23, 2024.

**Item XV. Public Comment**

Lawrence Walker, with Sankofa African American 3D Museum, provided comments and offered his assistance with the work of the Task Force. Sarah Newell asked if locations submitting responses to the criteria must do so in writing. Sen. Geraldine Thompson responded that responses to the criteria must be in writing.

**Item XVI. Adourn**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Howard Holley moved to adjourn. Berny Jacques seconded. The meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

 Presiding Officer

 State Historic Preservation Officer and Director, Division of Historical Resources

Approved: 3/11/24