

**Florida Museum of Black History Task Force**  
**Friday, December 15, 2023–9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**  
**R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough St., Tallahassee, FL 32399**  
**And via GoToMeeting Webinar, ID: 558-604-475**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Task Force Members Present In-Person:** N/A

**Task Force Members Present Via Webinar:** Brian Butler; Howard Holley; Berny Jacques, Vice-Chair; Dr. Altony Lee; Regina Gayle Phillips; Terri Lipsey-Scott; Sen. Geraldine Thompson, Chair

**Task Force Members Not Present:** Rep. Kiyon Michael; Sen. Bobby Powell

**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:** N/A

**Members of the Public Present Via Webinar:** Members of the public who 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 9:04 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 discussion on the Florida Legislative Black Caucus during agenda Item XII. Task Force Open Discussion and Questions. Dr. Altony Lee moved to adopt the agenda. Howard Holley seconded. The motion passed.

**Item IV. Adoption of Minutes from November 13, 2023, Meeting**

Terri Lipsey-Scott moved to adopt the minutes from the November 13, 2023, meeting. Dr. Altony Lee seconded. The motion passed.

**Item V. Presentations on Museum Locations**

The speakers listed below presented on behalf of their locations. Task Force Members asked questions throughout the presentations.

- **Amelia Island/Nassau County** - Maurie Duggar, Amelia Island Convention and Visitor's Bureau
- **Daytona Beach** - Lori Campbell Baker, Executive Director, Daytona Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau; Derrek Feature, Daytona Beach City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer; Beth Gibson, President of Planning Solutions Corporation

**Havana** - Harold Knowles, CEO, Havana Community Development Corporation; Mark Tarmey, 4M Architects

- **Jackson County** - Kelsi Williams, Executive Director, Jackson County First Development Council, Board of County Commissioners; Byron Dickens, Executive Director of the Emancipation Day Celebration (in Jackson County, Florida)
- **Opa-Locka Main Street** - Regina Silas, Founder, CEO, and President, the JBS Foundation, Inc.
- **Panama City** - Janice Lucas, Commissioner, LEAD Coalition of Bay County, Inc.; Willie Spears, author of "George and Hawk's Big Adventure with Big Dreams"; Jennifer Vigil, President and CEO, Destination Panama City
- **Sarasota** - Shantel Norman, Meeting Sales Manager, Visit Sarasota County; Nicki Oldham, President and CEO, Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition, Inc., and CEO, Vickie O Heritage Productions, Inc.; and Erin Duggan, President and CEO of Visit Sarasota

At approximately 10:17 a.m., Sen. Geraldine Thompson called for a 10 minute break. The presentations resumed at 10:27 a.m.

- **St. Johns County/St. Augustine** - Susan Philips, President and CEO, St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra and The Beaches Visitors and Convention Bureau; Sarah S. Arnold, St. Johns County District 2 County Commissioner
- **St. Petersburg** - Terri Lipsey-Scott, Executive Director, Woodson African American Museum of Florida

In response to Terri Lipsey-Scott's presentation, the Task Force discussed potential conflicts of interest that might arise based on member participation in the location selection process. Jon Morris recommended that the Task Force review Chapter 112, *Florida Statutes*, for guidance on this issue.

#### **Item VI. Break**

As noted above, Sen. Geraldine Thompson called for a break during Item V: Presentations on Museum Locations.

#### **Item VII. Presentation of Proposed Selection Criteria for Museum Location**

Prior to the discussion of proposed selection criteria for museum location, Alissa Lotane provided an update and brief overview of survey results thus far received (as of December 14):

- 253 responses were received
- 95% of respondents are Florida residents
- 30% of respondents were aged 65+
- 22% of respondents identified as general citizens
- 18% of respondents identified as retirees

Howard Holley suggested adding a section that would capture if survey respondents were members of the business community. Staff will see if this can be added to the survey.

Alissa Lotane provided feedback on Task Force Member travel as a group. DOS recommends that individuals visit museums on their own and report back to the entire group. Official group travel is not possible due to Sunshine Laws compliance and lack of agency funding.

Discussion ensued regarding a feasibility study. Alissa Lotane explained that staff will schedule presentations at future meetings by museum professionals familiar with budgeting, finance, and sustainability. Sen. Geraldine Thompson provided comments on her conversation with Secretary of State Cord Byrd on feasibility study costs and the timeline needed to procure the services necessary to complete such a project. Because of the lack of time and funds to complete a feasibility study, the Task Force may recommend that such a project be undertaken as a next step in the final report due to the legislature before June 30, 2024.

John Grandage presented an overview of the draft museum location criteria evaluation sheet. Discussion ensued on proposed text edits, weighting of scores, language used in criteria, and reorganizing the evaluation sheet to include less individual criteria in favor of grouping together like items. Staff will make changes and present a revised version at the next meeting.

Members of the public provided comments regarding the draft museum location criteria evaluation sheet. Sarah Newell suggested adding more weight to historical significance of the proposed community or region and also increasing the weight given to estimated construction cost and land availability. Beth Gibson suggested first narrowing down the list of locations to the top three before going further with evaluation criteria. Kimberlyn Elliot suggested an application process for applications to submit answers to a list of questions related to selection criteria. Dr. Sharon Brown suggested developing a rubric that better outlined standards within the criteria to provide for a more objective scoring process. Lawrence Walker, President/CEO of Sankofa African American 3D Museum, offered to be a resource for the Task Force in developing materials in the future. Jacob Gordon also offered to be a resource for the Task Force in developing materials in the future.

#### **Item VIII. Vote on Selection Criteria for Museum Location**

Based on discussion from the Task Force, staff will make changes and present a revised version for approval at the next meeting.

#### **Item IX. Update on Museum Design Solicitation**

Alissa Lotane discussed the solicitation that went out on November 13, 2023, to over 150 minority vendors, including the National Association of Minority Architects. Three proposals were received, but these did not meet the standards needed for this project. DOS will continue to solicit additional responses from vendors, with the goal of having a vendor participate in future meetings when under contract.

Task Force members discussed their questions and concerns regarding the solicitation and its deliverables. Alissa Lotane stated that, once under contract, the selected vendor would be able to attend future meetings, present their work, and receive feedback from the Task Force.

#### **Item X. Update on Educational Materials**

Alissa Lotane informed the Task Force that they will receive a link to view all educational materials compiled by staff and to review museum location presentation materials. Alissa Lotane also updated the Task Force on her efforts to secure a presentation from Chancellor Paul Burns, from the Florida Department of Education, at the January 2024 meeting. Alissa Slade Lotane asked the Task Force to supply contact information for other scholars who they may wish to present at future meetings. Recommendations provided by Task Force Members included: Dr. Maxine Jones, Dr. Tameka Bradley Hobbs, and Ted Ellis.

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

Task Force members discussed proposed dates for future meetings. Alissa Lotane explained that while February 19 is a federal holiday, it is not a state holiday, and therefore the meeting would be held as planned on that day. Alissa Slade Lotane explained that locations for future meetings would be shared with the Task Force and announced to the public when available.

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

Howard Holley commented on the richness of the presentations by prospective location representatives. Meeting times were reconfirmed as requested by Rep. Berny Jacques.

**Item XV. Public Comment**

Althemese Barnes asked about Task Force involvement in the preservation of historic buildings in Florida related to Black history. Evelyn Pierre suggested including the contributions of Black Floridians with ties to Caribbean nations in the future museum. Sen. Geraldine Thompson responded to both public comments.

Task Force members highlighted upcoming events related to Florida’s Black history and culture.

**Item XVI. Adjourn**

Terri Lipsey-Scott moved to adjourn the meeting. Howard Holley seconded. The meeting adjourned at 12:51 p.m.

Geraldine J. Thompson Presiding Officer

Alissa Slade Lotane State Historic Preservation Officer and Director, Division of Historical Resources

Approved: 3/7/24