

**Florida Museum of Black History Task Force**  
**Friday, April 19, 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: 394-671-699**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Task Force Members Present In-Person:** Howard Holley; Regina Gayle Phillips; Sen. Bobby Powell; Sen. Geraldine Thompson, Chair

**Task Force Members Present Via Webinar:** Brian Butler; Rep. Berny Jacques, Vice-Chair; Dr. Altony Lee; Dr. Nashid Madyun; Rep. Kiyon Michael

**Department of State (DOS) Staff Members Present:** Alissa Lotane, Director, Historical Resources; John Grandage, Assistant Director, Historical Resources; Jeremy Heiker, Webinar Facilitator; Dr. Angela Tomlinson, Assistant Director, Historical Resources; Jon Morris, Deputy General Counsel, Florida Department of State

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

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

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

Sen. Geraldine Thompson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Roll call confirmed quorum. Sen. Geraldine Thompson asked for a moment of silence in honor of former Florida Governor and United States Senator Bob Graham, who passed away on April 16, 2024, at age 87.

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

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

**Item III. Adoption of Agenda**

Howard Holley moved to adopt the agenda as amended. Regina Gayle Phillips seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item IV. Adoption of Minutes from the February 19, 2024, Meeting**

Regina Gayle Philips moved to adopt the minutes from the March 25, 2024, meeting. Howard Holley seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item V. Discussion of Educational Materials**

John Grandage discussed educational materials outlined in the bill and additional topics gathered by DOS during Task Force meetings, from the public survey, and from scholarly sources. Additional topics for educational materials suggested by the Task Force include: foodways, sports, Gullah-Geechee culture and history, agriculture, cattle, education, and local and regional stories gathered from FAAHPN. DOS is building a working list of educational materials to include in the Final Report.

**Item VI. Discussion of Preliminary Recommendations & Final Report Process**

John Grandage provided an overview of the draft table of contents for the Final Report. Howard Holley recommended including a section on the Marketing Plan. The Task Force discussed preliminary items to be considered in the Recommendations section, specifically regarding museum operations and administration. DOS will prepare a list of recommendations in advance of the May 19 meeting for consideration by the Task Force. As stated in the bill, the Task Force must include in its Final Report recommendations on:

1. Plans for the location, design, and construction of the museum.
2. Recommendations for the operation and administration of the museum.
3. A marketing plan to promote the museum.
4. A transition plan for the museum to become financially self-sufficient.
5. Recommendations for archival and artifact acquisition, preservation, and research; exhibits; and educational materials.

The Recommendations must include educational materials relating to:

1. The role of African-American participation in defending and preserving Florida and the United States, including 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.

#### **Item VII. Overview of the Location Scoring Process**

Alissa Lotane summarized the location scoring process, including key dates, the locations from which responses were received by DOS, the criteria used by the Task Force in evaluating responses, and the process for completing final scores during today's meeting to determine the top three prospective locations. Alissa Lotane also provided information on the frequency of locations mentioned in the public survey.

#### **Item VIII. Presentation of Preliminary Scores**

Alissa Lotane discussed the preliminary scores for the eight proposals received and clarified the process for determining the final ranking:

1. St. Johns County, 94.00
2. Eatonville/Orange County, 91.56
3. Sarasota, 81.22
4. Opa-locka, 77.44
5. Nassau County, 75.56
6. Seminole County, 73.00
7. Panama City, 65.00
8. Jackson County, 61.00

#### **Item IX. Individual Consideration of the Top Four Locations**

The Task Force asked questions to representatives from the top four locations based on preliminary scoring (in alphabetical order):

- Eatonville

- Opa-locka
- Sarasota
- St. Johns County

Representatives from each location answered questions from the Task Force. Prior to St. Johns County's presentation, the Task Force elected to move to briefly to Item X. Discussion of Museum Marketing Plan, prior to returning to Item IX. to the St. Johns County presentation to accommodate travel delays.

Upon completion of the question-and-answer period, the Task Force heard public comment prior to holding a vote on the final rankings.

#### **Item X. Discussion of Museum Marketing Plan**

Brenna Dacks, Regional Partnership Manger, Visit Florida, provided an overview of Visit Florida, the specific services that could be provided to the future museum and the ways that Visit Florida would help promote the museum.

#### **Item XII. Final Raking of Museum Locations**

Task Force members individually read into the record any changes to their scores for each location.

#### **Item XI. Break**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson called for a break for DOS staff to make adjustments to the scoring, based on changes voiced by individual Task Force members.

#### **Item XIII. Vote on Top Three Museum Locations**

Alissa Lotane presented the final scores based on any updates from Task Force members.

1. St. Johns County, 96.78
2. Eatonville/Orange County, 95.33
3. Opa-locka, 84.89
4. Sarasota, 80.78

Howard Holley moved to accept the updated final score sheet as presented by staff. Sen. Bobby Powell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Howard Holley moved to accept the final ranking order as presented. Regina Gayle Philips seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Item XIV. Next Steps for Top Three Museum Locations**

Alissa Lotane discussed next steps for the upcoming meetings, including the presentation by FAMU on the top three locations.

#### **Item XV. Future Meeting Dates and Agendas**

Alissa Lotane discussed the upcoming meeting dates and the items on the agendas for May and June.

#### **Item XVI. Task Force Open Discussion, Questions, & Announcements**

The Task Force briefly discussed some of the items to be on the agenda during the May meeting.

**Item XVII. Public Comment**

No public comment.

**Item XVIII. Adjourn**

Howard Holley made a motion to adjourn. Dr. Altony Lee seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Geraldine F. Thompson Presiding Officer

Bliss Lane State Historic Preservation Officer and Director, Division of Historical Resources

Approved: 5/21/24