VOLUSIA COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD MEETING
October 13, 2022

The Public Hearing of the Volusia County Historic Preservation Board was called to order by James Zacharias, at 1:07 p.m., at the County Council Chambers, 123 West Indiana Avenue, DeLand, Florida. This was a joint meeting with the ECHO Advisory Committee. On roll call, the following members answered present, to wit:

COMMISSION PRESENT:

JAMES “ZACH” ZACHARIAS – Present
BONDA GARRISON – Present
GREGORY HOLBROOK – Absent
BRIAN POLK – Present
LARRY FRENCH – Present
MARGARET BERESFORD – Absent

STAFF PRESENT:

PATRICIA SMITH, Planning Manager
BENJAMIN WALTER, Planner II, Historic Preservation Board Staff Liaison
CHRISTOPHER RYAN, Assistant County Attorney

ECHO MEMBERS:

PATRICIA NORTHEY
GERARD J. PENDERGAST
JEFFERY AULT
SARALEE MORRISSEY
PAT PATTERSON
DAVID ROMERO
REGINA SANTILLI
STACEY SIMMONS
JACK SURRETTE

ECHO STAFF:

DR. BRAD BURBAUGH, Resource Stewardship Director
KENDRA HIVELY, ECHO Manager
RUSS BROWN, Senior Assistant County Attorney
JILL MARCUM, ECHO Administrative Specialist
SARAH PRESLEY, Volusia Forever Administrative Specialist

Not having achieved a quorum, Christopher Ryan explained that a vote on the previous meeting minutes could not be held. Mr. Ryan went on to explain that the Historic Preservation Board members could participate in the joint discussion.
Chair Zacharias introduced himself and invited the other members to introduce themselves. Brain Polk, Bonda Garrison and Larry French introduced themselves to the public and the ECHO advisory board members. The ECHO Advisory Committee members introduced themselves. County staff introduced themselves.

County staff for the ECHO Advisory Committee presented a list of historic preservation projects that have been funded by the ECHO program. Benjamin Walter then gave a synopsis of the Historic Preservation Board’s creation and role. The three historic districts within unincorporated Volusia County were shown as an example of the work the Historic Preservation Board has completed in the past. The portions of the Historic Preservation Element of the Volusia County Comprehensive Plan that encourage work with the ECHO program for historic preservation within the county.

Susie Peace, Historic Trust DeLand, introduced herself and thanked the Committee/Board for allowing her to speak. Ms. Peace presented a short video clip describing the story of the World War II era tugboat ST479 Tiger. She explained the Tiger was built 78 years ago on the shores of Lake Beresford, in Volusia County. She stated it was the only World War II era tugboat returned to the United States. Ms. Peace said the Historic Trust DeLand planned to apply for an ECHO Grant within the next couple's grant cycles. She said the Trust considered the Tiger an important historic artifact. She stated the Trust wanted to bring the tugboat on shore and create a permanent public display honoring Volusia County history and heritage. Ms. Peace said current ECHO guidelines exclude projects that only provide exterior viewing capabilities and explained the interior of the Tiger would not be accessible for safety reasons. Ms. Peace suggested adding language to the ECHO guidelines allowing an exemption for “significant historic structures/artifacts” and quoted the guideline definition of a “Historic” project being a site, building, or facility. Ms. Peace asked that “Artifact” be added to the definition of Historic Projects.

Stephanie Doster, Volusia County Schools, thanked the advisory committee for providing the opportunity to express the School Board’s interests and eligibility for historic preservation partnerships. She explained most of their funding was focused on student stations and providing facilities for the students to have a healthy learning space. She said due to those priorities there was not a lot of money available for historic preservation until it becomes an emergency. Ms. Doster described the school funding, explaining it was a combination of sales tax, local funding, and impact fees. She explained the use of the funds were dedicated to specific projects and leaves very little room for maintenance and preservation projects. Ms. Doster then reviewed some of the historic schools currently needing restoration and described the extensive work required to restore them.

Pat Justin, Deltona Woman’s Club, introduced herself and described the need to restore the Deltona Woman’s Club. Ms. Justin stated they approached the City of Deltona, and they were unwilling to help. She said they were looking into having the building designated as historic and would be back at a later date.

The combined committee/board then commenced a discussion:
Chair Zacharias commented on the tugboat, comparing it to the Hiawatha Train at the Museum of Arts and Sciences. He explained there was no access to the interior of the train, for safety reasons, but they provided a viewing platform that allows the public to view the interior. Chair Zacharias said the tugboat was really a national monument.

Brian Polk stated he agreed with the adding the language to include “significant historic structures/artifacts” as part of ECHO.

Bonda Garrison stated she agreed with the addition of “artifacts” as well. She described the World War II watchtower located in Ormond-by-the-Sea and stated it need restoration. She stated she wasn’t sure it would be eligible for ECHO funding because it was privately owned.

Larry French concurred with the suggestion to add “artifact” to the ECHO wording. He said he was also interested in how the Historic Preservation Board could seek certificates of designation for item like the tugboat and women’s club. Mr. French commented the estimates for the school restorations were very high and asked if the projects could be divided up into smaller parts.

Ms. Doster agreed they would start with the highest priority needs, like keeping the water out.

Mr. French asked if there was a separate category for historic preservation in the school board budget or if they were competing with all the other maintenance repair projects.

Ms. Doster said there was no budget for historic restoration. She said the restorations were done as needed, typically once it is at an emergency state.

Chair Zacharias thanked the speakers for coming forward. He said historic structures were very important because they attract people. He said historic structures were beautiful and commented the newer architecture was not beautiful.

Saralee Morrissey told the committee she had specifically asked the school district to attend the meeting and make a presentation, because they are currently not eligible to apply for an ECHO grant. She said she was concerned about the historic schools both within the school district and those functioning in private ownership. She presented a few examples of schools in need of restoration. She said she felt the schools were threatened and endangered historic structures. Ms. Morrissey said she believed public education and having children and their families travel in and out of historic schools was a high priority and should be something communities care about.

David Romeo stated he would like staff to look into the wording of the Historic Grants to see if there was a way to include the tugboat and similar situations.

Pat Patterson said he had deep concerns about making changes to the rules, stating changing the rules for some and not for others would be a mistake. He mentioned the costs listed for school restoration and said the financial end of it was huge.
Vice-Chair Pendergast stated he was always in support of historic restoration and as an architect he was disappointed more Historic projects did not come forward to ECHO. He discussed the school issue and said he understood the importance of restoring and honoring them.

Chair Northeay stated she shared some of Mr. Patterson’s concerns about rewriting the rules, but she did appreciate language that allows people to view historic structures, because they aren’t always accessible. She stated she was concerned about the City of Deltona not addressing the needs of the Women’s Club. She said any ECHO aware is based on contributing match and the city not being willing to help probably meant that ECHO was not in a good position to add value to the club. She asked the school board didn’t set aside funds from the school taxes for restoration and rehabilitation of those historic schools. She asked if the school board had a 5-year plan.

Ms. Morrissey said the school board did have a 5-year plan they created annually. She said when needs are presented, they try to work it into that plan.

Chair Northeay said there was a county-wide school sales tax that could be used to restore/rehabilitate the schools in need.

Ms. Morrissey acknowledged they received tax funding. She said the issue was priorities and demands. She explained the school district focused on cost per student station and getting as many stations as possible in the buildings. She said the problem with the historic schools was either they aren’t being used for student stations or there are very few student stations in them due to their size. She said when the school district prioritizes student stations and the largest number of stations possible, the historic building fall to the bottom.

Chair Northeay asked if any of the historic buildings were on the national register.

Ms. Doster said that some of them were.

Chair Northeay stated her concern was the school board had a sales tax, and yet they were not setting any funds aside for the historic buildings, instead they were treating them like any other school site. She stated it seemed like a school board issue, for them to approve coming to ECHO and provide some value as to why it should be restored.

Ms. Doster said looking at the difference in cost of new construction versus the cost of historic restoration, it was less expensive to construct a new school. She used Port Orange as an example and said they couldn’t justify the cost of restoration earlier, but now it has become an emergency.

Chair Northeay asked if a site was purchased and take out of the school system, would it be eligible for ECHO.

Ms. Hively stated if it was an ECHO related activity and open for public use then it would probably be eligible.
Ms. Morrissey asked if a building would be eligible if the charter school forward with an application.

Ms. Hively stated the primary purpose would still be education. She quoted the guidebook, page 6, “projects intended primarily for students, faculty and staff, and/or intended to augment or supplement a curriculum” are ineligible.

Chair Northey raised the subject of the Enterprise Elementary School.

Ms. Hively explained that the school was used as a History Museum with public access. She stated if there was a curriculum or students it would be ineligible.

Chair Zacharias brough back the topic of the tugboat saying he would really like to see it saved. He suggested making an exception of access if it were for the health and safety of the visitors or an impact on the resource or artifact. Chair Zacharias suggested selling one of the schools and using the money from the sale to restore the others as needed. He said the schoolboard should look at which schools were National Register eligible and if it was eligible, they should go to a city/county Historic Preservation Board. He reminded them there are requirements for restoring structures on the registry. He mentioned the standards of the Department of Interior.

Chair Northey asked if the Historic Preservation Board had funds allocated for restorations.

Chair Zacharias explained the Historic Preservation Board did not fund projects. He suggested language be added that the eligibility of artifacts, like the tugboat, might be able to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Chair Northey asked staff to provide an example of a historic stabilization grant and verified the historic grants were not tied to an annual cycle.

Ms. Hively explained that only a Critical/Emergency Stabilization Grant could be taken out of the cycle. She explained an emergency would be a situation where the structure would be lost or destroyed if not immediately undertaken.

Ms. Morrissey stated there seemed to be a precedence for monuments. She used the Daytona Clock Tower and the Mary McLeod Bethune statue as examples. She said there was a similarity to the tugboat.

Chair Zacharias said there were not many places you could go to see historic World War II artifacts.

Ms. Hively said staff would bring back recommendations for the tugboat.

Stacey Simmons asked if the schoolboard had been approached by an outside source with an ability to purchase any of the historic buildings in the last five to ten years.

Ms. Doster said to her knowledge no one had come forward with such an offer.
Chair Northey asked Ms. Hively to review the grant amounts for each type of ECHO Grant.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The discussion closed and Chair Zacharias adjourned the meeting at 2:08 pm.

**APPROVED**

James "Zach" Zacharias, Chair

Larry French, Secretary

1/24/2023
Date

1/24/2023
Date