

Cultural Resources Branch – Lee County Recovery Task Force

Meeting Minutes

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM | AUGUST 16, 2023 | COLLABORATORY | 2031 JACKSON STREET,
SUITE 100, FORT MYERS, FL 33901 | PUBLIC MEETING

Call to Order

At 8:31 AM on August 16, 2023, Jon Romine, facilitator, convened the Cultural Resources Branch meeting with the following members present:

- Matt Johnson
- Will Prather
- Teresa Watkins Brown
- Lydia Antunes Black

County Liaison:

- Nancy MacPhee

Facilitators and Branch Support:

- Jon Romine, Collaboratory
- Tracey Phillips, Hagerty Consulting
- Robbie Heere, Hagerty Consulting

Introductions

Jon Romine provided a review of the work of the Recovery Task Force (RTF) and its Branches. Mr. Romine reviewed the work of the Recovery Task Force in the development of the ResilientLee Recovery and Resilience Plan (the Plan). Mr. Romine outlined the timeline of the planning process and the next steps of the Branches. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to review and validate the Branch draft Initiative Profiles and begin to develop the Branch Action Plan.

Overview of RTF Member One-on-One Meetings

Mr. Romine summarized the one-on-one meetings with the Recovery Task Force Members and their jurisdictional leadership.

Mr. Johnson questioned if there is a commitment after December 5, 2023, for the implementation plan. Mr. Romine responded by explaining the overview of the recovery and resilience planning process and how the implementation plan is being developed. Ms. Phillips added that the planning process, Initiative Profile-building process, and implementation will continue after December 5, 2023. Mr. Romine provided additional background information on the sentiments of the Recovery Task Force Members leading to the implementation of the Plan.

Review of Draft Initiative Profiles and Branch Member Feedback

Mr. Romine introduced the draft Initiative Profiles and explained the structure. He stated that Members will have until August 25 using the QR code and online form to provide direct feedback on the draft Initiative Profiles.

Mr. Prather asked if the funds would go through the Department of Human and Veteran Services or the identified lead, to which Ms. LeSage provided background information. She provided an example of another Branch considering the expansion of the Disaster Advisory Council (DAC) to consider implementation. Ms. Phillips stated that Members should consider including the right groups and stakeholders in the Initiative Profiles.

Ms. Black suggested the inclusion of arts and cultural organizations and agreements to sustain sites in the planning process that would be used during a disaster. Members suggested that the DAC and more general arts and cultural organizations be included as partners. Ms. Black stated the need for funding arts organizations and post-disaster social services to get the organizations back up and running. Mr. Romine suggested including service providers with funding needs, including arts and cultural organizations, as well as combined working groups represented in the DAC. Ms. LeSage suggested adding the corresponding implementation step in other Branches and adding arts and cultural working groups into the DAC for organizations with facilities and volunteers.

Ms. Phillips described the process of funding and mapping projects the Branch identified. Ms. LeSage suggested that Members provide a preamble to explain why arts and cultural organizations are important in providing social services and helping during disasters.

Mr. Romine introduced the second draft Initiative Profile. Mr. Johnson asked about the cultural resilience hub, which Mr. Romine explained fell under the Health and Social Services Branch. Mr. Johnson stated that the arts and culture working group would be connecting organizations; he supported a separate organization for providing funding sources. Ms. Black suggested creating an independent organization to reduce competition from individuals.

Mr. Prather stated that the feasibility and implementation of the action items are critical. Ms. Phillips reminded Branch Members of the process of what would make the Initiatives a reality. Ms. Trull stated that long-term funding has always been the biggest issue in accomplishing such Initiatives. Ms. LeSage asked Branch Members to consider key things that are needed for the resilience of the County.

Mr. Johnson questioned if the Initiatives were specific enough to define the actual facility needs. He stated the need for an organization to look at the bigger picture of the arts and culture community and identify funding sources that could apply. Members supported the idea of post-disaster repairs of physical facilities and being paid for such services. Members discussed combining draft Initiative Profiles that have similar overarching goals. Ms. Black stated that the second and eighth draft Initiative Profiles could be combined.

Ms. Black asked if beaches and parks were included in the other Branches draft Initiative Profiles. Members discussed that parks could live in both Cultural and Natural Resources. She stated that arts organizations should be included in the conversation and development of new parks, public recreation, and other infrastructure.

Ms. Trull provided an example of how organizations use public space in the City of Cape Coral. She stated that Cape Coral created a committee to develop the park and renovate the area; arts organizations had a seat at the table. Ms. Trull recommended that the working group serve alongside public programming facilities. Ms. Watkins Brown stated that the African American History Center sits within Roberto Clemente Park, and the working group could play a role in the development of public park facilities. Members agreed to include parks and recreation projects in other facility-based draft Initiative Profiles.

Mr. Prather stated the need to be concise and create feasible recommendations. Ms. Black stated that the loss of artists within the region has been a real challenge.

Ms. Black supported the draft Initiative Profile to include individual artists in the recovery process. She also supported bringing together creative communities. Ms. Black stressed the importance of this issue and addressing artists' needs. Ms. LeSage cautioned Members of consolidating draft Initiative Profiles as they emphasize the importance of the arts and cultural sector to the economic resiliency of the area.

Members discussed keeping the affordable housing component as an Initiative to show the synergy between branches.

Questions and Next Steps

The next Branch meeting is scheduled for September 6, 2023, from 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM.

Ms. Black urged arts and cultural organizations to make their voices heard.

Public Comment

Jim Magnus from the Economic Recovery Branch thanked the Members of the Cultural Resources Branch. He discussed overlapping concepts among the Branches, such as affordable housing, and gave the example of artist cottages in Bonita Springs. He stated that he was involved in the Workshops and provided ideas to get involved with projects. Mr. Magnus suggested reviewing the Bonita Springs Plan with ideas on how to move a project forward so the Plan can be approved on December 5.

Chase Pizaris Henderson thanked Branch Members for their help in making Lee County resilient. He gave an overview of his organization and spoke about an opportunity to lend an arm for businesses to gain capital funds.

Adam Knight from Mound House discussed parks and recreation in the area, specifically Fort Myers Beach. He discussed how some cultural resources are immovable due to archaeological significance.

Sharon McAllister asked if there were dollar amounts for the Initiatives.

Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Mr. Romine thanked the members for attending and then adjourned the meeting at 9:38 AM.