

Cultural Resources Branch – Lee County Recovery Task Force

Meeting Minutes

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

Call to Order

At 8:34 AM on November 8, 2023, Tessa LeSage, facilitator, convened the Cultural Resources Branch meeting. The following Members were present:

- Janel Trull
- Lydia Antunes Black
- Matt Johnson

County Liaison

- Nancy MacPhee

Facilitators and Branch Support:

- Tessa LeSage, Collaboratory
- Harrison Newton, Hagerty Consulting
- Robbie Heere, Hagerty Consulting

Introductions

Ms. LeSage provided an update on the work of the Recovery Task Force and the Recovery and Resilience Planning Process.

Upcoming Community Engagement

Ms. LeSage summarized the upcoming community engagement series regarding the Initiatives of the ResilientLee Recovery and Resilience Plan.

Updated Initiative Review

The Support Team introduced each Initiative for discussion with Branch Members.

Coordinating Capital Funding for Rebuilding Arts and Cultural Facilities

- Members stated the importance of this Initiative has been lost in recent iterations. The Initiative should reflect multiple years of challenge from Hurricane Irma to COVID-19 to Hurricane Ian. Members stated that the community's challenges include the lack of large lines of credit for nonprofit organizations, deferred maintenance for major repairs of systems, and years of lingering issues from previous disasters.
- Members suggested including a sustainable source for capital improvements.
- Members stated that Lee County Human and Veterans Services is not the appropriate department.
- Members suggested cross-referencing the Arts and Culture Advisory Group Initiative.
- Mr. Johnson stated a potential source of data would be a poll of 30 different arts organizations to gather information on their organization's deferred maintenance needs.
- Members suggested including historical preservation in the Initiative. Members stated there is an absence of collective storage and an archive of historical resources in all jurisdictions. Members suggested collectively working together to preserve historical resources.
- Members discussed larger needs of arts and cultural organizations, stating that the needs are not just related to real estate.

Establishing an Arts and Culture Advisory Group

- Members suggested making this the first Initiative for the Branch.
- Members suggested an Advisory Group should be a neutral third-party art coordinating entity, utilizing a public-private partnership, with an organizational structure and funding to support it.
- Members stated the Initiative should not be paired with the Department of Human and Veterans Services because that department is not connected to what arts organizations do in the community.
- Members suggested focusing on the sector comprehensively.
- Members suggested focusing on the Initiative at a higher level to include advocacy and representation. Members suggested the Initiative should focus on sustainable funding sources for capital improvements.
- Members suggested including the new economic data from the Alliance for the Arts.
- Members suggested cross-referencing the Public Art and Rebuilding Initiative.

- Members suggested describing why arts organizations are included in the Plan and the role of arts and culture in the community.
- Members suggested referencing a nationally recognized model such as FutureMakers as a coordinating entity to advocate for arts and culture.
- Members suggested the approach should be to develop infrastructure for long-term resiliency to support opportunities to have a successful and sustainable arts community.

Reviving Public Recreation

- Members suggested incorporating arts and culture into the design and approach to public parks.

Public Art and Rebuilding

- Members suggested the Need Statement only describes damaged infrastructure rather than the actual needs of the community to be resilient. Members suggested including reasons why resilience is important; such as place-making and including arts and culture in the design of a public park.
- Members suggested considering the importance of including the arts community in the design.
- Members discussed the value of recovery and resilience for the arts community in the Plan.
- Members suggested cross-referencing the information on public parks in the Reviving Public Recreation Initiative and including information about place-making spaces and public parks in this Initiative.
- Members discussed Lee Tran as an opportunity to include art in the community. Members suggested that art helps with “placelessness issues”. Members suggested carving out spaces by using public art for placemaking in primary neighborhoods.
- Members suggested that public art must be integrated into conversations about infrastructure and economic recovery. Members suggested the business community could also be involved in the conversation on public art.

Questions and Next Steps

The group reviewed the next process steps, including that Branch Members will be notified as soon as the next meeting is scheduled.

Public Comment

There was no request for public comment.

Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Ms. LeSage thanked the members for attending and adjourned the meeting at 9:51 AM.