

Cultural Resources Branch – Lee County Recovery Task Force

Meeting Minutes

8:30 AM – 10:00 AM | SEPTEMBER 20, 2023 | COLLABORATORY | 2031 JACKSON STREET, FORT MYERS, FL 33901 | PUBLIC MEETING

Call to Order

At 8:30 AM on September 20, 2023, Jon Romine, facilitator, convened the Cultural Resources Branch meeting. The following members were present:

- Marco Villalobos
- Will Prather
- Lydia Antunes Black
- Charles Barnes

County Liaison

- Nancy MacPhee

Facilitators and Branch Support:

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

Introductions

Mr. Romine provided an update on the work of the Recovery Task Force and the Recovery and Resiliency Plan (Plan) development process. Ms. Phillips reviewed the process for members and stakeholders to provide feedback on the Initiatives.

Overview of Recent Recovery Task Force Efforts

Mr. Romine provided a summary of the One-on-One meetings with the Recovery Task Force Members and their leadership teams.

Initiative Feedback Summary

Mr. Romine explained the sources of feedback from Branch members, RTF members, and from Lee County.

Mr. Heere introduced the initiative, CR01: Capital Funding for Post-Disaster Social Services. Mr. Newton provided information on Lee County's feedback and position on suggested Initiatives. Members discussed the feedback summary. Ms. Black stated that a request was made previously to have a liaison for Cultural Resources in the Emergency Operations Center. Members discussed the support of cultural resources. Members suggested removing Tourist Development Tax dollars and instead focus on examples of sustainable funding sources. Ms. MacPhee provided information on the use of Tourist Development Tax. Ms. Black discussed the challenge of identifying the best funding sources to sustainably fund cultural resources. Ms. Phillips discussed that specific implementation steps will not be included in this Plan because it will be a strategic document.

The Support Team introduced the Initiative CR02: Connecting with Community and the feedback summary. Ms. Phillips explained the consolidation plan for this Initiative with CR08: Cultural and Arts Working Group and CR06: Cultural Resiliency. Ms. Phillips stressed that consolidation does not affect the substance - just the structure of the presentation of the Initiative.

The Support Team introduced the Initiative CR03: Reviving Public Recreation. Members discussed that the Parks and Recreation Department is doing great work, and the Department's recovery and repair of parks is outside the purview of the Cultural Resources Branch. Ms. Phillips provided background on relevant federal funding and how damage assessments are conducted. Mr. Barnes stated that there is constant discussion with the City of Fort Myers as certain cultural resources are located on and in their parklands.

The Support Team introduced the initiative, CR04: Cultural & Artistic Mixed-Used, and the feedback summary. Mr. Newton introduced the feedback of the County and their position on arts and culture and opportunities for workforce housing. Mr. Prather stated that it is difficult for the workforce that supports cultural resources to find housing, and short-term housing needs are different from the long term needs of the workforce.

The Support Team introduced the initiative, CR05: Art Infrastructure and feedback from Lee County. Mr. Newton summarized that this group suggested that cultural resources should be at the table. Members suggested that the County's capital improvements plan could include (and/or the Lee County Facilities Department could consider) an art component in infrastructure projects such as the Cape Coral Bridge on the South end. Another potential opportunity is at the new airport; art is incorporated into the structure and in public places.

The City of Fort Myers already has public art and art-in-flight initiatives. Members agreed that the objective should be to integrate art into buildings. Members discussed the question of “How do we make sure that art and culture are in the Plan”? Members discussed the amount of feedback from the RTF members. Members discussed the feasibility of strategic planning for arts and culture. Mr. Romine provided background on the various strategic plans for arts and culture. Ms. Black provided background on the City of Fort Myers and their inclusion of arts and culture in strategic planning. Members discussed that the city of Bonita Springs has made a commitment to arts and culture, too.

The Support Team introduced the initiative CR06: Cultural Resiliency and the feedback summary. Mr. Newton described the County’s feedback about resiliency.

The support Team introduced CR07: Cultural and Arts Working Group. Members discussed that this is the first step to accomplishing the goals of other Initiatives. Mr. Newton shared the positive feedback from other working groups about this Initiative.

Initiative Consolidation

Mr. Romine introduced the recommendation plan for Initiative consolidation for the Cultural Resources Branch.

Questions and Next Steps

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

Public Comment

Nadalie De la Torre Salas from the Florida Public Archaeology Network which works to educate and promote the preservation of archeological and historical resources. She asked how archaeological and historical sites should be included in the Plan as they are important in recovery. She asked who will take on the management of historical sites to protect the story of the past. She asked Branch members with heritage or archeological preservation specialties to be involved in the Plan writing. She also asked, “What measures are taken in the Plan to assist museums in the historical district to increase their resilience”?

Chase Pisaris Henderson thanked Branch members for their work.

Misha Jackson, with Cape Coral Emergency Management, commented on the cultural and archaeological assets in Cape Coral. She stated she previously worked hand in hand as a

partner with First Nations in California within the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in the county. She commented on the discussion of protecting newer artwork and suggested a way to work on this on the preparedness side; she also stated that there is a space at the table for culture and arts and preservation in the EOC. She stated that prevention is cheaper than recovery.

Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

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