

Cultural Resources Review Board Minutes

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Committee/Board/Agency: Cultural Resources Review Board

Date/Time of Meeting: Monday, December 11th, 2023 at 1:30 P.M.

Location/Address: St. Johns County Permit Building, Conference Room 1
4040 Lewis Speedway, St. Augustine, FL

Members Present: Robert Olson, Janet Jordan, Christine Newman, Nick Jonihakis, Susan Schjelderup, Blair Knighting, Dr. Leslee Keys

Members Absent:

Commission Liaison:

Staff Present: Ryan Mauch, Hali Barkley, Kealey West (Office of County Attorney)

Public Attendees: Ed Slavin (phone, edslavin.com), Sallie O'Hara (Hastings Main Street), Adam Morley (Genungs Fish Camp), Janine LeBlanc (Genungs Fish Camp), Pat Hamilton (Genungs Fish Camp), Vivian Browning (Vilano Main Street), Nathan Stuart (165 Vilano Road), Sheila Lee Davies (1033 Ponte Vedra Blvd), Sacha Martin (Vilano Main Street), Sallie O'Hara (Hastings Main Street)

- Mr. Jonihakis brought the meeting to order at 1:30pm, took roll call where all members were present, and read the civility clause into the record.
- Mr. Jonihakis opened Public Comment for items not on the current agenda.
- Public Comment: Ed Slavin wished the board Happy Holidays and gave suggestions to better the CRRB, including televising the meetings as is done for LAMP. He mentioned that he filed a complaint with HUD for the harassment of County Staff, namely Trey Alexander Aster, and members of the public and they are investigating under the Fair Housing Act. He asked that the materials for the meeting are posted in advance of the meetings. He suggested that we reject the idea that employees should be pressured by County Administration and not to do their jobs without fear of favor and that we should not be scared of scaring off developers because the developers scare him, the employees and the people. He commended Commissioner Joseph as the Liaison to the CRRB for standing up to oppression, and agreed with her statements about the development pressures and one-party rule. Mr. Slavin mentioned that he spoke to Commissioner Dean in relation to the censure after the BCC meeting and stated they were wrong. He suggested we speak out in favor of the 1st, 9th, and 14th amendments.
- Public Comment: Janine LeBlanc, Genungs Fish Camp, stated that they would love help on getting the fish camp designated as a local historic landmark. She asked for assistance with the process and mentioned that she has received some paperwork but would like help from staff to move in that direction. Mr. Olson asked Ms. Leblanc to further describe why the fish camp deserves the designation. She described a small bait and tackle shop and house that were built in 1948 by Jack Genung and it is now owned by people in the area that want to preserve it. She stated that herself and her husband have run the fish camp for the past six years. She stated it is a great spot that would be great to be preserved.
- Public Comment: Pat Hamilton, part owner of Genungs Fish Camp, told the board that when he was a kid Jack Genung would catch all the fish for Marineland. He mentioned other locals that would visit the location and drink whiskey. He stated that it was bought by a bunch of residents to preserve it as a fish camp and stated it is the center of Crescent Beach right now. He mentioned that the South

Anastasia Community Association is having an Oyster Roast there as a fundraiser. He stated it is one of the hearts of Crescent Beach and the current tenants have been great. He asked for help from staff to fill out the forms and figure out what the obligations are.

- Public Comment: Adam Morley, Genungs Fish Camp, mentioned that he has been going to the fish camp long before his wife and him took over as tenants. He stated it is where he got his Captains license and began his guiding career. He mentioned that he speaks to people whose grandparents frequented the location. He stated that there are a lot of locals that come there and remember many stories. He stated that it would be great for preservation.
- Public Comment: Pat Hamilton spoke again to mention that within blocks of the fish camp there are cottages, owned by his extended family members, that are all over 50 years old from the 20's and 40's. He asked what it would take, what the obligations are, and what the incentives are if they wanted to designate a district or each individual building. He mentioned the house at 251 Cubbedge Road was built before there was a bridge and it had an artisan well that ran a hydrolic before there was electric.
- Public Comment: Sallie O'Hara, Hastings Main Street, stated that she used to be the A1A Administrator and one significant part of the corridor is the historic assets and they are rapidly disappearing. She mentioned the Historic Survey completed from Ponte Vedra to Vilano and stated that within the survey there are some potential significant historic districts there. She suggested a similar survey be conducted for the south Anastasia corridor and mentioned that it would slow down the demolition of structures. She encourages the board to endorse and help.
- Ms. Newman stated that she has been discussing with some of the folks from Genungs Fish Camp and there is an archaeological site on the property.
- Mr. Jonihakis directed staff to determine what the board would need to do to extend the historic survey to the south Anastasia A1A Corridor and Ms. Newman clarified that this house in particular should be included in the survey.
- Dr. Keys made a motion to approve the October meeting minutes with some small grammatical adjustments to Board Reports. The motion was seconded by multiple members of the board and approved unanimously.
- Motion by Ms. Newman and seconded by Dr. Keys to approve the current agenda. Board approved unanimously.
- **Item 1:** Kealey West reminded the board that members are required to vote on every item unless they declare a conflict of interest. Blair Knighting, representative for Sheila Davies, recused herself for this item. Ms. Knighting gave a presentation on the Milam House located at 1033 Ponte Vedra Boulevard. She discussed that the owner is looking to receive a waiver to the Florida Building Code FEMA requirements, to complete a substantial improvement to rehabilitate the original historic structure without meeting current floodplain requirements which would be infeasible. Sheila Davies, owner of the house and architect, discussed the history of the structure designed by Paul Rudolph and the different design elements. They pointed out the later additions that are not included in the National Register designation and showed their proposal for the rehabilitation of the original structure, demolition of additions, and construction of new additions.
- Mr. Jonihakis inquired if they would be using the same type of materials for the additions. Ms. Davies clarified that the additions will not be the exact same materials but something complimentary to the original structure and she is currently considering smooth stucco. Mr. Jonihakis asked for clarification that the addition will not be bright blue, and the owner confirmed that they will maintain the sand/white-ish color that exists. Mr. Olson asked if Paul Rudolph was aware of the additions and Ms. Knighting answered that they were done through his office. Mr. Olson also asked if this would need

to go through SHPO (State Historic Preservation Officer) and Ms. Knighting clarified that the item in front of them was to confirm Significant designation of the structure so that the Building Official will proceed with building permits. Ms. Schjelderup asked for clarification on if the new addition will be street side or ocean side and if the ocean side will have the brises-soleil. Ms. Knighting showed that the additions will be set back from the original structure on the street side of the property as the "front" of the property is facing the ocean. She clarified that they would not be mimicking the brises-soleil in order to not take away from the original structure or create a false sense of history and Ms. Davies stated that the new buildings design was informed by the brises-soleil with the large window openings but not copying them. Dr. Keys suggested the applicant address the square footage of the additions and suggested a color differentiation of the additions so that it is clear that it is not part of the original structure construction. Ms. Knighting stated they appreciated the feedback on color and would take that into consideration, and clarified that the addition is setback from the original structure and the property is 3 acres so they have the room for the additional square footage and that there is no variance required for the floor area ratio. Ms. Newman asked if the applicant would need to go before the National Register before completing the improvements and Ms. Knighting stated they do not.

- Ms. Barkley clarified that the item before the board was to sign the letter provided to them that states the proposal does not remove the Significant integrity of the structure, to provide to the Building Department so that they may grant the FEMA exemption. She stated that at the time of actual permit submittal, if a review and approval of the modifications is required by the board, that would be brought before them then.
- Mr. Olson made a motion to approve the letter for the Building Department. The motion was seconded by Ms. Schjelderup and unanimously approved.
- **Item 2:** Dr. Keys declared a conflict of interest and recused herself from the vote as the representative to the applicant for the Landmark and Tax Exemption applications for 165 Vilano Road. Dr. Keys introduced Nathan Stuart and presented the Landmark presentation for Barrancoto's. She hit on the Integrity of the historic structure mentioning Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Feeling, and Association. She presented photos of the structure from the past and current state of the structure. Dr. Keys mentioned the non-conforming garage that is proposed for removal and showed the interior of the structure.
- Blair Knighting moved to recommend approval of LMA 2023-02 and Mr. Olson seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.
- Public Comment: Vivian Browning spoke to her history of involvement with the Vilano area. She stated that she supports preservation of what can be saved in the Vilano Town Center and believes that the building follows through with the vision she had for the area. She finished her statement by giving her support for the designation.
- Public Comment: Sacha Martin, current board member of Vilano Beach Main Street, stated that from the beginning, the group wanted to preserve as much of the environmental and historic nature of the area as possible. She spoke to the fact that this art deco building is one of few left and she is very excited that the owner is wanting to preserve as much of the building as possible despite the deterioration of certain areas of the building.
- Public Comment: Sallie O'Hara reported that Hastings Main Street has been recommended for a Florida Main Street designation. She stated that Vilano has enough properties to become a historic district and spoke to the benefit of a district having greater value in protecting historic properties. She encouraged the designation of Vilano Town Center and Hastings Main Street as a historic district.

- Kealey West asked the chair for clarification on if the Findings of Fact provided in the staff report were included in the motion and the chair stated yes.
- **Item 3:** Dr. Keys presented the application for tax exemption for the improvements proposed to 165 Vilano Road. She stated that part I of the application is to determine significance which was completed in the item prior, Landmark Application. Part II is the proposed modifications and Dr. Keys reminded the board of the hurricanes that have impacted the structure and mentioned that the modifications will follow the Rehabilitation Standards. She mentioned that the structural load will need to be transferred elsewhere through design of a new addition. She showed renderings of the new design including the outside seating and showed the Streamline Moderne design. She mentioned they would be using the same Landscape Firm that completed the Vilano Publix space and down by the water front.
- Mr. Olson questioned the location of the entrance and the additions to the parapet. Dr. Keys answered that the new design is Streamline Moderne and the entrance would be in the center. Nathan Stuart, also a resident of Vilano, stated that the new design saves the entire original structure and the art deco design matches the common theme in Vilano like the Publix. Dr. Keys mentioned that the Secretary of Interior Standards do not preclude you from rearranging space as needed and the new windows going in will be hurricane resistant. Mr. Olson asked if there is a way to demonstrate that the elements being added to the original structure are not original so it is clear that they are not part of the historic structure and Dr. Keys mentioned that color would be a way that they would address that. Ms. Knighting asked if the owner was pursuing federal tax exemptions and Dr. Keys clarified that they are only pursuing ad valorem tax exemption through the state. Ms. Knighting stated her support of the project and the addition in the back but expressed her concern for the art deco addition on the front as only a design element. Dr. Keys clarified that it is enabling the roof condition to be addressed, the roof to be raised, and a place to hide the air conditioning system. Mr. Stuart further clarified that it will contribute to hiding the mechanical systems. Mr. Jonihakis asked if there were plans for water rise and how many seats are planned and Dr. Keys answered that door dams will be utilized and Mr. Stuart answered between 150-160.
- Public Comment: Vivian Browning clarified that the reason she believes many people thought that building was built in 1946 is because that was the origin of Barrancotto's at their first location, not this building. She mentioned that the art deco design of the building doesn't have many of the accessories that is common for the style because when it was being built in the 1950's, people were building on a budget. She stated her support of the project mentioning the height of 50 feet that could be if the building were removed.
- Public Comment: Sacha Martin inquired the value of the ad valorem tax exemption. Dr. Keys explained that the millage will stay the same after the improvements are made for a period of ten years. Kealey West clarified that St. Johns County's code is the tax exemption is for the difference in assessed value before and after improvements. Discussion ensued between multiple members of the public where it was clarified that the tax exemption is for improvements made to a historic structure not just preserving it as it is.
- Ms. Knighting made a motion to approve the item based upon the findings of fact and conditions in the staff report. The motion was seconded by Ms. Schjelderup and approved unanimously.
- **Item 4:** Cancelled and rescheduled for a future meeting.

- **Item 5:** Mr. Olson clarified that board members may serve as Chair and Vice-Chair for up to two consecutive years and that is the pattern of service of the officers in the past. Ms. Knighting moved to keep Nick Jonihakis as Chair and Christine Newman as Vice-Chair for the next year. Mr. Olson seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Staff Reports:

- Ms. Barkley updated the board on the two ad valorem tax exemptions in Hastings that were approved by the BCC.

Board Reports:

- Mr. Olson stated that the Sinclair Lewis house is on the market and wanted to make the board aware of the significance of the structure in association with Sinclair Lewis, author, and stated the interior is largely unaltered but has no historic designation.
 - Dr. Keys asked if the CRRB or the county ever sponsors State Historic Markers. Ms. West answered if it is in the Right of Way we are part of the process but it is a state program and is initiated by the property owner. Mr. Mauch mentioned that the board often will provide a letter of support to the state.
 - Ms. Schjelderup asked if the board needs to have a vote for the suggestion of making Hastings and Vilano a National Register Historic District. Ms. West mentioned that staff can present the process for creating a historic district and mentioned that it is a very involved process and buy in from property owners is required as you may not have more than 51% of property owners object. Mr. Jonihakis inquired how long the process of getting something designated as a district would take and the average answer was 3-4 years. Mr. Jonihakis asked staff to provide the requirements of a National Register Historic District. Ms. Knighting suggested determining the exact areas to survey and potentially designate with mentions of Vilano, Hastings, and Crescent Beach.
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- Mr. Jonihakis called the meeting to a close at 2:59 PM
 - **Meeting Chair:** Nick Jonihakis **Staff Recorder:** Hali Barkley