

Combined Minutes of Corridor Advocacy Group Meetings

June 3, 2013 CAG Organizational Meeting, American Beach Community Center in Nassau County

Agenda and Sign-in sheets attached. Mayor Sarah Pelican welcomed participants at 6:00pm and expressed the support of the City of Fernandina Beach for the designation. Ms. Elaine Brown opened the meetings and conducted introductions. Ms. Debrah Miller of FDOT presented an overview of the program. There was general discussion of the draft map of the corridor, possible routes and intrinsic resources. The meeting adjourned at 8:00pm, with discussion of a next meeting to take place in Duval County.

July 31, 2013 CAG Eligibility Training Session, Ribault Club on Ft. George Island in Duval County

The agenda is incorporated into the presentation, which is available on the CAG webpage. Sign-in sheets attached. Ms. Barbara Jackson welcomed the group at 2:10pm. Mr. Mike Palozzi, on behalf of FDOT, provided an overview of the eligibility phase of the Scenic Highway Program. There was discussion on the benefits of the program, and a request was made for metrics related to benefits to business. The FDOT consultants indicated that this is currently an aspect of programmatic focus. FDOT confirmed that it was not necessary to have finalized exactly the extent of the route at the time that the Letter of Intent (LOI) is filed. FDOT recommended that the determination be made by the CAG as to whether the filing was for an extension or a new designation before filing the LOI. FDOT consultants were asked when the draft LOI would need to be filed with them if it were to be considered by the Scenic Highways Advisory Council in October, and they requested the document be filed by mid-August. CAG members agreed to post the draft LOI for review before the next meeting. The meeting adjourned at 4:00pm.

August 29, 2013 CAG Meeting, Ribault Club on Ft. George Island in Duval County

Agenda and sign-in sheet attached. Ms. Elaine Brown and Mr. Todd Duncan welcomed the group at 2:10pm, and conducted introductions. Ms. Brown led a discussion on whether the CAG proposal should be as a designation or an extension of the designation to the south. After much discussion, including discussion on the importance of the ferry to A1A and the region, it was agreed that our CAG will always welcome opportunities to align and collaborate with the scenic highway in St. Johns and Flagler counties, but by unanimous vote the CAG agreed to make application as a separate corridor. There was lively discussion on the name of the corridor. With one dissenting vote, it was ultimately decided to name the corridor "A1A Ocean Islands Trail." The group provided comments on the draft Letter of Intent in various formats to Ms. Margo Moehring. Comments received in writing before the meeting were shared with the CAG. Ms. Moehring agreed to work with Ms. Chelly Schembera on another draft, for CAG review before submission to FDOT. There was discussion about removing the

Visit the CAG webpage:

http://www.nefrc.org/pdfs/publicNotices/A1A%20App/A1A_Scenic_Highway_Webpage_Copy%20Final.pdf

objective related to Jaxport from the text. CAG members asked at the meeting that the following intrinsic or other resources be added to the text:

- The Coast Guard Station in Mayport Village (Ben Tucker)
- Mayport River Pilots (Ben Tucker)
- African American Community and History in Jacksonville Beach (Steve Lindorff)
- Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor (Barbara Goodman suggested that the NPS already has text about the local portion of the corridor that could be incorporated, Val Bostwick reminded the group of the expertise of Derek Hankerson)
- Franklin Town in Fernandina Beach (Val Bostwick and Phyllis Davis)
- Marine Science Center (Ben Tucker)

In a discussion lead by Mr. Duncan, the group talked about the route in northern Nassau County. By unanimous vote they agreed that the terminus of the route supported by the CAG would be at the Shave Bridge and the Amelia River. With this decision, Ms. Moehring was asked to get the resolution of support back on the agenda of the Nassau County Planning and Zoning Board and ultimately the Board of County Commissioners.

The CAG then discussed the data points that might be of interest to businesses in the area. Ms. Moehring was asked to gather and post examples of annual reports from other highways as examples, and to inquire of FDOT whether their website can quantify the number of "hits" our webpage gets, once A1A Ocean Islands Trail is designated. The group confirmed that its intent is to use the designation as a way to promote business.

Ms. Linda Lanier agreed to work with Ms. Schembera on a draft organizational chart for the CAG, along with recommendations for officer and committee assignments. Ms. Brown and Mr. Duncan were confirmed as Co-Chairs. Ms. Barbara Jackson noted she had made a presentation to the organization "Build a Better Jacksonville Beach" and they were very positive. A letter of support from the Amelia Tree Conservancy has been received. Ms. Barbara Goodman provided a letter of support from the National Parks Service, Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve.

Post script: On August 30, 2013, Ms. Regina Duncan of the Amelia Island-Fernandina Beach-Yulee Chamber of Commerce provided a letter of support, and let Ms. Moehring and Mr. Duncan know that letters had been requested of the TDC, the Historic Downtown Business Association (Fernandina Beach), the Amelia Island Trails Association, the Amelia Island Nature Festival and the Friends of Fort Clinch. Mr. Duncan resigned his position as Co-Chair.

Nassau Informational Meeting April 21, 2014, Omni Amelia island Plantation

The group discussed a draft brochure and draft "defining success" survey. They also discussed the following ideas:

- Using models from other byways
- Engage realtors
- Engage the American Beach community
- Considering support for voluntary agreements related to things like signage that impact the corridor

- Parts of the corridor are like a superhighway. Consider goals that would improve how it looks, works and public safety, such as lighting, bike lanes, sidewalks, underground infrastructure
- Note that the corridor is both a beautiful and interesting way to get from beginning to end, and also a series of “destinations”
- Include the destinations in Fernandina Beach that are special, such as the marina, the river, Centre Street, the historic district, the museum and the horses and carriages
- Ensure that Timucuan Park is listed as part of American Beach
- Align with efforts to establish a ferry to Cumberland Island
- Concept: The corridor is a path to connect parks
- Concept: Fort to Fort, Ferry to Ferry, Park to Park

The group discussed a CAG meeting, to be scheduled, and having information available at upcoming meetings on May 15 and May 20.

June 9, 2014 CAG Meeting, Broward House in Duval County

The group discussed organizational/governance structure and the roles of committees and officers. They noted the following:

- There is the perception in Nassau County that A1A Ocean Islands Trail efforts are the same as the well-advanced trail efforts that have been undertaken there. This needs to be addressed, so that the corridor can be part of the success of the trails, and the trails part of the success of the corridor. We need to ensure both efforts are always complementary.
- DOT will put the application together.
- We should reach out to follow up with folks who have expressed interest in the scenic byway process in the past.
- We should align with existing non-profits, and consider a stakeholder summit. Perhaps the Duval Environmental Roundtable would be an opportunity.
- Refer suggested committee leaders and members to Ms. Lanier.
- Ms. Moehring agreed to continue to be the liaison to FDOT.
- A volunteer will create a member form to be posted to the committee webpage.
- We will need to maintain the overall continuity of the A1A Ocean Island’s Trail message while also telling the stories of historic sections of the corridor, such as Buccaneer Trail and Pablo Road.

October 20, 2014 CAG Meeting, Mayport Village Community Center in Duval County

The FDOT representatives presented an overview of the corridor assessment they are about to begin, and made recommendations of corridor stories that may serve as models for our group. The group agreed that it was appropriate to leave the survey open for the foreseeable future, as not enough responses have been received. Mr. Osborne agreed to begin to write the corridor story, with the help of several additional volunteers. He suggested the CAG reconvene in a month to review a first draft.

December 15, 2014 CAG Meeting, Broward House in Duval County

A meeting scheduled for November 17 was cancelled due to inclement weather. The group discussed the comments provided by FDOT via e-mail and created a "story team" to write the compelling story of why the corridor is worth visiting. Team members will use a spreadsheet to address the overall approach, will footnote sources and will write in sections. The sections will be combined and edited. Ms. Moehring was asked to request more specificity from FDOT as to what they will do, schedule regular CAG meetings every other month beginning in February, and to reach out to stakeholder groups that were considered important when setting a brainstorming meeting on vision and goals the third week in January. In addition to those at the meeting and regular CAG meeting attendees, stakeholders with a planning or historic perspective were identified as important to include in the brainstorming meeting.

An important goal remains to be able to quantify the value of scenic highway designation to the area. Ms. Schembera noted "We dress it up, we take it to town and we make money all the way down the line." After the vision and goals are established, it was recommended that the CAG ask for the assistance of Chambers of Commerce and economic developers in the area to help get the survey, which will help with metrics, out to businesses.

Members suggested several approaches that might be part of an implementation strategy:

- Make use of the colorful characters who know about history in the area
- Tours of industries such as Rayonier
- Bundles: one fee for several attractions
- A corridor website that allows users to sort by type of resource, buy tickets to attractions, learn about resources and link to an app that could provide a guided tour. Should be GIS and smart-phone enabled.

Ms. Moehring was asked to inquire how much assistance FDOT can provide related to a corridor website.

January 20, 2015 CAG Meeting, Broward House in Duval County

Ms. Lanier led the group in brainstorming of ideas for what outcomes were desired for the corridor and what it should be like in the future. These will be used as the foundation for work on a strategic plan, to begin at the next meeting on April 14, 2015.

April 14, 2015 CAG Meeting, Broward House in Duval County

The group discussed the results of the brainstorming session, and added several ideas, including contacting Google to get the ferry to take precedence over I-95, and talking to the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor folks when they are in town in July, 2015. The group noted the importance of the partners list, and Mr. Scanlon agreed to share the Amelia Island Trail Team Partners list as a place to start. A date in mid-May will be sought for the next meeting.

May 11, 2015 CAG Meeting, Broward House in Duval County

FDOT representatives reviewed changes to the scenic byway program, and the group agreed to emphasize the story and intrinsic resources for the next meeting.

June 16, 2015 CAG Meeting, Mayport Village Community Center in Duval County

FDOT recommended that the visitor experience be added to the story, and the group discussed using a linear experience format, so that the readers would be told the story from the point of view of someone "doing" the corridor from one end to the other. Consider a grandfather showing the corridor to his grandson, for example. The group agreed that steps to finalize the story and resources should be identified and linked to individual tasks and a timeline. Members were asked to think about ways to find a videographer to participate in the storytelling. It was also discussed that businesses become a subcommittee of the CAG, so that their input and ideas are included from the beginning of designation. It was agreed that the next meeting should be on the same topics in Nassau County.

July 28, 2015, Omni Amelia Island Plantation in Nassau County

The group agreed on the need to gather projects and improvements along the corridor to be included in the application to leverage local commitments as the state considers the application. A \$50,000 study re: burying utility lines, the commitment of the 8th Street Fernandina Beach Improvement efforts and the 1 mile board walk near Talbot Island were noted. Commitments were made to share photos and educational materials that include the corridor and its resources, and to review what is written so far with a view towards consolidating it into the story. The state was to be contacted to inquire as to what was wanted from businesses, and on other issues. Post meeting update:

1. Margo confirmed with Debrah post-meeting that the "Story" can be a combination of excerpts from the resources text from the Letter of Intent (word version attached) with the addition of the "action story" text drafted by Hank and his team. We made some tweaks to "story" text (attached), and folks may have others. We agreed that what needs to be added is an "action" story line and tone, using characters if the writers among us think that is a good idea, such as one that begins with someone showing the corridor to another person, starting at the Shave Bridge and going south. Current versions of FDOT guidance attached.
2. Gary volunteered to take a look at the edit of the Duval text, and some of you folks from Nassau may be hearing from Sarah on the Nassau text. We will need to connect the two teams of writers.
3. Debrah confirmed that we do not have to show "bumpouts" on the corridor (i.e. show on the map and in the text exactly how to get to each resource that is not located directly on A1A). If there are a few super-important resources where we want to do this, we can. Or, the corridor map can simply be A1A, and story text can note the off-corridor resources. When we do signage, we can include them.

4. Debrah also confirmed that we can start asap on community commitment letters from businesses, and they do not have to be on the intrinsic resource list or directly on the corridor. These letters will work in our favor with the committee only if they identify an action that the business will undertake to support the corridor and/or to capitalize on the corridor.
5. The intrinsic resource list can include whatever we like and could be posted on the webpage or an appendix, as it is not a specific state requirement. It is a necessary first step for the app we have been discussing.
6. We are hoping to have a final draft of all required documents to provide to the state in October. The SHAC is still planning to visit our area in October.
7. Some members had links to share for related information or images. Please forward these to me and I will post on the webpage. We anticipate these, plus the LOI images, will be sufficient to illustrate the story.
8. The next meeting will be August 25 at 3pm at a venue to be determined.

August 25, 2015, Beaches Museum in Duval County

Discussions continued on preparations for the SHAC field trip. It was agreed to reach out to the Beaches Chamber and to inquire about the trolley. Members agreed to propose new text. Efforts are on target for October 1 submission.

September 15, 2015 CAG Meeting, Broward House in Duval County

The SHAC field trip has been postponed, so discussion centered on the remaining tasks necessary for the State to have a complete draft for consideration at a SHAC meeting in late October. The one year work plan was outlined, and goals will be circulated based on the visioning and discussion. A preliminary map based on the resources will be created, and photos taken or gathered to illustrate the story. Business commitments will continue to be sought. Communication will be by e-mail until we know the date, and perhaps outcome, of the SHAC meeting.

May 17, 2016 CAG Meeting, Broward House in Duval County

The CAG did not meet for some time while communication was undertaken to seek to understand the requirements of FDOT regarding the documents required to finish the eligibility phase. Once this was understood, it met to finalize drafts of the Byway Management Plan, Workplan, Bylaws and outline of community participation. Officers were named and tasks were assigned. Draft documents will be available for review by CAG members in advance of a final filing with FDOT staff on or before June 2.

April 12, 2016 FDOT and Executive Group Meeting, Broward House in Duval County

FDOT staff met with the Executive Group to clarify requirements for designation.

February 9, 2017 Executive Group Meeting, Beaches Museum in Duval County

After designation in July 2016, the group met to discuss an announcement event to which the entire CAG, local dignitaries and supporters will be invited. April 25 is the projected date.