

HISTORIC RESOURCES BLUE RIBBON PANEL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

11 January 2008 Initial Draft
19 March 2009 Revised
25 April 2009 Final Draft for Approval

BACKGROUND

On June 6th, 2008 the Board of County Commissioners appointed the Blue Ribbon Panel and assigned the panel several tasks. Panel members with their affiliation and Panel tasks are listed below.

Blue Ribbon Panel Members

Jean Trammell, Chair, City of Venice Historic Preservation Board
Deborah Walk, Sarasota County Historical Commission
Gregory Hall AIA, Chair, City of Sarasota Historic Preservation Board
Marion Almy, Florida Historical Commission
Jim Eslinger, Eslinger Homes
Doug Driscoll, Chair, Sarasota County Historic Preservation Board
Sandra Terry, Laurel Civic Association
Pamela G. Truitt, AICP, Blue Ribbon Panel Chair, and Immediate Past Chair, Sarasota Chamber of Commerce

Tasks as assigned by the BCC

1. Review alternative business models
2. Review alternative funding sources (not general fund)
3. Look toward self-sufficiency
4. Consolidation possibilities for all preservation and historic groups

The Blue Ribbon Panel conducted eleven advertised meetings in addition to many advertised sub-committee meetings. All meetings and sub-committee meetings were conducted 'in the sunshine'. Pam Truitt was selected as chair of the Blue Ribbon Panel, and led the group through the meetings and sub-committee work. Aided by City of Sarasota staff, County staff and others, the panel engaged in considerable research, information sharing and evaluation. In addition staff briefed panel members on the current management, organizational framework, public finances, regulatory climate, and other background information. The Panel met in various locations throughout the County—including History Center (Porter Way), Chidsey Building, North County Administration Building, Laurel Community Center, and Venice Community Center/Triangle Inn. Each location provided Panel members with a broader understanding of available historic resources and allowed members of the public to have access to meetings. A summary of the meeting topics is included with this report (See the Appendices).

The Panel is grateful to several folks who developed information, kept us in the "sunshine", and provided insight. Special thanks to: John McCarthy (Sarasota County Parks and Recreation), Kim Lance (Sarasota County Parks and Recreation), Jeff Seward (Sarasota County Chief Financial Planning Officer), Dan Hughes (former Interim Director, Sarasota County History Center), Lori Muldowney (Sarasota County History Center), Jeff LaHurd (Sarasota County History Center), Cliff Smith (Senior Planner, City of Sarasota), James Hagler (Director, Venice Archives and Area Historical Collection), Virginia Haley (Sarasota Convention & Visitor's Bureau), and Larry Kelleher (Private Citizen).

HISTORIC PRESERVATIONS VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY

There is no question that history and historic preservation are important to the citizens of Sarasota County. This is reflected in the large number of involved groups and supplemented by the County's recent (June 2008) 'budget game'. Of the six (6) choices given for the Quality of Life category, historic preservation received the second highest votes.

The economic benefits of historic preservation are also strong indicators of its value. *The Economics of Historic Preservation, A Community Leader's Guide* (1994), is a National Trust for Historic Preservation document, which thoroughly and comprehensively makes the economic case for historic preservation. The guide lists 100 different reasons and ways to use historic preservation to enhance local economies. The good news is that there are many strategies that are minor investments, but which yield major returns. For instance--Strategy #91 is about modest improvements to storefronts. "Our data also show that merchants overwhelmingly believe that the façade improvements they made have resulted in a positive change at the cash register." *Economic Efforts of Storefront Improvements*.

The State of Florida published *Economic Impacts of Historic Preservation in Florida* (2003) and reports that in 2000:

- More than 123,000 jobs were generated in Florida from historic preservation activities. Job creation was in the manufacturing, retail, services and construction sectors.
- More than \$657 million in state and local taxes were generated from spending on historic preservation activities.
- Visitors to Florida spent more than \$3.7 billion visiting historic sites. These sites include museums, archeological sites and state parks.
- Since 1983, state historic preservation grants have funded 2,751 projects with a state investment of \$212.1 million. These funds were leveraged at the local level for additional investment.
- Since the Main Street Program began in Florida (1985), 80 communities have leveraged a state investment of \$4 million. This investment resulted into a total public/private investment of \$486.5 million.
- Historic preservation helps to maintain property values. Eighteen (mainly residential) historic districts were examined to determine adverse impacts on value. None were found. In 15 of these cases, property values appreciated greater than comparable, targeted non-historic districts.

To assist the Panel is getting from 'here to there', a model outlining how historic preservation efforts presently work was prepared by staff with input from Panel members. A summary is as follows:

- Each local government (Sarasota County, Sarasota City, Longboat Key, North Port and Venice) has its own comprehensive plan policies and implementing ordinance(s).
- Sarasota County, Sarasota City and Venice presently have paid staff, totaling 3.5 FTEs. (Current County Staff numbers are down 4 FTEs, to the result of attrition and a hiring freeze due to extreme budget restrictions.)
- Countywide there are between 14-21 separate not-for-profit historic preservation groups.
- There are three (3) historic preservation advisory boards (Venice, Sarasota City and Sarasota County) in accordance with their code of ordinances.

- Sarasota County has both a Historic Preservation Advisory Board and a Historical Commission, in accordance with the County's Code of Ordinance.
- Venice has an Architectural Review Board and a Historic Preservation Board
- Sarasota County maintains the History Center (Porter Way) and the History Center Museum.
- The City of Venice maintains the Triangle Inn (Venice).
- The policies, rules, regulations, implementation and various roles vary slightly between the local governments.
- Coordination and collaboration between the paid staffs is at high level.
- Coordination and collaboration between the various volunteer groups could be improved.

HISTORIC RESOURCES BLUE RIBBON PANEL REPORT

Context:

The whole world has changed since the Panel began its work. Entire business markets have collapsed, considerable wealth has been lost, and governments across this nation are facing deep fiscal crisis with the erosion of their taxing base. The communities of southwest Florida are among the hardest hit by this economic downturn.

The Panel gave considerable attention to development of organizational and funding recommendations that we believe are both practical and workable today as well as later when the economy improved. While the headlines give us little hope for moving beyond the current economic morass, we are optimistic that positive change is coming and that Sarasota's future is bright.

Throughout the process, the Panel remained resolute in its support for Historic Preservation. Research revealed the benefits of Historic Preservation are real; are measurable; and, are considerable.

Qualifiers:

Many of the Panel's recommendations involve consolidation and partnership of County programs with existing programs of other municipalities, stakeholders or preservation groups. Aside from fact checking and information gathering, the Panel has not reviewed these final recommendations with any of the entities. Should the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) decide to accept the Panel's recommendations, the logical first step toward implementation would be initiating a dialogue between the County and those other municipalities, stakeholders and preservation groups.

The Panel's Recommendations are grouped as Short Term (1-2 years) Mid Term (2-5 years) and Long Term (5-10 years). Reference Graphics 1, 2, and 3 are appended to this report for a summary illustration of each organizational phase.

Report:

The report provides detail of Panel findings related to the following tasks assigned by the BCC: alternate organizational structure(s), new funding mechanisms, the process for moving toward self-sufficiency, and viability for consolidation of historic preservation groups. This report is followed by a summary of the Panel recommendations.

A Review of Alternative Business Models

In an effort to combine, streamline and create an effective countywide organization, the Panel recommends creating a comprehensive 'single entity' consolidated Historical Resources Agency (HRA) that will provide needed services in the most cost efficient and effective manner. The HRA will be created through inter-local government agreements between Sarasota County and participating cities. With its creation, the HRA will immediately increase efficiency and maximize effectiveness in the delivery of heritage resource protection for Sarasota. At present, each jurisdiction within Sarasota County, including the county itself, individually supports Historic Preservation at some level and maintains one or more citizen advisory boards. This has led to a duplication of infrastructure, a higher cost per unit for services, and due to recent multiple staff losses, a decline in effectiveness and service.

When fully implemented and as funding allows, the HRA will be comprised of six staff members. These staff will continue to multi-task with job functions ranging from archaeological and historical review, cultural resource protection, land development review, research, collections management, volunteer coordination, exhibit planning, and publication production.

The Panel recognizes it will take 1-2 years to negotiate and execute the inter-local government agreements. During this period, it is essential to identify and place the Director for the pending HRA so that the Director can directly participate in the Agency's near and long-range strategic planning. The Director is envisioned as an experienced historic preservation professional who possesses strong leadership and organizational skills, as well as the ability to become the public face of the HRA; helping to develop the HRA's presence within government and the community. Early placement of the HRA Director will enable her/him to set the agency's direction.

Until the HRA becomes operational, and as an interim short-term measure, outside professional consultants and volunteers should be utilized as needed to fill in the gaps created by the loss of 4 FTE staff.

The Panel envisions long-range growth of the HRA to include a countywide History Museum. Development of a history museum would enhance the level of service and open the door for a number of funding sources that would not only cover direct support for the museum but also cover a portion of the work presently being performed by staff. Once the History Museum is up and running, some of the HRA staff could shift to the Museum as illustrated in the long-range plan. At the same time, the costs for these staff would shift from General Revenue to grants, educational dollars, and other funding sources not presently available.

Review Alternative Funding Sources (not General Fund)

The Panel and County staff spent a considerable amount of time looking at funding sources. In addition to the County budget, the budgets of the municipalities were researched. We did not attempt to get the budget information from the various non-profits groups (over 20) that are in operation in the County.

The alternative funding sources explored included building permit fees, increased development review fees, capital improvement project fees, interdepartmental charge-back fees, business tax fees, demolition fees, landfill tipping fees, real estate transfer/documentary stamp fees and tourist development taxes. Additionally, the Panel discussed the possibility of private sector funding. Jeff Seward, CFO, provided the Panel with an overview of funding sources, their limits and legal status. A short summary of the status of the various funding sources is below, divided into three (3) categories: Viable Now, Viable in the Future, and Also Reviewed.

Viable Now – Short Term Funding Options

- Inter-departmental Charge-Back fees – The concept is to set up a fee structure for consultants, municipalities and County departments to offset the costs of archiving (records, collections, archeology fragments, etc.). Currently some County departments employ this tool. If implemented, it would likely generate a modest revenue stream.
- The City of Venice has secured copyrights for its historic material and has the ability to charge market rates to users. These materials include photographs, lending artifacts and exhibits, etc. This tool is available for use to the County now.
- Events/Merchandise – There is a long list of little items that can be developed to help support countywide history efforts. They include: annual events; lecture series; outreach programs; poker run/5K; high quality posters; CDs with local heritage screen savers; caps/t-shirts/canvas bags; note cards; furniture reproductions. (Note: Ringling Museum receives 1.5% of its annual revenue from the gift store--\$250,000.)
- TDT The tourist development tax option was discussed with both Jeff Seward and Virginia Haley of the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). Two local history promotion projects underway now by, or in collaboration with, the CVB include a guide to local circus heritage and a self-guided tour of Sarasota School of Architecture landmarks. If funds were available within the TDT, additional promotional materials could be developed to feature Sarasota's rich heritage. In addition to promotions, TDT taxes are eligible by state law for operation of a local history museum as a tourism destination. Application of TDT funds for use in developing and marketing historic preservation products in this area is seen as an important diversification and competitive advantage for local tourism.
- Historic preservation grants have been used extensively by the City of Sarasota and Sarasota County. Most grant programs require a local match as a pre-qualifier for eligibility. Recent examples of the expenditure of grant funds include the restoration of the Federal Building and the Nokomis Beach Pavilion. The viability of this revenue stream is tied to the relative health of the state budget. At this time competition for state grant funds is extremely high.
- Surtax Challenge - \$2 million. \$200,000 is currently available and these funds could be used for programming, design and construction of a new history museum.
- Non-Profit Organizations – One concept envisions the countywide HRA being a non-profit similar in nature to several successful examples of public/private organizations that receive funding from the County. They are: the Economic Development Corporation, the Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and the Sarasota County Arts Council.

Viable in the Future (Potential) – Mid Term Funding Options

- Landfill tipping fees are a potential for future revenue. In concept, a \$1 per ton fee increase could generate about \$150,000 annually. While a case may be made that this is an appropriate manner to fund historic preservation efforts (by keeping historic resources out of the landfill and thus extending landfill life) the panel was advised that the current landfill bonding requirements preclude such a fee. As these bonds mature and the restrictions are lifted, this could be a future option for a portion of historic preservation program operations funds.

- Land transfer/documentary stamps – In 2005 the Florida legislature created a special district called “St. Lucie County Research and Education Authority” for the purpose of public education and historic preservation. As a special district, funding is derived from property assessments. A few years ago, Senator Bennett proposed a similar tool for the Sarasota/Manatee area, but it was not approved. This may be a potential for the future.
- Increased fees for development review. The income to the County’s budget from the History Center was only a little over \$26,000.
- Private Sector – The capacity for private sector funding is unknown, but it could be a potential source of substantial means.

Also Reviewed

- Business tax licenses in this economic climate would not result in substantial revenue and there is not a strong rational nexus between increased business tax fees and historic preservation. Please note that the Panel is not suggesting that any of the existing business tax revenues be reallocated from the EDC.
- Any fees funded by demolition and commercial building fees must be directly tied to the Florida Building Code and have been ruled by the Office of the County Attorney to be illegal for historic preservation operations.
- We queried whether the County’s CIP could include a percentage for maintenance and enhancements and were advised that the funds are restricted and not available.

Look toward self-sufficiency

As outlined above, the documentation is clear that historic preservation contributes to economic development and is important to citizen’s quality of life. Tapping into the economic potential of historic preservation will lead to self-sufficiency for the proposed Historical Resources Agency (HRA). Looking toward that future, the panel developed the following vision statement:

The Vision recognizes the long-standing commitment to historic preservation and finds that:

- Historic preservation is integral to community sustainability,
- Historic preservation efforts enhance and contribute to the economic, educational and social health of our communities,
- Stewardship of historic/cultural resources is the responsibility to past, present and future generations,
- Progressive and dynamic communities are defined by memory, and conserving history provides a future enriched by the past,

A systematic detailed business plan to identify and optimize this vision must be pursued to contribute to the economic engine of Sarasota County.

The fully consolidated long-range model is estimated to cost approximately \$900,000 annually by FY-2016. Half of that projected budget would continue to be from existing local government general revenue funds. Under the proposed three phased plan, general revenue contributions from the County, City of Sarasota, and the City of Venice would be reduced each year until they reach their base funding level in FY-2015. Note: there would be a short term \$10,000 increase for the City of Sarasota for FY-2011 & FY-2012.

Program General Fund Contribution to the HRA Operational Budget

<u>2008 Adopted Budgets</u>		<u>2012 Budget (Proposed)</u>		<u>2015 (Proposed)</u>	
County	\$518,000	County	\$400,000	County	\$350,000
Sarasota City	\$ 40,000	Sarasota City	\$ 50,000	Sarasota City	\$ 35,000
Venice	\$ 87,000	Venice	\$ 75,000	Venice	\$ 65,000
	<u>\$645,000</u>		<u>\$525,000</u>		<u>\$450,000</u>
Alternative Funds	\$0		<u>\$125,000</u>		<u>\$450,000</u>
Totals	<u>\$645,000</u>		<u>\$650,000</u>		<u>\$900,000</u>

The key to the long-range budget success is the anticipated additional \$450,000 in operational funds derived from the adoption of the proposed alternative funding sources by FY-2016 in both the aforementioned *Viable Now and In the Future* categories. *Additionally*, there may be areas of funding that warrant further study or have yet to be identified.

(Note: County staff has not reviewed revenue projections from these funding sources.)

BLUE RIBBON PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary Recommendations: Short Term (1-2 Years) FY-10 & FY-11
(Maintaining Basic Services)

1. Maintain the current staffing and supervision of the History Center by Sarasota County Parks and Recreation while a new History Center Director is identified and hired. The Director will guide the development of the proposed Historical Resource Agency (HRA).
2. Determine the feasibility of consolidating paid staff (Sarasota County, Sarasota City, and Venice) into one program for countywide service, which consolidates expertise, resources, costs and services with multiple providers. Draft Interlocal Agreements through discussion with staffs, governing boards and interested groups. (Functionally, it is envisioned the inter-local agreements would operate similar to current programs for Parks, Transportation, and Housing.)
3. Determine the feasibility of identified alternate revenue streams. Initiate the adoption of text amendments, and other rules required to enable the development of alternate funding sources.
4. Research and identify historic preservation grant opportunities.
5. Utilize resources at the Convention and Visitors Bureau for history/heritage promotion and exhibits. Initial conversations indicate a strong interest. (Note - this will likely require an amendment to the TDT ordinance and a budget amendment for TDT funds).
6. As an interim measure, hire outside professional staff or consultants on an as-needed basis to complete development review as well as for cataloging, archiving, conservation of collections and other similar activities not presently being done due to the loss of FTE staff.

Summary Recommendations: Mid-Term (2-5 Years)
(Historical Resource Agency)

FY-11 to FY-14

1. Implement the Consolidated Historical Resources Agency Model under the direction of the Director hired in the short-term period. Conduct a phased-hiring approach to fill open full-time staff positions as funding allows.
2. Implement the collection of funds for historic preservation from contributions by constituent municipal members and new revenue sources.
3. Begin aggressive grant-writing program.
4. Create a diverse multi-jurisdictional historic preservation board composed of members from each municipality. Sunset separate Sarasota County, Sarasota City, and City of Venice historic preservation boards.
5. Initiate planning for a new countywide History Museum. The museum will curate the collections, engage in and foster research, and stage exhibits related to the social, cultural and physical history of Sarasota County. Planning will include development of an organizational structure, mission statement, funding and fundraising programs. Hire outside consultant for the development of space needs program and evaluate of potential museum locations.
5. "Grow" the Public-Private Partnership Program – "Friends of the History Center" to provide enhanced support system of volunteer workers and fundraisers.

Summary Recommendations: Long Term (5-10 Years)
(New History Museum)

FY-14 to FY-19

1. Begin realizing the benefit of the alternative revenue sources with the substantial reduction in General Revenue support to the HRA operational budget.
2. Bring the new countywide History Museum 'on-line'.

Consolidation Possibilities for all Preservation and Historic Groups

In addition to the consolidation of professional staff, the Panel explored the possibility of consolidation of historic advisory boards currently offered by the County and certain municipalities. While not all of the local governments are providing the same services there is a duplication of some services and thus opportunities for efficiency through a consolidated approach. Such consolidation could be codified through the same, or separate, inter-local government agreements structured to provide funding from all agencies to support consolidated services. An overview of the current network of preservation advisory boards and services includes the following:

- There are three (3) historic preservation advisory boards (Venice, Sarasota City and Sarasota County)
- Sarasota County has both a Historic Preservation Advisory Board and a Historical Commission Advisory Board
- Venice has an Architectural Review Board and Historic Preservation Board

- Sarasota County maintains the History Center (Porter Way) and the History Center Museum
- The City of Venice maintains the Triangle Inn (Venice).
- The policies, rules, regulations, implementation and various roles vary slightly between the local governments.
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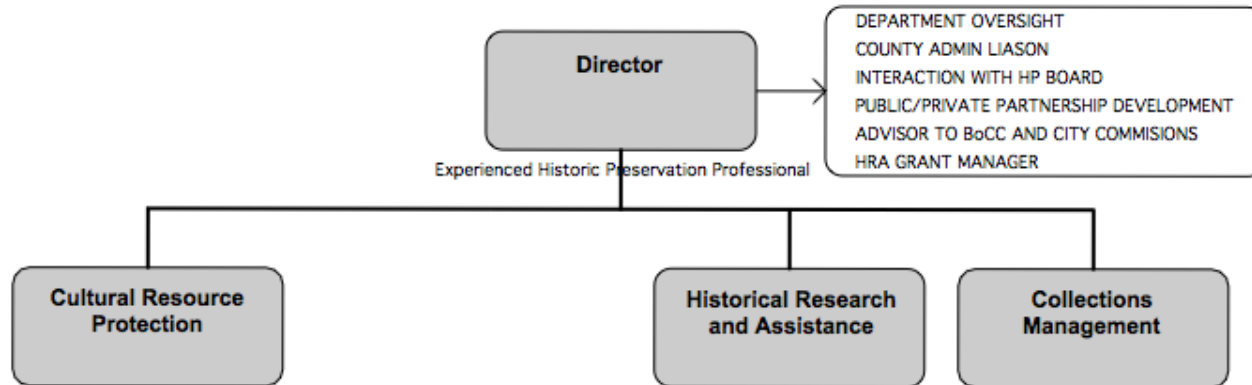
Since each municipality has cultural resource protection programs guided by separate ordinances, another opportunity for efficiency (and countywide customer seamlessness) is to work toward a single countywide historic preservation ordinance and guidelines. An analysis of the existing ordinances by the Panel revealed that the differences are not significant enough to preclude being enforced by one entity. We are not suggesting that any local government is required to codify into one set of regulations, but, if they did, it would result in less complexity to citizens and other users who may be involved in preservation programs (or development activities) within the cities and the unincorporated areas.

History Museum

One of the long term goals for the Panel was centered on developing a local history museum that would share the rich and diverse heritage of Sarasota County with citizens and visitors. As part of the surtax extension, funds were allocated by the BCC for a challenge grant for a local history museum. Two million dollars are allocated and require a match from alternative funds.

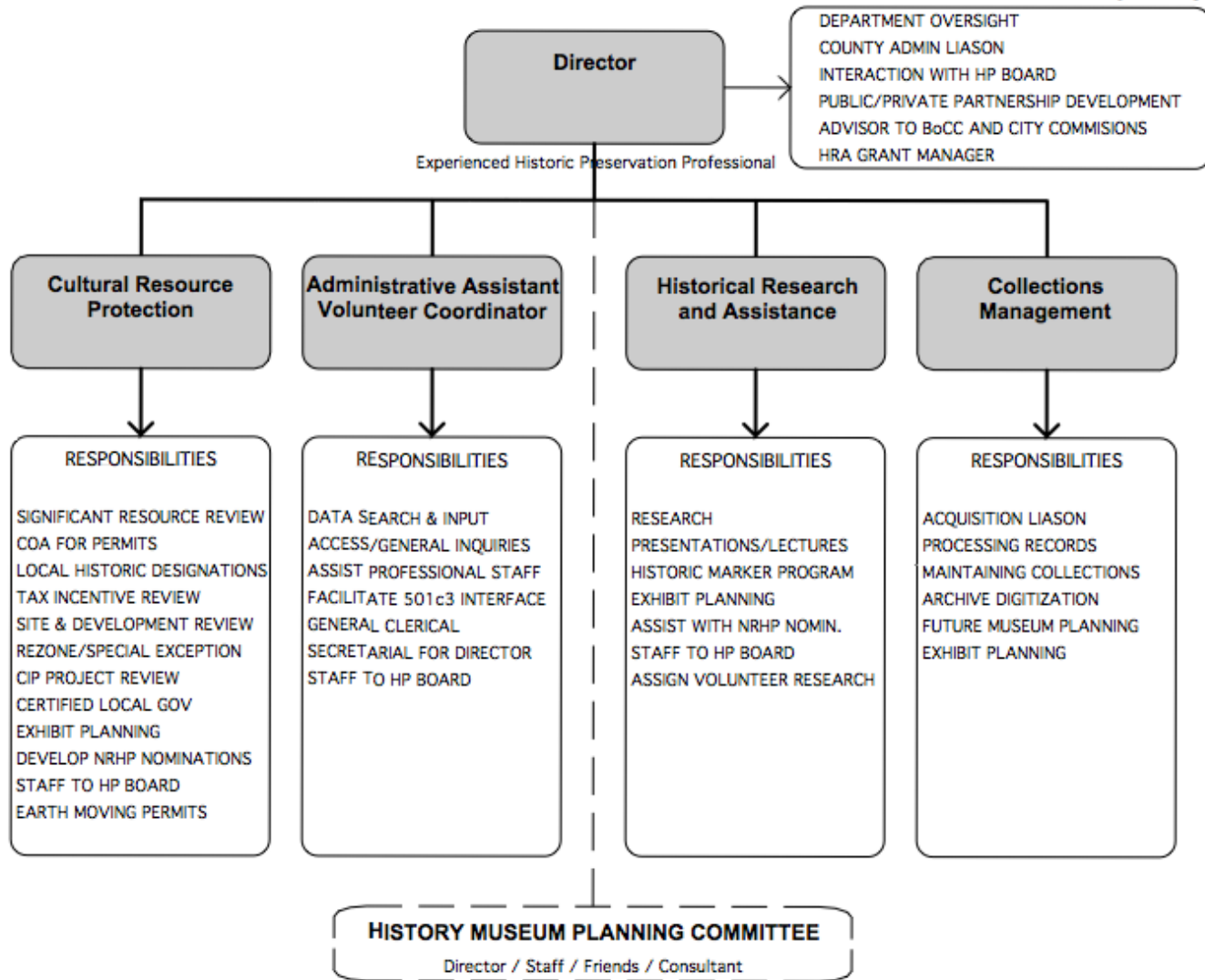
GRAPHIC 1

SHORT RANGE - (pre) CONSOLIDATED HISTORICAL RESOURCE AGENCY (HRA)



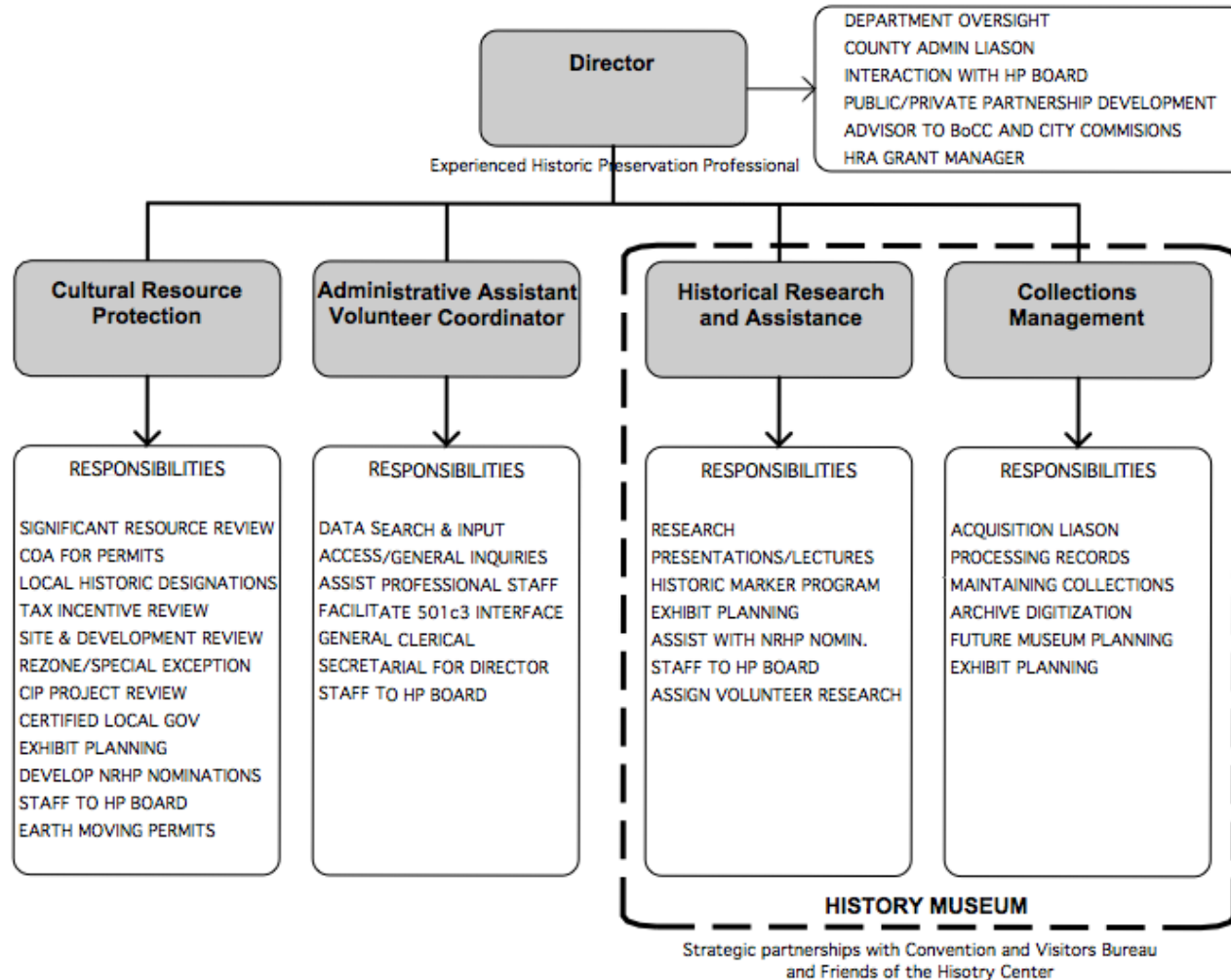
GRAPHIC 2

MID-RANGE PLAN - CONSOLIDATED HISTORICAL RESOURCE AGENCY (HRA)



GRAPHIC 3

LONG RANGE PLAN - HRA AND HISTORY MUSEUM



APPENDIX 1 Current Events at the History Center

WHAT'S NEW AT THE HISTORY CENTER?

In addition to the work of the Panel, the Chair met with County staff to gain insight into current activities and opportunities. Staff reported on positive developments within the History Center which included:

- Receipt of five new collections: J.H. Gillespie, Sarasota Garden Club, Ruby Woodson Collection, Marcia Corbino, and Pine Shores Trailer Park.
- Installation/re-installation of six historical markers: Woodmere Lumber Company, Circus Winter Quarters, Buchan Airfield, Buchans Landing (refurbished), Bee Ridge Turpentine Camp (refurbished and re-located) and Rosemary Cemetery (refurbished).
- Active volunteer corps operating under the leadership of a "super volunteer" Hope Black. These volunteers are cataloging the new collections and are also working with the older collections.
- Installation of several local history exhibits in the History Center Museum/Visitor Information Center. Grand opening of the mini-museum was held by the Friends of the History Center on 20 March 2009. The exhibit was the recipient of a 2009 Gold ADDY award.
- Gulf Coast Heritage has agreed to provide educational programs as a part of the existing Contract for Services for Spanish Point at the Oaks.
- To accommodate staff departures, Archaeological services needed for planning and development review are being contracted out to a certified archaeologist.
- Staff has implemented a similar part-time arrangement for archival services.
- The History Center has as a primary focus in this fiscal year to push forward with digitizing of documents such as historical photographs to provide web-based access thus substantially reducing staff time associated with routine requests for information.
- The History Center is currently operated by two full-time staff under the supervision of the General Manager of Parks and Recreation.
- The nomination of local government-owned buildings to the National Register of Historic Places will be a focus this year. The designations will help develop a stronger platform for heritage tourism while enhancing opportunities for grants.
- Local Historic Designations are underway in the community of Nokomis and an update to the Osprey historic resource survey is planned for later this year. Developers seeking mitigation for impacts to historic resources have funded both of these. In both cases the Sarasota Alliance for Historic Preservation, a local non-profit, serves as the project manager.
- Two grants have been received from the Community Foundation of Sarasota County each in the amount of \$3,500. The first will be used for the conservation of works on paper housed at the History Center. This grant will be administered by the Friends of the Sarasota County History Center; the second grant will be used to update information on buildings associated with the Sarasota School of Architecture.
- The Florida Trust for Historic Preservation will recognize the rehabilitation of the Nokomis Beach Plaza as an outstanding project at their annual preservation conference in May. The nomination was prepared by history center staff and sponsored by the Sarasota Alliance for Historic Preservation.

In addition to the Blue Ribbon panel's formal recommendation, we wish to express our support of these current and near term initiatives as worthy priorities and projects.

APPENDIX 2: Summary of Local Historic Preservation Ordinances

“The concept of historic preservation in the United States has evolved since its original concerns in the early 1800’s with rescuing buildings of outstanding historical significance to the founding of our nation and setting them aside as museums or shrines. Since then, Americans have become increasingly distressed with the destruction of the oldest buildings in their communities. The real catalyst for modern preservation efforts was the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which was sparked by the massive loss of historic and archaeological properties in urban renewal projects of the 1950’s and 1960’s.”¹

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and other historic resource legislation, which have followed it, have engendered the development and growth of strong historic preservation programs at the state and local levels throughout the country. Today these programs are put in place through state law as well as local ordinance, rules and standards. The Blue Ribbon Panel conducted a review of current Sarasota County Code (Chapter 66 – Historic Preservation) and the historic preservation chapter of the County’s Comprehensive Plan to confirm the level of service mandated by the County’s current rules and planning documents. In addition, the ordinances, rules and standards of the municipalities within Sarasota County were reviewed and compared to Sarasota County’s to explore potential obstacles for consolidation of resources.

SARASOTA COUNTY

Sarasota County’s preservation program is a multifaceted network of interrelated components that is largely patterned after the State of Florida’s historic preservation program. Constituents include a community advisory commission which advises on matters related to the management of historical resources and the County’s historical programs; a preservation board which participates in the development review process; a Director of Historical Resources and a History Center with a professional staff of historians, archaeologists, archivists, and preservation specialists. Together this network provides a broad basis of support for preservation activities in the County. Sarasota County Code Chapter 66 defines the requirements for preservation activities in the County while the Comprehensive Plan details how County staff and Preservation Board are involved in the development review process.

The Sarasota County Historical Commission - The Board of County Commissioners established the Sarasota County Historical Commission in 1958 to provide for the collection and maintenance of historical materials. The Commission is composed of sixteen members serving four-year terms. The Commission is charged with making recommendations to the Board regarding the structure of the Sarasota County History Center and the qualifications of the General Manager; recommend to the Board the placement of historical markers; review the budget of the General Manager of the History Center; and provide advice to the History Center regarding collection of historical materials. Sarasota County Code Chapter 66 Article II establishes the duties and responsibilities of the Historical Commission.

¹ Hunt, E. L., McPherson, J. K., Brinson, C. A., Historic Preservation in Florida, D&S Publishers, 1988.
Blue Ribbon Panel Report

The Sarasota County Historic Preservation Board - In 1997, the Board of County Commissioners established the Sarasota County Historic Preservation Board. The Preservation Board consists of seven practicing professionals who make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners regarding historic designations and tax exemptions, Certificates of Appropriateness. Sarasota County Code Chapter 66 Article III Section 66-77 establishes the duties and responsibilities of the Historic Preservation Board.

Department of Historical Resources (The History Center) – Sarasota County Code Chapter 66 Article II Section 66-36 establishes the requirement for a Director of Historical Resources and the responsibility of this Director to organize and manage all activities supporting the identification, evaluation, preservation, protection, development and interpretation of Sarasota County's historical resources, including archival, artifactual and historical materials. County Code Chapter 66 Article II Section 66-38 authorizes the Board of County Commissioners to establish the History Center and pay all the expenses of the Department of Historical Resources.

MUNICIPALITIES WITHIN SARASOTA COUNTY

Beyond Sarasota County government, many of the municipalities within the County have enacted their own rules related to historic preservation. Presently the City of Sarasota, City of Venice and City of North Port all have ordinances in place. Staff from each City (who has staff) assisted the Blue Ribbon panel's review. It is notable that Sarasota County's Code establish a preservation network that is more comprehensive than any of the municipalities within its borders. Pending zoning text amendments at the City of Sarasota will strengthen their rules and bring them to the level of the County. The City of North Port rules are largely focused on archaeological resources. Comprehensive plan updates under review at the Florida Department of Community Affairs will improve North Port's rules to more closely resemble the County. The City of Venice's program includes a staff, an archive, and preservation board.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Sarasota County Code Chapter 66 requires the Board of County Commissioners to fully fund the activities of the Department of Historical Resources and the salary of the Director of Historical Resources. The County's rules establish two community boards to assist the land development review and other preservation activities within the County. Similar rules in the municipalities within Sarasota County provide for duplicate boards and staff positions to support the management of their historical resources. Inter-local agreements may open the path to consolidation.