

Historical Advisory Committee (HAC) Minutes
September 10, 2025
Meeting held at Centennial Park in Port Charlotte

Committee Members

Deborah Fitch
Karen Hartman
Dianne Munson
Theresa Murtha- Absent
Clare Riggs
Pat Spence
John Valickas

Libraries & History Staff

Jennifer Zobebelein
Mechelle Simes

Public Attendees

Commissioner Stephen Deutsch
Ellen Teehan

Roll call

Dianne Munson does the roll call; We have a quorum.

Approval of minutes

Clare Riggs calls for approval of the June minutes. Deborah Fitch seconds. Motion was approved.

Citizen Input

N/a

Member Input

John Valickas- New board member introduces himself and gives his background.

Diane Munson-Marketing and community exposure discussion regarding citizens with historical property 50 years or older and the marker availability. **Dr. Jennifer** will investigate the possibility of adding to the Historical Advisory Committee (HAC) to the county calendar. Discussion/ clarification that it is the boards responsibility to spread the word in the community about the HAC and the marker program.

Discussion regarding the marker application and cost of \$3000.00. The new cost is \$3500.00 for the large marker.

Discussion in creating a packet or flyer **Dianne Munson** volunteered to collaborate with Clare Riggs in creating a flyer.

Discussion regarding Fawcett Hospital is celebrating 50-year anniversary in the county. The Charlotte Players (local non-profit) is celebrating 65- year anniversary in the county. Can the history of these entities be recognized by the HAC with a marker or dedication? **Dr. Jennifer** advised the board to meet with these entities to see if they would be interested. Is it okay to approach business? **Dr. Jennifer** will research

Dr. Jennifer reviewed the marker program margins regarding private vs county owned locations for markers. "It is always best to have them located on county property opposed to private property, namely logistics and access for the public to private property would be restrictive vs county owned property. The same limits apply with the City of Punta Gorda's property."

John Valickas- is in discussion with the Cape Haze HOA regarding the marker program for the Cape Haze Marine Laboratory. He will follow up with them on if they are interested. **Dianne Munson** will assist John with gathering the information needed for the marker program for a presentation to the Cape Haze HOA. **Dr. Jennifer** elaborated on the how and what they (HAC) can assist with on the application, such as the history of the proposed marker site and ho sponsorships work.

Dianne Munson refers to Commissioner Stephen Deutsch for updates.

Commissioner Stephen Deutsch apologizes for missing previous meeting due to scheduling conflicts. He mentioned the HAC meeting was not on the county calendar, and he did not receive an invite or copy of the agenda. **Dr. Jennifer** explained that our Libraries and History IT personnel is no longer with the county, and he was responsible for adding the agenda to the website and updating the calendar. **Dr. Jennifer** will make sure that the HAC meeting is on the calendar for 2026 and that the Commissioner Stephen Deutsch receives a copy of the agenda for upcoming meetings.

Karen Hartman- discussion points previously submitted to Dr. Jennifer. Attached to the minutes.

- Collage of all historical sites/markers with a map that can be downloaded from the website. Possibly using a QR code. **Dr. Jennifer** related that all County historical markers as well as a GIS map is located on our website.

Dianne Munson will collaborate with **Karen Hartman** to include this idea into the previously discussed marketing packet.

Karen Hartman- present an example of an article that she was part of for the Scene SWFL Magazine September 1998 – Palmetto City. Discussion ensued regarding paid publications to promote the City of Palmetto. Paid by promotional advertising of local business withing the articles and media.

Karen Hartman suggests to Commissioner Stephen Deutsch, Sunseekers and a tram system that would to Punta Gorda as well as other sites within the county. Commissioner Stephen Deutsch responds there were two models by Sunseeker a tram system and a water excursion taxi. These models we all discussed prior to Hurricane Ian. Due to the destruction by the recent hurricanes these ideas never came to fruition.

Karen Hartman discussion of targeting the schools and education department with a coloring book of historical outline of Charlotte County.

Karen Hartman poses question to Commissioner Stephen Deutsch when the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners, referred to as CCBCC, meetings are televised do you (the CCBCC) also promote or advertise events, sites and historical aspects that are in the community?

Commissioner Stephen Deutsch responds and refers questions to **Dr. Jennifer** regarding CC-TV. **Dr. Jennifer** responds that there are spotlights of community activities, and historical events.

Commissioner Stephen Deutsch starts discussion how the community loves the library system here in Charlotte County. Mid-County library is being restocked and should open sometime in February 2026.

Karen Hartman starts discussion regarding local YouTube and FaceBook presentation- Danny Duncan. She is planning on asking Danny to do a presentation on YouTube and/or FaceBook to promote the historical importance of Charlotte County.

Pat Spence- discussion regarding the Forestry Tower in El Jobean historical significance and the fact it has been broke in half since the recent hurricanes. They have brought two historical applications to the Forestry department with no response of interest. **Dr. Jennifer** points out that the tower is on Forestry land not owned by Charlotte County. **Dr. Jennifer** has reached out to them, and they are not interested in applying for a historical marker.

Commissioner Stephen Deutsch points out we have an educational responsibility to the community about the history in the county particularly dealing with the integration of the schools.

Karen Hartman- points out there are several historical grants that can be applied for if we have a historical designation. **Dr. Jennifer** asks for clarification "historical designation" on a county building. **Commissioner Stephen Deutsch** adds that you would have to differentiate between restoration or rehabilitation.

Dr. Jennifer explains this committee (HAC) is NOT an action committee and cannot write a grant proposal. This committee makes recommendations to the BOAD, that is its primary function. "You as an individual members of the community can promote the marker program."

Commissioner Stephen Deutsch responds that the CCBCC as decided not to have official liaisons for "a bunch of committees. However, there are several of us that will show up at these committees to enhance communication". "The committee as an advisory committee has an idea of grant you can make that recommendation to the CCBCC."

John Valickas- reviewing the ordinance [Chapter 1-11 - PARKS AND RECREATION | Code of Ordinances | Charlotte County, FL | Municode Library](#)

Sec. 1-11-73. - Functions, powers and duties of the committee.

The functions, powers and duties of the committee shall be as follows:

(a)To evaluate and make recommendations about where historical markers should be established;(b)To review development and construction projects of historical significance;(c)To

provide input on potential historic districts;(d)To provide input on historical programs and outreach efforts;(e)To make recommendations on establishing an archives/collection program;(f)To raise funds to preserve historical structures and amenities;(g)To provide recommendations to the CCBCC on issues relating to those duties specified above or other duties assigned by the board; and(h)To review and provide input on the capital improvement budget.

Dr. Jennifer states she will need to get clarification from the County Attorney's office as to the exact meaning of the section. What is the legality behind this section, and the need for clarification on how it can be done. "As a precaution to this HAC this is NOT a 5013c. If the money is raised how are the funds appropriated."

John Valickas- Will be speaking at the Lemon Bay Historical Group and he will ask them if we (members of the HAC) can "piggyback" off their 5013c. To be the "vehicle for funds raised for historical purposes.

Karen Hartman- starts discussion with **Clare Riggs** regarding the use of Sunseekers and their marketing publications. **Clare Riggs** refers this idea would be for the VBC committee. [Punta Gorda & Englewood Beach | Events, Things To Do & More](#)

Roles and Responsibilities

The Tourist Development Council (TDC) oversees the operations of the Punta Gorda/Englewood Beach Visitor & Convention Bureau (VCB). Other functions, powers, and duties of the TDC are as follows:

- To define the VCB's purpose and establish its governing principles.
- To provide advice and consent with regard to policy and goals.
- To approve the annual operating budget and monitor the VCB's finances.
- To represent the VCB's interests to external audiences.
- To serve as an advocate for tourism and destination issues.

Discussion of the use of Sunseekers as they are in a state of transition, and it may be bad timing to approach at this time.

John Valickas- starts discussion of the Alice White train/tram tour in Englewood.

Diane Munson-starts discussion of the VBC and HAC differences in responsibilities. Also, how the two work in tandem for each other and the county.

Karen Hartman- starts discussion regarding all the speaking engagements that **Dr. Jennifer** and her staff do in the community and surrounding counties.

John Valickas- starts discussion about the need for painting historical murals on local building. He is working on a project, and he needs a local muralist. **Clare Riggs** suggested Punta Gorda Mural Society would be a good contact and starting point. John is also asking for Dr. Jennifer's input on what would be the best topics for the murals depending on location.

Meeting Adjourned 9:58am

Next meeting is on March 11, 2026, at 9am, in the Centennial Park large conference room in Port Charlotte. All HAC meetings throughout 2025 will be held here.