

William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway
Corridor Management Group
Meeting Minutes – Thursday, March 20, 2025, 6:30 PM

Meeting Commenced at 6:35pm

1. Introductions of those Present: Al Abbatiello, Luis Caballero, Ann-Marie Evans, Joe McAnarney, Mike Palozzi and Amy Roberson. (Melissa Brunz later by phone)

2. Administrative

a. Approve Meeting Minutes – February 2025. Motion made to approve the February Minutes, seconded by Luis, all members present approved.

b. Treasurers Report

- Angie sent out the treasurer's report. Joe read the balance as \$7,804.15. Motion to approve the treasurer's report made by Al, seconded by Luis, all members approved.
- Mike said there are 3 annual reporting responsibilities. Annual Sunbiz, Agricultural and Consumer Report and IRS filing. Al has filed the Sunbiz paperwork and submitted the tax document. The Agricultural and Consumer report is due 6/5/25 and Mike offered to assist and relayed it is straightforward. Angie did submit a material change to them already. Al relayed that we need our exempt status number from St. Johns County to be tax free when making purchases.

3. Committee Reports

a. Membership Update

- Melissa sent out a template member recruitment letter via email. A QR code could possibly be added that goes directly to our website. Melissa will need an email list to send it to. Al has an email list of appx. 70 addresses of previous members. Last year there were only 8-10 renewals.
- Previously, Coastal Postal did a community mailing which included stuffing envelopes and postage to about 1200 addresses along CR13. Janice with FSHP was able to do the printing last time at no cost. The hope is that Amy with FSHP would be able to do this for us with the new mailing. She will need current letterhead.

b. Website Update

- Melissa was able to get into Word Press. Prior to the membership letter going out, the website infrastructure needs to be updated to ensure capability of accepting donations and providing a means for potential members to express interest or sign up. Melissa suggested Venmo might be an option and the possibility that they do not charge for non-profits. The money does not get credited to the account immediately. Melissa thinks we will have a

better response with Venmo as people don't have to then to send if people do not have to send in a check. Consensus from group that a way to immediately donate is preferable. Melissa will obtain more information and report back to the group.

- Al suggested a Sunday afternoon meeting to discuss what needs to go on website. Joe, Melissa and others expressed support for such a meeting and Joe agreed to complete the form to make a reservation at the Bartram Branch Library.

c. Facebook Update

- Joe was able to donate \$25 via Facebook; not sure where it went.

4. Project Ideas and Updates

a. Bartram Frolic

- This event will take place on April 12th in Palatka and our group is invited; the event takes place on the riverfront. Al may go and said the event is generally well attended. There is a member of the scenic highway that dresses up as William Bartram and is very effective. This is a good opportunity to talk with people.

b. Wildflowers at Julington Creek Bridge

- Amy has no new updates. She will get in touch with maintenance and make sure we are on the calendar. Joe asked if DOT will contact the county; Amy responded she isn't sure, but it would be a good idea.

c. Store Decals

- Melissa created the cling for businesses that donated. Angie has a list of everyone that donated in the fall. Melissa is networked with Coastal Postal and will order about 50. Joe said that the businesses he visited were very receptive to displaying the cling. Mike asked for the group to provide him with a picture of a decal being applied to a business so that he can include it in his fall report.

d. Bartram Library

- Joe and his wife attended an Audubon Society meeting. Joe said the presentation was fantastic. The presenter, Amy Roch expressed excitement about coordinating and partnering with us. She would be a tremendous ally. She was particularly interested in an education center at Bartram Branch library.

e. Switzerland Community Center

- Al said no real update at this point. The legislature was asked for \$70k to do some preliminary work. The center will always be a county asset. Operation Lifeline, Eric

Saks, will be leasing the center for vocational purposes. The center has been in the works for years, probably another couple until it is done.

- The lot next to the community center is for sale. It was listed before but did not sell; it was not allowed at that time to be used for commercial. Not sure of current zoning.
- Al relayed that the Creekline paper has asked him to write an article to be printed in April. Joe inquired as to whether there is an open invite. Al said that if we have something, the Creekline paper will usually run it.
- Our state representative has asked for feedback from Al on a bill. In bills that we support, Mike suggested that we write a letter of support.

f. PowerPoint Presentation to County Commissioners – April 15th?

- Joe has not asked for a meeting yet. April 15th or May 6th may be options. It would be great to have a Proclamation to be presented in recognition of the Bartram Scenic Highway. Al suggested we meet with Commissioner Joseph to arrange the date. Mike mentioned that the 20 year anniversary of the William Bartram Scenic Highway will be October 30, 2025. No need to wait until then, however, to move forward. Once the date is arranged, Joe will ensure that membership knows well in advance so that we can have a great turnout. It is thought that other scenic highways will be happy to see this group receive recognition.
- Mike asked if the Commission needs a copy of the PowerPoint presentation in advance, Joe responded that the PowerPoint is usually due the Friday before the meeting but the Board of County Commissioners has allowed same day. Al suggested that we need to emphasize our main points in the PowerPoint and then transition to the Masterplan. Mike may have a sample PowerPoint that he will email to Joe and Al as a sample. Joe talked to some folks about a county tagline of, “St Johns County – Scenic from Ocean’s Shore to River’s Edge.” He received a good response from those he talked to as well as the members present for this meeting.

g. Other

5. FDOT / FSHP Updates

a. Amy

- Amy looked into a monument on the A1A and deferred to Mike. She offered to help with projects that we might want to do.

b. Mike

- Mike said he attached the spring newsletter via an email he sent out.
- Mike looked into monuments and found that the A1A was funded by a grant in 2006-2007. At that time, scenic bi-ways were very successful in obtaining federal money. The cost for the sign was approximately \$90-\$100k. That grant request

was put together with help from Vicky Renna, who had been with St. Johns County at the time.

- A similar monument for the Julington Creek area could possibly qualify as a community aesthetic feature. Joe asked Mike to provide the grant information so that he can provide it to the St. Johns County grant coordinator.
- A match is required with the grant and the grant cycle takes approximately 12-18 months to get through. The Department of Transportation has historically helped with concept and cost estimates. This information would be helpful to know before meeting with the County for support. Amy suggested that we start now with collecting the information that we will need; both Mike and Amy relayed that waiting for the announcement to come out will result in us probably being too late as work up front is necessary. First steps include obtaining photos of the existing monument on the A1A; that monument predates Sally but she probably does have some tips she could give us.
- A visitor center was discussed. The Tourism Development Council might be willing to commit money in addition to us applying for grants.

6. Public Comments

- Vystar bank seems to be community oriented and a potential donor. They have not only donated funds, but also people hours. Joe said he will reach out.
- Luis handed out a print out of an upcoming project. Several projects were discussed including Waterlily (the addition of 3,000+ homes) and the sale of a 7.26 acre nursery on SR 13. It seems unlikely that Waterlily will be approved due to the impact or potential impact on the highway.
- These events may encourage members of the community to become involved in our organization.

7. Next Meeting Date – April 17, 2025

8. Adjourned at 7:43pm