

**William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway
Corridor Management Group
General Meeting Minutes February 20, 2025**

The meeting was called to order at 6:35pm and adjourned at 7:29pm.

Introductions: Al Abbatiello, Phyllis Abbatiello, Luis Caballero, Ann-Marie Evans, Joe McAnarney, Angie McFarland, Mike Palozzi (virtual attendance) and Amy Last Name.

Administrative

Everyone in attendance introduced themselves. Dues are currently due.

Minutes

By motion, the November and January minutes were approved. Al made the motion, Phyllis seconded followed by a unanimous vote of those present.

Treasurers Report

Treasurer's Report reflected a balance of \$7,671.25.

Angie is looking at mobile deposits, the mobile banking app. and banking online. Angie has the appropriate notebook that contains tax information, copies of filings, etc.

- Al filed the 2024 tax return and it was accepted. Form 880 is used for non-profits with less than \$50k.
- Corporate registration must be done annually and changes require that an Amendment be submitted.
- Tax exempt status is renewed through the county.
- A report also needs to be filed with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Mike said the report is fairly simple and is due annually. The report is due June 5, 2025. Per Mike, some years ago there were scandals tied to non-profits and that is the reason that the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer services became involved. No cost to file.
 - Of note, this will enable the group to fundraise by selling Jaguar tickets.

Committee Reports

Membership

The group discussed the historic difficulty in getting volunteers to fulfil roles within the group. Al and Phyllis, have historically absorbed many of these roles. Melissa created a letter to go out to a list that Al has maintained. Melissa will need funds for envelopes and postage. Approximately 75 people are on the mailing list. Al said that he believes the last time a mailing was done like this the cost was around \$1,200 and he used Coastal Postal. Janice printed the letter. Mike suggested adding a QR code to the letter so that interested citizens can easily get more information.

Communications, Website/Social Media

Melisa has been working on the website. Angie is actively posting on Facebook. Joe commented that the posts look great. We have about 400 friends and some followers. Mike provided some posts to Angie that can be put on Facebook as well.

Projects:

- a. Wildflowers – Amy had already provided an update via email. Seeds need to be planted in November for them to grow in the spring. Dawn Hutchins tried before to no avail. Amy said she will make sure it gets done. Joe likes the idea of a large sign that welcomes people to St. Johns County. The group agreed. Joe referenced the existing signs on the A1A. The sign predates Mike; Mike and/or Amy will try to obtain more information for the group regarding a sign.
- b. Angie, Al, Joe and Melissa attended the Bartram Bash last year and had a table set up. Angie and Melissa solicited donations from several stores and put together 2 gift baskets which raised about \$200. It would be great to have store decals to give to businesses that donate to the Scenic Highway. Joe went to several stores and received a welcome reception. The decals would need to be placed on the outside of most stores due to the sun protection screening that many businesses apply to the inside of their glass doors. The decal could have a QR code and the logo of the historic highway. A high resolution version would be preferred which both Angie and Joe have.
- c. Bartram Library – The masterplan includes plans for flowers and walkways. Joe will get in touch with the library to see how we might work together. Joe suggested a partnership with Watson Real Estate; if they would perhaps donate \$50k, then we could explore including their name in an “education corner.” Joe has a contact at Watson Real Estate and will reach out.
- d. Switzerland Community Center. Al and Joe met with representatives of the project. The center is being funded by federal grant money and the county. The center will be a concrete building and will be used as a vocational center as well as for community activities. Eric Sacks with Operation Lifeline is very supportive of the project. Kim Kendall has requested funds for this project. Hartley General Store has been vacant for years and it would be great to see that repurposed.
- e. Proclamation Honoring Scenic Highway. Joe is working on a Powerpoint presentation for the March 4 or 18 Board of County Commission Meeting. Joe thinks that it might be possible to get 15 minutes. Commissioners will be able to see that the Bartram Scenic Trail is a big deal and needs support. Other scenic highways are getting substantial funds.
- f. Other.
 - Tree bank has about \$200k in it. Joes suggested that we might request some new plantings along 13 scenic highway.
 - Al mentioned that his daughter had suggested a dog walk fundraiser. He also said that Phyllis was the mastermind behind an Antique Road Show event that raised quite a bit.

FDOT

Joe talked about trying to get the highway changed from D (1000 cars per day) to C (700 cars per day) which defeats commercial buildings being built along the scenic highway. 2 lanes are non-expandable. County can initiate through the TPO. Discussed roundabouts along 13. Amy offered to have anything printed that the group might need.

FSHP

FSHP Conference next week.

The William Bartram Scenic Highway letterhead needs to be redone to remove Al's address. Mike said Charlene can take care of that. Al will send a pdf to Angie, it is the original.

Mike talked about a grant opportunity through AARP "Community Betterment Project" which could help with the library project. He also discussed a bi-way recognition award through the National Scenic Bi-way which might help with recognition of the group. A scenic highway newsletter will be going out in the next week or so. Al and Phyllis will be highlighted for their many years of service.

Public Comments

Meetings need to be on calendars throughout the county. Entire list of names will be emailed letting people know meeting time and the need for volunteers.

Next meeting will be March 20, 2025