

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

450th Steering Committee Meeting
June 18, 2009

The 450th Steering Committee met in a formal session Thursday June 18, 2009 at 1:30 P.M. in the Virginia Room, Ringhaver Center Flagler College. The meeting was called to order by Dana Ste. Claire, 450th Director, and the following were present:

1. Roll Call: Joe Boles, Mayor City of St. Augustine
Dr. William Abare, President, Flagler College, St. Augustine
Major General Douglas Burnett, Adjutant General of Florida, National Guard
Charles Ellis, Fort Mose Historical Society Vice President
Dr. Michael Gannon, University of Florida Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of History
Glenn Hastings, Executive Director of St. Johns County Visitors and Convention Bureau and the Tourist Development Council
Joseph Joyner, St. Johns County School District Superintendent
Loran Leuders, St. Augustine Police Chief
Derek May, Publisher, St. Augustine Record
Rich O'Brien, Mayor, St. Augustine Beach
David Shoar, St. Johns County Sheriff
Cyndi Stevenson, Chair, St. Johns County Commission
Don Wallis, Chair, St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce
Doug Wiles, former Florida House Representative, District 20
Tom Willis, Pastor, Cathedral-Basilica Pastor
Gordie Wilson, Superintendent, Castillo de San Marcos National Monument, National Park Service

Staff: Dana Ste. Claire, 450th Celebration Executive Director
Karen Rogers, City Clerk
Darlene Kirkland, Recording Secretary

2. Overview of the St. Augustine 450th Commemoration Initiative and Updates.¹

Mayor Joe Boles welcomed everyone in attendance.

Dana Ste Claire, Executive Director, St. Augustine 450th Commemoration Commission, described the Commemoration key points as follows:

- Contribute to national awareness

- Would be a three year event beginning in 2013 and ending in 2015
- Begins the year after Spain's 200th year celebration of their Constitution²
- The only city in the nation that can celebrate 450 years of constant occupation
- Oldest streets and architecture
- 500th anniversary of Ponce de Leon landing in 1513
- Impact study would be done in 2016

¹ Mr. Hastings was not in attendance.

² Chief Leuders arrived at 1:39 P.M.

- Showcase history through signature events, festivals and reenactments
- Gained Federal distinction on March 30, 2009 when bill #146 became law 111-11

Mr. Ste. Claire stated that the Commemoration goals were as follows:

- Destination awareness
- Economic development
- Creation of enterprise
- Infrastructure improvement
- Increase and enhance tourism
- Talk to community and get feedback

Mr. Ste Claire noted that there were already many members of the community expressing interest in the celebration for example:

- Robert Hall – complex for Colonial History
- Davis Walker – reenactment coordinator
- Benny Kay - Commemoration theme song
- Cathy Deegan and Carl Halbirt - Archeological programs
- Michelle Rena – Menendez landing celebration
- Derrick Hankerson – Fort Mose history
- Maury Kaiser, Roy Jaeger and Sam Turner – Menendez replica ship construction
- Troy Blevins and Ryan Detra – development of special programs with St. Johns County
- George Gardner – 450th initiative planning

Mr. Ste. Claire stated that there were Commemorative products emerging such as coins, stamps and publications that would need to be sanctioned by the 450th Committee. He noted that the City hired Jeanne Zeidler, Mayor of Williamsburg, as a consultant. He stated that the short term goal was to develop a strategic plan identifying signature events and smaller

signature committees. He expressed that he hoped everyone would be involved in implementing the plan. He stated that infrastructure needed to be addressed and considered when planning events due to limited space, parking and facilities. He concluded that the general structure of the Strategic Plan should be discussed at the next meeting.

3. Opening Remarks.

Mayor Boles compared the Commemoration Celebration to a world's fair. He stated the 450th Commemoration would also celebrate the 46 million Hispanic citizens in the United States. He noted that the Kingdom of Spain and the City of Aviles were partners in the celebration, and the Mayor of Cartagena was interested in becoming a partner. He remarked that the Seminole Indian Tribe of Florida was partnering with the celebration to represent the indigenous population of Florida, and that the Catholic Church and the African American community were also signature partners with their amazing histories. He stated that with partnerships, came contributions and financial backing. He explained that the celebration would educate the population about the history of St. Augustine. He stated that due to the success of the Jamestown Commemoration Celebration, St. Augustine would use their plan as a jumping off point for our own plan.

4. Presentation – The Honorable Jeanne Zeidler, Mayor of Williamsburg, Virginia, and immediate past Executive Director of the Jamestown 2007/400th Commemoration.

Jeanne Zeidler, Mayor of Williamsburg, Virginia, presented an overview of the Jamestown Commemoration Celebration. She stated that leadership, commitment, enthusiasm, and community interest were the real elements of a successful celebration. She pointed out that planning should incorporate the entire region not just St. Augustine. She noted that outlying areas could be used for guest services and other amenities. She stated that it could be

an opportunity to revitalize the area with the following:

- Transportation infrastructure
- Facility improvements
- Educational enhancement
- Building renovations and expansion
- Improved customer service standards

Mayor Zeidler stated that with the Jamestown celebration, exhibits were built to present history, constructed a welcome center, \$35 million spent on improvements in transportation infrastructure and facility expansion and improvements had been completed. She stated that public and private investments totaled over \$400 million. She pointed out that not only physical improvements had been made to Jamestown, organizational partnerships, individual relationships, and community support developed through the Commemoration planning. She stated that the goals for the Commemoration were as follows:

- Increased tourism
- Promote economic development and capital investment
- Educate and raise awareness of Jamestown's and Virginia's role in history

Mayor Zeidler noted that in 2004 a host committee was established to promote guest services, advertising and community involvement, and partnerships were created with other communities inside and outside of the state to extend the education and awareness. She stated that the Commemoration was organized around a central message that emphasized the legacy of Jamestown. She said signature events were planned that would appeal to diverse audiences and reinforce the messages of the legacy, and all events were designed to create awareness and involvement. She stated that, through the involvement of everyone, the event was a success and some of the indications were as follows:

- Over 400,000 Commemorative coins sold raising \$5 million
- More than 2.5 million people participated in the events
- One million school children and educators participated in the educational web cast
- Millions watched televised events
- Over 12 billion media impressions in the United States over an 18 month period
- Significant increase in tourism since the celebration

Mayor Zeidler stated that one of the primary missions of the host committee was to engage the local community, and some of the ways were as follows:

- Community conversations
- Art projects
- Beautification projects such as an Anniversary Garden
- Community project contests

Mayor Zeidler described ways that would assist tourist, visitors and area staff to enjoy the celebration experience and beyond; such as, navigational signage, easy to read maps, hospitality and volunteer training, tours for employees to help them understand the history and Police and Fire Department involvement to ensure an incident free event. She concluded that the financial impact of the Jamestown 400th Commemoration was as follows:

- \$1.2 billion sales
- Creation of 20,621 jobs
- State tax revenue – \$22 million
- Local tax revenue - \$6.4 million

5. Role of the St. Augustine 450th Commemoration Steering Committee.

Mr. Ste Claire stated that the Jamestown 400th Commemoration had been one of the most successful national celebrations, and to be successful, it would take structure. He pointed out that the celebration was not for a miscellaneous town, but for the 450th

anniversary of the oldest city in the United States. He stated that, in addition to fundraising and planning, infrastructure improvement was critical. He noted that the City of St. Augustine had already begun to address infrastructure city wide.

John Regan, Chief Operations Officer, stated that infrastructure improvements began in 2006 with the parking garage and the satellite parking bus system. He explained that the City had submitted a grant application for a multifunctional sea wall project. He stated that the 450th Commemoration Department had been working with the Public Works Department to determine which roadways needed to be rebuilt and to search for funding streams. He concluded that the City had been working toward community involvement and working with the business community; some examples were the restoration of the Flagler Fountains through private funding and the Amtrak station proposal.

Mr. Ste. Claire remarked that the Bridge of Lions restoration would be completed prior to the 450th Commemoration Celebration.

Mayor Boles stated that while the task of the celebration might be daunting, the City's budget was parallel to the budget of Williamsburg, Virginia. He commented that the federal appropriation money was not just to celebrate a birthday; it would be used to generate future income. He stated that he felt the celebration would be one of the largest events in the nation and St. Augustine would be inviting the world to attend. He reminded the steering committee members to:

- Stay personally committed to attending each meeting
- Consider making personal staff available
- Abide by the Sunshine Laws

David Shoar, St. Johns County Sheriff, questioned what the relationship between federal commission and steering committee would be.

Mayor Boles replied that the federal commission was the funding pipeline and the steering committee was the working committee. He remarked that they were looking for federal committee members that would bring in funding and awareness; such as Michelle Obama.

Major General Douglas Burnett, questioned whether the current economy would be difficult to overcome compared to the economy at the time of the Jamestown celebration. He also questioned how the City could access funding.

Mayor Zeidler replied that, in challenging economic times, the key to success was involvement and corporate partnerships, and she suggested starting with local and Florida based companies.

Sherriff Shoar asked for clarification of the souvenir coin that was being minted locally.

St Claire replied that a coin had been minted by a private group for fund raising purposes, but it was not the official commemorative coin. He stated that the steering committee and the federal committee would sanction the design of the official commemorative coin and anything that would be used as a marketing tool.

Doug Wiles commented that St. Augustine had a need for infrastructure improvements, and it was important to stress to the public that the costs associated with preparing the City for the celebration would improve the quality of life within the City and surrounding areas. He questioned Mayor Zeidler as to the quality of life improvements and the infrastructure improvements that had been made during the Jamestown celebration.

Mayor Zeidler replied that, in some cases, the road improvements were made for public safety, but the majority of the improvements were made in the hospitality industry, which boosted the economy and continued to create jobs.

County Commissioner Cyndi Stevensen questioned where to forward inquiries regarding the 450th Commemoration.

Mayor Boles recommended forwarding questions, ideas and comments to Mr. Ste. Claire for the time being.

6. Concluding Remarks and Scheduling of Future Meetings

Mayor Boles noted there would be another meeting scheduled possibly in September 2009 when specific tasks would be identified.

Mr. Ste. Claire stated that getting information to each other and to the public was important, and a website was being created. He said that the City would host several meetings to discuss the celebration with the community, organizations and local partners. He concluded that the Commemoration event would provide a long term economic impact, and he expressed appreciation to the committee members for their support and participation.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:26 P.M.³

MAYOR

CITY CLERK, CMC

³ Transcribed by Darlene Kirkland