

Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System
Historical Plaques Team Meeting
FMATS Conference Room, 800 Cushman Street
City Hall, Fairbanks, Alaska
Meeting Minutes – February 27, 2013

1. Call to Order

Jessica Smith called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. Introduction of Members and Attendees

The following were present:

Name	Representing
Donna Gardino	FMATS Coordinator
Jessica Smith	FMATS Transportation Planner
Deborah Todd	FMATS Admin Assistant
Ron Inouye	Historian/Community Member
Julie Jones	Festival Fairbanks
George Lounsbury	Pioneers of Alaska/Pioneer Museum
Kathy Marks	FNSB Planning
MaryAnn Nickles	Local Artist/Citizen
Pat Sackinger	Historic Preservation Commission

3. Public Comments

MaryAnn Nickles stated that she was with the Weeks Field Parks Association as a liaison for the Borough Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission and asked if there were any rules for standardization when creating and installing plaques. Ms. Nickles stated that a plaque was being prepared for the Weeks Field Community Park and they would like to follow the same standards.

4. Administrative Items

a. Process

Ms. Smith presented the agenda and an explanation of the historical plaque procurement and placement process. Ms. Smith stated that the budget for the project was approximately \$10,000 and that this process had to be followed as part of FMATS obligation for receipt of federal and state funding.

b. Team Meeting Schedule

Ms. Smith explained the draft team meeting schedule contained in the packet with meetings being held on Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m.

c. Goals & Objectives of the Project

• **Description of the Project Area**

Ms. Smith provided a brief description of the project area and explained that it was located between Cushman and Barnette Streets north of the Chena River near Immaculate Conception Church and the Big I. Ms. Smith showed a visual illustration of the project area and discussed the amenities that would be installed

there. Mr. Inouye inquired about the elevation on the top and if there would be access to it. Ms. Smith stated that there was step access from the north side to the top of the platform.

- **Limits of the Project**

Ms. Smith stated that the project area is where the original “Gateway” art sculpture was to be placed. There is a budget for about six to eight 12” x 18” signs. The signs should be accessible from the sidewalk around the platform.

- **Team Duties**

Ms. Smith explained that the duty of the team would be to represent the community by helping FMATS come up with ideas for layout, placement, and number of signs.

5. New Business

a. Overall Theme (Action Item)

Ms. Smith explained that the team needed to come up with ideas for elements and themes of plaques for this historical area.

- **Submitted Team Member Ideas**

Mr. Inouye presented a package he had prepared for the greenspace plaques and explained that he created this with the idea that there were probably a lot more non-English speaking/reading international tourists and he preferred more graphic plaques or timelines rather than plaques containing text. Mr. Lounsbury asked if they were allowed to put plaques in the round area and if there was a limitation with regard to handicap access to the plaques. Ms. Gardino stated that the art should be uncluttered and not detract and the team should concentrate on plaque theme rather than placement of the plaques. Ms. Sackinger stated that placing the signs on a low profile platform or bookstand might be an idea. Ms. Jones stated that Ms. Sackinger had an extensive list of possible themes. Ms. Sackinger presented her ideas of early Fairbanks and the founding Fathers (ET Barnette, Felix Pedro, and Judge Wickersham). Ms. Sackinger explained that her ideas encompassed the Fairbanks founding fathers; fire, floods, and Front Street, early Fairbanks, as well as gold and gold mining. Ms. Jones stated that Festival Fairbanks is creating signs along the bikepaths in Fairbanks and she really liked the founding fathers idea for the area since it is a small area but would recommend focusing on events that occurred right in this specific area rather than elsewhere. Ms. Jones stated that Festival Fairbanks would love to be involved in placing plaques on overlooks and bike paths around Fairbanks and those plaque ideas could be used for future projects. Mr. Lounsbury liked the idea of the founding fathers but also like the gold idea and how Felix Pedro was tied into gold mining outside of Fairbanks. Mr. Lounsbury suggested a timeframe theme with pictures from 1905, 1925, 1945, 1950 so people could visualize the changes that have occurred in that area. Mr. Lounsbury stated that his original idea was to have north, south, east, and west and what was in that location during a certain time period and he has seen pictures around

town that would be excellent but permissions might have to be granted to use the pictures. Ms. Gardino suggested using a theme of the different types of transportation that were in Fairbanks. Ms. Smith summarized that the common themes discussed were location, transportation, historical events, and founding fathers. Ms. Smith stated that the Art Committee decided that the art piece in that area should be modern and then historical plaques could be installed to explain the history of the area. Mr. Inouye explained that there needed to be emphasis on why Fairbanks came into existence due to the Depression, poverty and the search for gold and a map would illustrate that. Ms. Gardino stated that there needed to be an explanation of why the founding fathers came to be here and that gold was an integral part of that. Ms. Nickles inquired about the reference of "location" meant and whether it meant this particular spot or Fairbanks in general. Ms. Smith stated she was referring to this particular spot. Ms. Marks asked about placing a map in the concrete. Ms. Smith stated that the cost and the fact that the concrete would be covered with snow for six or more months a year would make that idea prohibitive.

- **Additional Ideas**

Mr. Lounsbury stated that a dozen pictures relating to the site should be chosen by each team member and the theme should be specific to the location. Ms. Gardino liked the idea of location specifics and relevance of the area. Mr. Inouye liked the idea of the environment and scientific use of the area by past inhabitants. A 360 degree idea was discussed. Ms. Jones liked the idea of having plaques that pointed in a direction explaining what happened in each area. Ms. Gardino stated that with respect to keeping text to a minimum, there could be a scan code that linked to narratives, websites, or videos.

- **Selection of Theme(s)**

Ms. Smith stated that if the team felt that all their ideas had been considered and discussed for theme specifics, a motion should be made to proceed.

Motion: To proceed with the theme of location specific history of the surrounding area, transportation hub, trading, and environment. (Jones/Gardino)

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

- b. **Plaque Content**

- **Discuss Content Layout**

Ms. Smith summarized layout ideas presented, including a picture with a timeline, something that could be walked on, or plaques placed along the perimeter of the sidewalk area. The size of the plaques would determine how many could be installed and layout of the plaques. Ms. Gardino indicated that there was a meeting on March 5, 2013 at 10 a.m. to look at the design alternatives and standards for the Wayfinding Signs project and the Historical Plaques Team could possibly incorporate the wayfinding design concept and format into the historical plaques.

- **Potential Placement Within Greenspace**

Mr. Lounsbury stated that plaques could be placed in the concrete outside the area in a circumpolar configuration. Ms. Sackinger stated that the biggest sign should be placed first. Ms. Gardino stated that there should be an unobstructed view of the art and there would be flowers planted around the concrete structure in the summer and possibly an ice sculpture placed there in the winter.

Ms. Gardino stated that there would be power to the site, so the area could be lit and would be a viewpoint to the river and a possible public gathering spot. Ms. Sackinger stated that idea of bookstands that were close enough to the concrete to prevent vandalism, but not buried under the snow. Ms. Gardino suggested placing the plaques so they could be viewed as you walked around the sitting wall. Ms. Sackinger suggested photos with titles under them. Ms. Jones liked the idea of a timeline with photographs and a short caption of what was depicted in the picture.

- **QR Codes or Web Address Options-Webpage or Scan Code**

Ms. Smith explained how web addresses work and how they can be redirected if they change over time. A QR or scan code can be scanned by a smart phone and linked to any link such as a video, a photograph, a web address, or an entire web page. Ms. Jones stated that University Archives has sites that are available for inclusion in QR code use but concern about the fact that in bigger towns people are placing their own codes over the existing ones but a lot of places are using a dot containing a magnetic code that could be changed with technology. Mr. Inouye inquired about maintenance of the websites or technology. Ms. Smith explained that currently she maintains the website for FMATS and that they are always changeable.

Motion: To include a web address as well as a QR Code to keep up with technology changes over time. (Jones/Sackinger)

Vote on Motion: None opposed. Approved.

c. Staff & Team Member Assignments

Ms. Smith asked the team what they would like to do and what she could do to help facilitate the process. Ms. Smith stated that she would need a source and the dates for the submissions she received from the team. Ms. Smith stated that she already has hundreds of photos.

d. Next Steps

- **Storyline, Photos, & Sources (maximum of 3)**

Ms. Smith stated that she would organize all photos by date, categorize them, put them on a website, and post them for the team to review.

- **Deadline for Completion of Next Steps**

Ms. Smith stated that she will have the photos on the website for review and instructions for selection by the team members by March 6, 2013. All team members will review photos placed on website prior to the next meeting on Monday, March 11, 2013 at 1:00 p.m.

6. Public Comment Period

Ms. Jones received a comment from an unidentified source stating that they disliked the Borough Historical Commission plaques and did not feel that they were appropriate for the area.

7. Other Issues

None.

8. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn: (Inouye/Jones). The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Approved: Jessica Smith Date: 4-11-2013
Jessica Smith
FMATS Historical Plaque Team