



Evans' Rendezvous Engagement

Nassau County BOCC | February 12, 2024

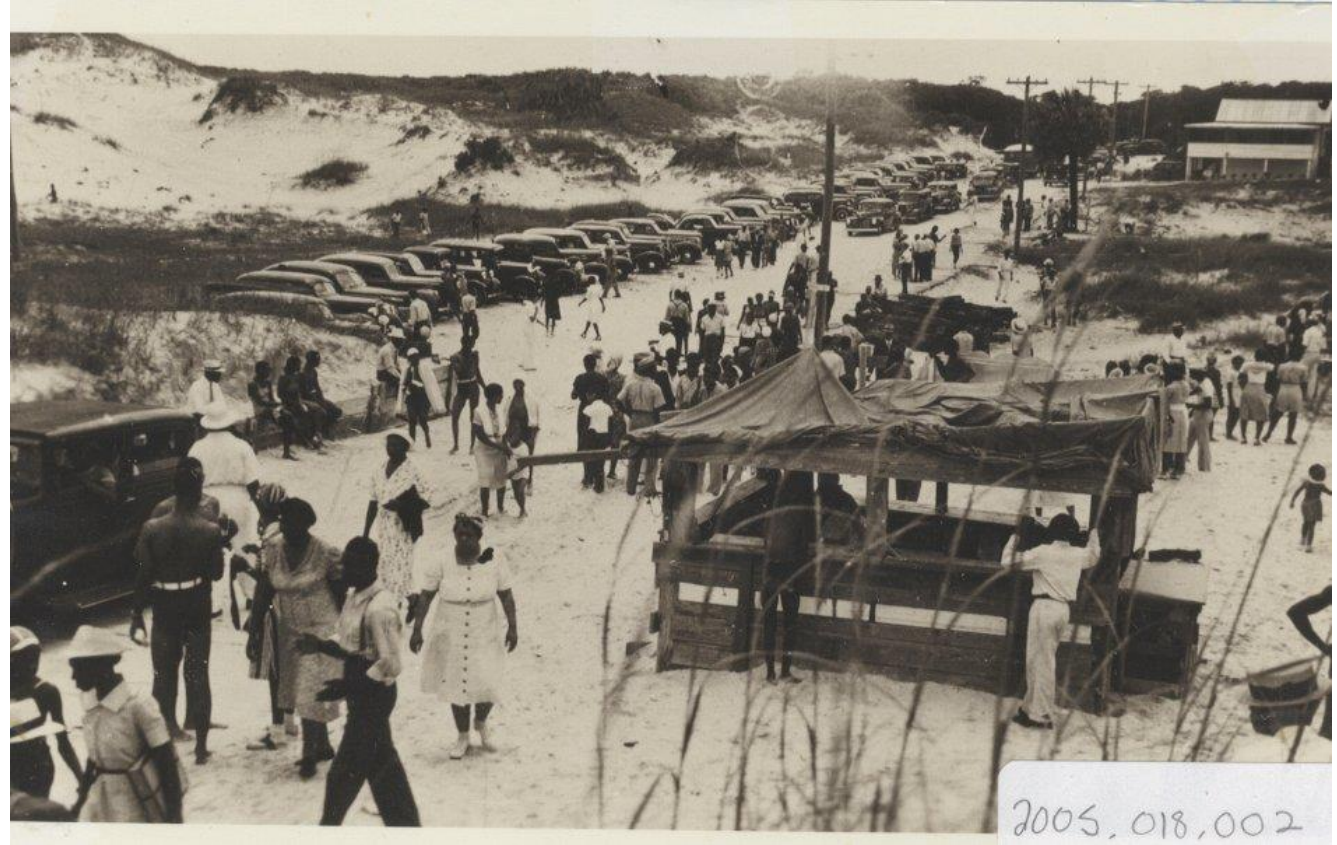


PLANNING DEPARTMENT
NASSAU COUNTY, FLORIDA



AGENDA

- I. Introductions
- II. Community Workshops
- III. Conceptual Plans
- IV. Additional Community Comments
- V. Next Steps



Lewis Street at American Beach c.1940s
Photo Courtesy Amelia Island Museum of History

I. INTRODUCTIONS

Community Planning Collaborative is an **urban planning** and **historic preservation** consulting practice whose purpose is to elevate the voices and culture of those traditionally excluded from urban planning, land use and zoning.

CPC facilitates community-led, history-based planning solutions so that equitable outcomes are possible.

Expertise includes historic preservation planning, long-range land use planning, master site planning and development, land development regulations, place-keeping strategies, historic interpretation and research, historic cemetery planning, resilience planning, GIS mapping and analysis, grant writing and administration, and community outreach and engagement facilitation.



LaVilla Cultural Heritage Trail



Florida Chitlin' Circuit



Wharton, TX CPAT Project



Opa-Locka Main Street

II. COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

11/4/23 Meeting:

Open discussion about potential uses/components of Evans' Historic Park space - this includes the Evans' building, two lots to the south of the building, and the three lots across Gregg Street

12/2/23 Meeting:

Narrowed down discussion of specific options including cultural center, science centers, and options for vacant lots

1/27/24 Meeting:

Presented conceptual plans for reuse of Evans' building and the vacant lots

Community helps to shape plans for Evans Rendezvous

JULIA ROBERTS
News Leader

Members of the American Beach community gave their input into plans for the site of Evans Rendezvous to representatives of Nassau County government and consulting firm Community Planning Collaborative last week, helping the shape the future of what was once the "Pre-eminent entertainment and social center of historic American Beach resort," according to a county report.

Earlier this year, a \$500,000 African-American Cultural and Historical grant was approved by the Nassau County Board of County Commissioners. The grant was funded through the Florida Department of State. The funding is being provided by the American Rescue Plan Act.

The site consists of three parcels of property, the Evans Rendezvous building, a property directly to the south that was the site of a motel and another three parcels across Gregg Street. The 1.67-acre property, which has been dubbed the American Beach Historic Park, was acquired by the county with a grant from Florida Community Trust in 2004. Its development is guided by a state management plan.

Adrienne Burke and Ennis Davis with Community Planning Collaborative gave a presentation at the American Beach Community Center.

Burke said the management plan will include ensuring public access, especially to the beach, focusing on the preservation, interpretation of the neighborhood historic district, creating

PLANS Continued on 4A



JULIA ROBERTS/NEWS LEADER

Members of the community saw plans and photos of the glory days of Evans Rendezvous at a meeting held to involve the public in the process of reinventing the building and nearby county-owned properties to become the American Beach Historic Park.

All meetings included group discussion to ask questions and express concerns. That information has been recapped in presentations from the meetings and is available on the County's Planning website.

Common Themes from Meetings

- **Use of building and space does not negatively impact residents and American Beach community**
 - Traffic, parking and noise major concerns
 - Active uses like playground, pavilion, etc. not of interest
 - Keeping green/open space and passive uses like garden, labyrinth, heritage and educational/interpretive signs
- **Preservation of Black history legacy of American Beach and sharing that story through the spaces**
- **Preservation of Evans' Building as is with floorplan** (and any needed modern improvements)
- **Uses should serve the American Beach community**
- **Programming and parameters around it are critical**
- **Having dedicated staff/director is essential**
- **Additional concerns:**
 - losing open space
 - water and drainage
 - County listening to the community



Meetings on 11/4/23 and 1/27/24

III. CONCEPTUAL PLANS

STATE MANAGEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES + RESTRICTIONS

1. Organize public use of the beachfront parcel and access to the beach while protecting the beach dune natural community.
2. Provide a focus for the preservation, enhancement and interpretation of the American Beach National Historic District and secure a central public open space within a potential high-density development.
3. Restore native vegetation to degraded portions of the beach dune community and buffer the public use facilities with native landscaping.
4. Explore adaptive reuse of the small motel building for ancillary purposes to the Rendezvous.
5. Stabilize the Evans' Rendezvous building and renovate it to support public interpretation, recreation and social event uses, and to provide a source of revenue for management of the park, if feasible.

- **Park facilities needed to support project:**
 - Beach Pavilion
 - Dune Boardwalk (*Completed*)
 - Interpretive Facilities
 - Wildlife Observation Platform (*Completed*)
 - Landscaping
 - Parking
- **Could also provide space for:**
 - Food Service and Beach Concession Operations
 - An Expanded Interpretive Program Area
 - Space for meetings, weddings, family or class reunions or other social gatherings



Completed dune boardwalk and wildlife observation platform



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VACANT LOTS TO THE SOUTH AND WEST



AMERICAN BEACH HISTORIC PARK



**Aerial view of American Beach including
Evans' Rendezvous and Motel c.1989**
Photo Courtesy State Archives of Florida/Overton



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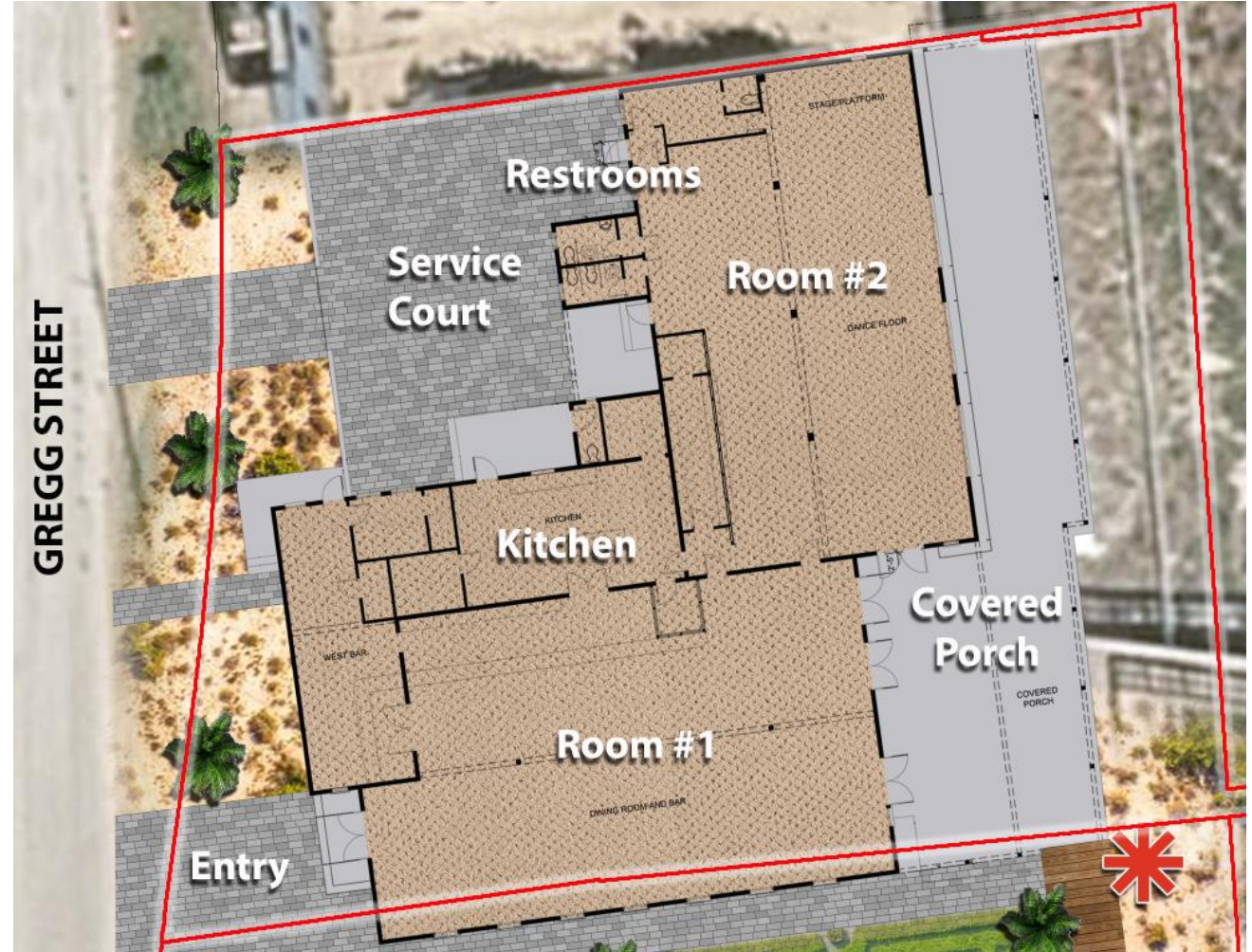
EVANS' RENDEZVOUS



ROOM #1



COVERED PORCH



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EVANS' RENDEZVOUS



COMMUNITY DINNERS



ARTIST AND WRITER'S PROGRAMS



LECTURE EVENTS



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EVANS' RENDEZVOUS



HISTORY EXHIBIT WALLS



SMALL MUSIC EVENTS



MULTI-PURPOSE SPACES



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VACANT LOTS



(Oceanfront Park - Jacksonville Beach, FL)



Native Vegetation
(Oceanfront Park - Jacksonville Beach, FL)



Pervious Paths
(Coligny Beach Park - Hilton Head, SC)



Labyrinth
(Egan's Creek Park - Fernandina Beach, FL)



Interpretive Markers
(Cosmo Freedom Park - Jacksonville, FL)



Entry Signage
(North Beach Park - Fernandina Beach, FL)



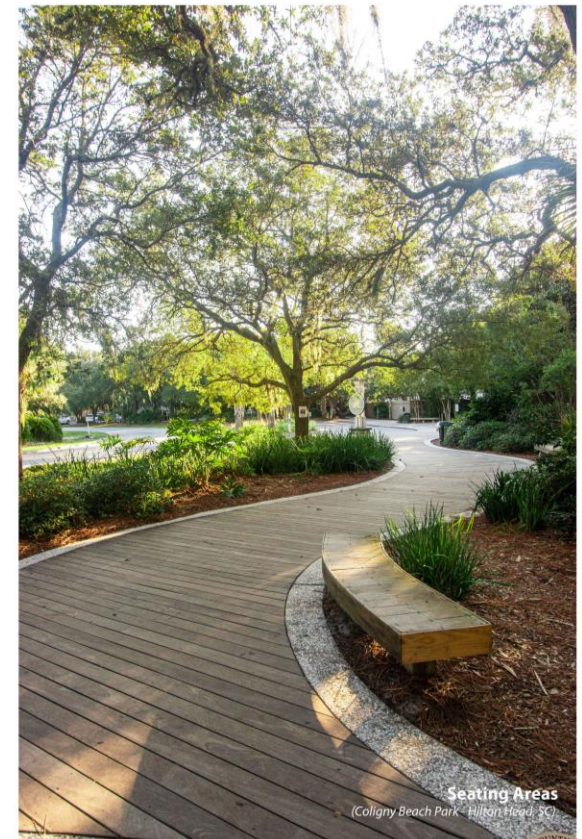
Outdoor Statues
(Queces' Live Main Street - St. Petersburg, FL)



Native Landscape
(North Beach Park - Fernandina Beach, FL)



Pervious Parking
(Donner Park - Atlantic Beach, FL)



Seating Areas
(Coligny Beach Park - Hilton Head, SC)



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VACANT LOTS



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VACANT LOTS

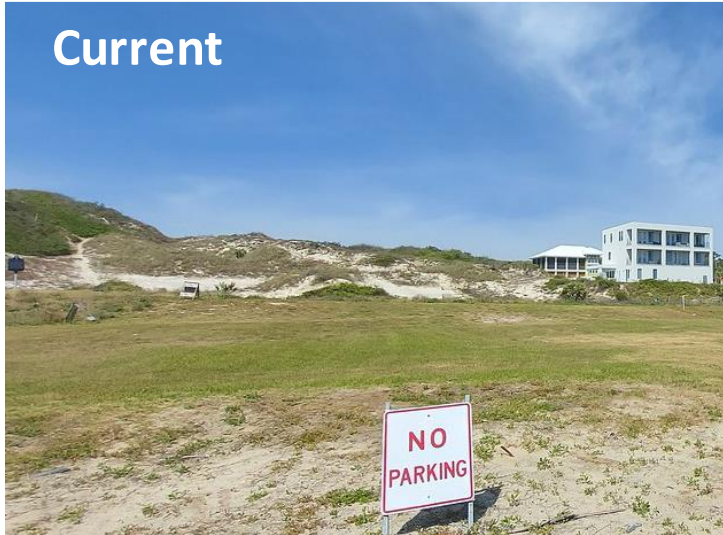


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VACANT LOTS

Current



Conceptual Rendering



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IV. ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY COMMENTS

COMMUNITY COMMENTS ON PRESENTATION

- Create a goal statement for Evans' restoration project
- Potential partnership with National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration connections at FAMU, Edward Waters University, and the Gullah/Geechee Nation
- Friends of American Beach continues to fundraise for Evans' Rendezvous
- Not in favor of community dinners, dining facilities, café, coffee shop or any use that attracts litter, noise pollution or cooking odors
- Consider vehicular entrance to proposed parking only on Ocean Boulevard. Suggest pedestrian access on both sides to Ocean and Gregg Streets



Related to next meetings:

- Need to clarify term “crossroads”
- Clarify that the white two-story building to the north of Evans' is not associated with/connected to Evans' Rendezvous

V. NEXT STEPS

Next Steps

- Update/obtain cost estimates
CPC
- Implementation of state grant for rehabilitation
County
- Gregg and Lewis Street “Crossroads” Planning
Community, County, CPC

Questions/Needs Moving Forward

- Staffing and management of Evans’ Rendezvous
- Programming and implementation
- Additional funding and fundraising
- Identifying potential partners
County and Community



Contact Information

Adrienne Burke, AICP, Esq.

Email: Adrienne@planningcollab.com

Ennis Armon Davis, AICP

Email: ennis@planningcollab.com

Website: www.planningcollab.com

Instagram | Twitter | LinkedIn: [@planningcollab](https://www.instagram.com/planningcollab)



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