

To the Board of the North Port City Commission,

The City of North Port Historic and Cultural Advisory Board applauds the concern and good stewardship shown in the formation of our advisory board and past preservation efforts made by the commission regarding the 1959 Jack West Sarasota School of Architecture facilities and Cyclorama at Warm Mineral Springs. The historic public art, Architecture, and tree canopy of a city's landscape and how those things are cared for convey a lot about the culture of that city to residents and visitors.

Thank you for working to preserve and improve North Port's sense of place. The landscape may be what is most noticeable to visitors and what may be considered a large part of the face of North Port. This letter is looking to inform the commission about what could be considered by some historians to be the soul of historical resources; oral histories.

Oral histories tell of an individual's experience and perspective of events in our city and in their lives. They capture moments in time and perspective of the people who lived them. They tell us about an individual's view of the events that shaped our landscape and the cultural exchange that make us who we are today. They also offer a snapshot of the "current" time in which they are made, and are often used in documentaries because of this perspective.

Each individual oral history is a way to capture a personal perspective of life in our city as lived by an individual in their own words and voice. Written word cannot convey intonation, cadence, or pitch variations that we use in everyday speech to convey extra facets and meanings of words. These individual inflections can be recorded in an oral history using a voice recorder. Video oral histories add to this; the ability to convey facial and body gestures, as well as giving us a visual memory of the individual and their "current" surroundings.

Oral histories are documents that are mostly used by biographers, historians, and scholars; they contain information not available in any other format. But like any other document; they can be lost without a repository to collect and preserve them for posterity. One recent example of lost history is the oral histories gathered by the city's 50th anniversary committee. Some of these irreplaceable documents were records of the people who lived in and influenced the founding of our city, and have since passed. We have a unique opportunity to capture oral histories from the individuals who were here at the founding of our city, but the opportunity to capture an individual's oral history is always limited by time.

A City of North Port Historical Archive needs to be available for collecting and retaining these documents along with all city related historical documents and important artifacts. Volunteers and researchers need to be able to access these records, as well. We would like to see the commission embrace the collection of oral histories and other historical documents as part of saving our city's past for posterity.

Best Regards,

Bill Goetz, Vice Chair
City of North Port Historic and Cultural Advisory Board