Advisory Board Meeting NEH Grant
October 4th 2013

Advisory Board members present:
Herschel Shepard, Retired Architect, FAIA
Susan R. Parker, Executive Director, St. Augustine Historical Society

UF Project Team members present:
Thomas Caswell, PI, Unearthing St. Augustine
James Cusick, Co-PI, Unearthing St. Augustine
Mark Sullivan, Systems Programmer, DLC
John Nemmers, Archivist, Special and Area Studies Collections
Matt Peters, Project Programmer, Unearthing St. Augustine
Joe Aufmuth, GIS Librarian, Documents Department

Guest(s) present:
Jenny Wolf, St. Augustine City Planning
Bob Nawrocki, Chief Librarian, St. Augustine Historical Society

- The current agenda and minutes from the July 12, 2013 meeting were accepted and approved.

- Handouts and presentation of Matt Peters' progress.
    - They have finished the editing portion of the project
    - They are moving to the searching functionality
    - They are creating an interface – he demonstrates the backdrop of the new interface and the editing abilities.
    - Several helpful features are already available – one can add points of interest on the map and save the changes.
    - They are revamping the browsing methods.
- Joe Aufmuth asked if the changes would be public.
    - Matt P. said yes they would be public.
    - Joe A. asked who would be able to make such changes to the database and would there need to be permissions.
    - Matt P. said yes, that in order to make and save changes, one would have to be verified via a log-on and password.
    - Tom Caswell asked if there would be super-users.
    - Susan Parker asked how one would get authentication.
    - Matt P. explains the process for one to gain access – people would have to register and have their credentials substantiated.
- Matt P. shows how to get to an item and place it on the map – shows the log-on step required in order to add information.
    - John Nemmers asks if they should let people know they can get permission.
    - Susan P. asks how you let people know they can get permission.
    - Tom C. suggests a "contact us" button at the bottom of each screen.

    - Matt P. explains that the only way to add information would be to log-on, the general public won't be logging on for the most part.
    - Matt P. illustrates that the beauty of this interface is that once permission has been granted, any user can add information and save it to the public view.
- Jim Cusick asks how they are going to be granting permission.
    - John N. suggests person to person contact to give permissions.
    - Jim C. asks if the request for access would be on the main page.
    - John N. says, no, not on the main page but that everyone would still see points of interest from the public side, they just couldn't make and save changes without the correct log-on permission.
- Herschel Shepard brings up the question of quality control - how are they going to police the information that others post.
    - Matt P. says they could get contact information and then authenticate before granting access.
    - Joe A. suggests that new users go through a tutorial before gaining access so that they will be more familiar with the system if they could make it the tutorial user friendly.
    - Bob Nawrocki brought up accountability – is someone going to go back and periodically check the metadata that has been posted by other users?
    - Joe A. expresses concern – not sure how this would be monitored.
    - John N. points out that once they feel confident with the person's credentials then they don't need to check behind users.
    - Bob N. suggests that some users could abuse this function.
    - Matt P. agrees that since this is a new concept (the interface) that this might be an issue.
    - Tom C. asked if there is a limit to how much information a user can post.
    - Matt P. said there isn't really a limit at this time.
- Further discussion of the functionality of this new tool.
    - Joe A. discusses how the scaling and orientation of the maps help him get information using GIS.
    - Matt P. explains that the interface is geo-locating <u>not</u> geo-rectifying.
    - Joe A. – geo-locating is putting points down – this system can rotate the map to show where it should be for analysis. It's cost effective for researches and it saves time.
    - Tom C. asks if the map will be rotatable.
    - Joe A. assures him that it is.
    - Joe A. explains that if the image coordinates to real coordinates is accurate then they can batch process the information.
    - Matt P. – the example is not ready for this process yet, they are still testing – he will email the group once the demo is working.
- John N. asked if the original proposition for the grant was to geo-rectify but are they now switching to geo-placing.
    - Matt P. said that geo-rectifying takes longer than this system.
    - John N. says he like this better.
    - Joe A. agrees that it is easier and cleaner than geo-rectifying.

    - Matt P. states that this is better for researchers and their questions.
- Herschel S. brings up the legal implications. When you talk about setting points on a map there might be lawyers with real estate issues because St. Augustine is really just a bunch of territories.
    - Joe A. says that's why they are not geo-rectifying. The maps can be used to make calculations but even paper maps shrink and change – they need to have a disclaimer to the public to avoid any legal ramifications.
    - Tom C. asked if they already had such a disclaimer in place.
    - Joe A. – no, not as of yet.
    - Matt P. is making a note to add that disclaimer to the interface upon returning to Gainesville.
- All agree that there could be serious legal issues so a disclaimer needed to be added immediately.
- Joe A. expressed his excitement with this project and all the work they have done thus far.
- Tom C. presented Matt Armstrong's progress (Matt was out of town and unable to attend the meeting).
    - Items that Matt A. has digitized thus far:
        - 555 titles
        - 3512 items
        - 8500 digital pages/ images scanned total thus far.
    - They have processed 85% of the 10,000 pages that was the target for this grant.
    - Matt A. is working closer with Mark Sullivan to get things into the system much faster.
    - Tom C. mentioned that there have been multiple visitors curious to see how the grant has been progressing – word of mouth has really gotten others interested in this project.
    - Matt A. has found people in the community that can identify some of the photos that didn't have text describing who/what they are.
    - Matt A. has also been digitizing the scrapbooks.
        - Joe A. asked if the scrapbooks were being digitized page by page, not photo by photo.
        - Tom C. said yes, page by page.
    - Matt A. has also set up a blog for this project -- http://preservedowntownstaugustine.wordpress.com
    - Matt A. has finished the map negatives collection of the HSAPB and the large block and lot photos. Next he plans to work on the HSAPB block and lot cards – the key to the Government House photo collection.
    - Matt A. will continue to scan the scrapbooks.
    - Tom C. showed some examples of clippings and text that is available for searching.
- Herschel S. asked if after the mini-grant is over this year, will they be able to continue with this rather important work.

- Tom C. said that yes, he's trying to get more funding to keep this project alive. There isn't really any permanent staff at the Government House that could keep it going but if he can get more grant money then they continue to scan and post items.
- Tom C. gave thanks to Susan Parker and the St. Augustine Historical Society for the opportunity to digitize their materials.
- Susan P. mentioned that many of the translations of these documents to be digitized are not something that can be geo-placed. She wants to provide translations that would be more readily available.
    - Many of these have generic information and general housing information of past lots – they need a way to pull this together.
    - Joe A. suggested that they enter the name and place of each document (if any) so they will be able to pull these items into the map interface once they have been scanned.
    - Susan P. suggested that these items might create more questions than they answer.
    - Joe A. said that text mining diagrams and other humanities techniques could be helpful to tie these documents to the project.
    - Susan P. said that some of the information in the lot and blocks from the Historical Society didn't really add the translation so that's why they have to add them during this project.
- Bob N. brings up the MC63 chronological collection. 1 cubic foot or about 2,000 onion skin paper documents.
    - John N. asked what in what condition the documents are.
    - Bob N. said they are yellowish but in good enough conditions to be scanned.
    - Tom C. asked how much he wanted them to digitize.
    - Bob N. said the 1st Spanish Period.
    - Susan P. agreed that it would be better to scan those for the general public since the 1st period is harder than the 2nd Spanish period.
    - Tom C. asked if they should start with page #1.
    - Bob N. said yes.
    - Susan P. asked how they start; at the beginning or do they pick and choose documents to scan that might be more difficult for the general public to translate?
    - Jim C. said he viewed the MC63 collection and that' it's not topical but very specific. Not all the text on the documents are typed, some information is hand written and might not be easily searchable. He has a list that he can provide with items that are possibilities for this project and with other potential collections – for example the Smathers Libraries' PK Yonge collection.
    - Tom C. asks if Jim C. can work with Bob N. to digitize the MC63 collection.
    - They agree to work together on this collection.
- More discussion of what collections they might want to include in this project.
- Susan P. expresses some concern about the items to be scanned from the Historical Society and the translations they will be posting. She wants the project to seem like it knows what it's doing – if they need to put up a caveat about the exactness of the translation then perhaps they shouldn't be posting the translation at all.

    - Jim C. stated that they could argue that the items being posted are Basic English guides and translations.
    - Susan P. further explains the difficulties surrounding any translation – there might be folds or holes in the paper or the text itself might be blurry. All these things contribute to the difficulty in translations. There might also be more than one translation for something – there could also be several different variations.
- Joe A. asked if the translations would be set up like the other documents and if people could make changes to the records like on the maps?
    - Susan P. was curious about this too.
    - Herschel S. asked that even if items could be changed, would the original information still be visible to the public or would the changes override the existing information.
    - Mark S. said that yes, all information would still be visible even after changes to the record had been made.
    - Susan P. said this would make the information very easily accessible which is a really good thing.
    - Jim C. suggested that they add text before each document's translations stating that this is by no means the absolute correct translation.
- Tom C. suggested that they add URL's to the web site so users could link to other related digitized databases directly from the project's interface.
- Bob N. discussed that the MC63 collection is going to go away and be re-organized and will change but the descriptions can be added anytime.
    - John N. asked if that would be a problem.
    - Bob N. said they could annotate the collection for searching purposes.
- Susan P. asked for a time line of when things were going to be accomplished.
- Tom C. wasn't sure how much more that Matt A. could take on but he would be in touch with her by the end of the month to give her a better idea of the time frame.
- Jim C. begins discussion of the Parish records to be digitized – see handout.
    - Jim C. presented suggestions of the explanatory text for the Parish Records.
    - All agree with the handout
    - Discussion begins about the necessity of sending Sister Cathy a letter to explain to her the projects aim and why they want to digitize the records.
    - If she has concerns then she can express them to Jim C.
    - If she does express disapproval then the group will proceed from that point.
    - Susan P. pointed out that these are already public records and they have been available for a long time to the public. Just not in digital form.
    - Jim C. would like to get input from the public but doesn't want to put out a subpar product. He stated that in any translation there is a possibility of error – that is completely normal.
    - Further discussion of possible resistance but the group decided to proceed.
- Susan P. asked how far in time are they going to scan and post online.
    - Jim C. said that everything before the 19 century will be digitized
    - Tom C. stated that anything later than that they might have issues with privacy.

- Susan P. said that by putting these records out for the public, it gives users a sense of the society during that period. There is a wealth of information about regular people's lives during that time.
    - Jim C. agrees that this is an incredible record of the people who lived in Florida during that period.
    - Susan P. reiterates that if we can get this information online then users will be able to scroll through and see what life was like simply by reading these records.
- Tom C. states he is anxious about getting started on these great collections – both the Historical Society's documents and the Parish Records but feels it is fair to let Sister Cathy know before starting the Parish Records.
- Tom C. suggests adding links to the Vanderbilt Ecclesiastical project and to the Diocesan Archives.

- Tom C. asks if there are any more questions.

    - John N. asked about timing and what is next for the project.
    - Tom C. said they will have to wait to hear from Sister Cathy re: Parish records
    - Susan P. asked if some of these can be fed through a document feeder.
    - Jim C. said that some of the final versions have handwritten things and items that have been marked through so the OCR may not work for some – they will have to edit them to make them work.
    - Tom C. asked if there was access to an ADF.
    - Mark S. said that yes, they have one the project can borrow.
    - Tom C. asked if it was reliable.
    - Mark S. said it was.
- Brief discussion about obtaining another grant to keep this project going after this grant had expired.
- Tom C. mentioned that he will be formally presenting this project to ARLIS/NA in DC in May 2014 to give it more visibility.

The next quarterly meeting will be in January 2014.
There are only three more quarterly meetings for this grant - January, April, and June.
June 30th the project ends.

Meeting adjourned.