

Press Release - from the Old Vero Ice Age Sites Committee

DATE: Jan. 10, 2013 - Group seeks Historic Site designation for Old Vero Site, appears before the Vero Beach Historic Preservation Commission

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Members of the local non-profit Old Vero Ice Age Sites Committee appeared before the City Historic Preservation Commission on Thurs. Jan. 13 seeking Historic Site designation for the Old Vero Site. OVIASC chairperson Susan Grandpierre spoke before commissioners Debra Atwell, Sherri Philo, Laura Allen, Stacey Miller, Anna Brady, and Herbert Whittall. Assistant City Attorney Peggy Lyon, Planning and Development Director Tim McGarry, and City Clerk, Tammy Vock, were also present.

Grandpierre thanked the commissioners for accepting the group's application and said the designation would give the famous site protection under the City Code and make the City better able to protect and preserve it.

She described the Old Vero Site project as "an adventure in community archaeology. Our priorities are to educate, excavate, and exhibit in that order," she said.

Last September OVIASC retained UF trained Ph.d archaeologist Andy Hemmings as lead archaeologist for the project. A specialist in paleo-archaeology, he has worked with Dr. James Adovasio, head of the Mercyhurst Archaeological Institute at Mercyhurst University in Erie, PA since 2006.

Prior to appearing at the hearing before the Commission on Wed., Grandpierre and OVIASC Board members had a meeting with Hemmings, Adovasio, and Mercyhurst President Tom Gamble at the Vero Man site to discuss a 2013 first quarter excavation.



Airport Director Eric Menger also spoke at the hearing, raising concerns about the potential for disruption of the runway protection zone and the need for approval from the FAA for each phase of the project.

The group has raised sufficient funds to start a dig this winter or spring. OVIASC received a \$25,000 grant from the Felburn Foundation in the fall, having raised 3 times the grant amount as required. They have also received an anonymous gift of \$25,000 from a local couple and additional funds from other donors. Anyone who wishes to can be a member of the "First Diggers Club," and be among the first volunteers allowed to dig at the site. You can join the First Diggers by donating \$5,000 or more. Lesser amounts are welcome, too. Andy Hemmings plans to run a program to allow all interested local volunteers to help at the site.

The Commission voted in favor of the application, and it will go before the City Council later this spring.