

FLORIDA FINDS

Barberville Pioneer Settlement offers history lessons

By Ronnie Lovler  
Correspondent

The motto at the Barberville Pioneer Settlement is “Discover Yesterday Today.” And that’s precisely what you will get at the 30-acre campus of this living history destination in Central Florida.

When it opened in 1976, there were only two buildings on the grounds: the Joseph Underhill House, currently under renovation, and the Barberville Central High School, built in 1919. Today, there are 20 historic structures on the grounds, although that isn’t all.

“We are not just about preserving buildings,” said Erick Nielsen, associate director of Barberville Pioneer Settlement. “We are also about preserving the arts, crafts, tools and technologies of the pioneer lifestyle in Florida.”

The high school building, a National Register of Histor-



Photo by Ronnie Lovler

Erick Nielsen in front of an old railroad car on the property.

ic Places site, is center-stage and one of the first things you see when you walk on the grounds. It was first built to accommodate elementary, middle and high school students and was the only school in the area to offer college preparatory classes.

But county officials abandoned the school after a time. Nielsen said the building was saved thanks to the efforts of a group of art teachers who founded the Pioneer Settlement for the Creative Arts, Inc., as a not-for-profit organization.

“They petitioned the school board to use the high school building to teach lost arts such as spinning, weaving, blacksmithing and woodworking,” Nielsen said.

The high school is the settlement’s prize building and the reason Pioneer Settle-

ment opened where it is.

“It is one of the jewels of the settlement and the whole reason the settlement came about,” Nielsen said.

At first, the teachers leased the school building from the Volusia County School Board, but in 2001, the school board ceded ownership to the Pioneer Settlement Board of Directors.

Over time, other buildings were moved to the location, giving birth to the Settlement.

“Most buildings are regional, and a lot came from just 10 miles away,” Nielsen said. “The furthest building is the Lewis Log Cabin, which comes from South Georgia.”

The train depot on the property was built in 1885. If connected to a railroad path, it could be used as a functional depot. It also contains a history lesson: the depot had two waiting rooms, one for African Americans and one for whites because it was

built during segregated times.

The fire station, Model A Ford shop, clubhouse, and blacksmith shop are standouts, especially the blacksmith shop.

“It’s been our most successful workshop and partnership,” Nielsen said. “They petitioned the school board to use the high school building to teach lost arts such as spinning, weaving, blacksmithing and woodworking.”

The settlement also promotes the art and entertainment that dominated during pioneer times, with two major folk festivals during the year: the Spring Frolic on the first weekend in April and the Fall Country Jamboree on the first weekend in November.

The festivals include contra dancing, musical workshops and historical demonstrators who show off different tools and trades, such as wheelwrighting, chair caning and pottery.

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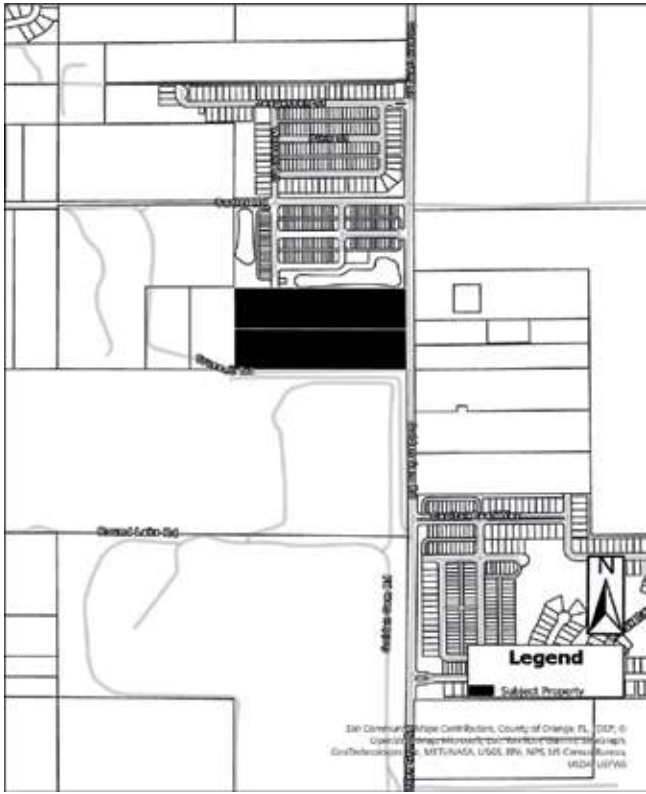
**The Schroeder Dental Group** office is located at 527 Wekiva Commons Circle in Apopka.

Advertisement

CITY OF APOPKA  
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE  
CHANGE OF ZONING

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Secs. 163.3184 and 166.041(3)(a), Florida Statutes and the Apopka Code of Ordinances, Part III, Land Development Code, Article II, Section 2.4.7.B, that **G L Summitt Engineering, Inc. c/o Geoffrey L. Summitt, P.E.** has made application relating to the following described property.

**ORDINANCE NO. 3102**  
**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF APOPKA, FLORIDA, CHANGING THE ZONING FROM COUNTY A-1 (CITRUS RURAL) TO KPI-MU (KELLY PARK INTERCHANGE – MIXED-USE, ASSIGNMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT OVERLAY, FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY GENERALLY LOCATED WEST OF GOLDEN GEM ROAD, SOUTH OF NIGHTSHADE GROVE LANE AND SADLER ROAD; COMPRISING 19.76 ACRES, MORE OR LESS; OWNED BY TIMOTHY BURCHFIELD, ROBERT AND STACYMOSS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**



Parcel Identification Number(s): 14-20-27-0000-00-025 and 14-20-27-0000-00-083  
Contains: 19.76 +/- Acres

NOTICE is given that a public hearing for Ordinance Number 3102 will be held by the **City of Apopka Planning Commission** at its regularly scheduled meeting in the City Council Chambers of the Apopka City Hall, 120 E. Main Street, Apopka, Florida on **Tuesday, April 8, 2025 beginning at 5:30 P.M.**, or as soon thereafter as possible.

FURTHER NOTICE is given that a public hearing for Ordinance Number 3102 will be held by the **City of Apopka City Council** at its regularly scheduled meeting in the City Council Chambers of the Apopka City Hall, 120 E. Main Street, Apopka, Florida on **Wednesday, May 7, 2025 beginning at 1:30 P.M.**

Affected parties and the public may appear at the above listed hearings to speak. The proposed Future Land Use and Rezoning Applications can be inspected at the Apopka Community Development Department located at Apopka City Hall on weekdays between the hours of 8:00 A.M. and 4:30 P.M. City Hall address shown below. Please be advised that, under State law, if you decide to appeal a decision made with respect to this matter, you will need a record of the proceedings and may need to ensure that a verbatim record is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), persons with disabilities needing assistance to participate in any of these proceedings should contact the City Clerk’s Office at 120 East Main Street, Apopka FL 32703.

**Apopka City Council  
Apopka Planning Commission  
Community Development Department**

March 28, 2025

**D-I-WHY?**  
The Apopka Chief

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