

HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

June 11th 2015

Members Present: Tom Speir, Richard Magrill, Rose Mary Magrill, Barbara Judkins, Alaina Jones, Thomas Richardson, Marty Vaughan, Ann Brannon, Bill Sullivan, Jr., Robert Wood, and Elizabeth Bradshaw.

Tom Speir shared a copy of the service bulletin from the funeral of Jennifer Larned for the benefit of any members who were unable to attend.

I. Call to Order

Tom Speir, as acting chair, called the meeting to order on Thursday, June 11th 2015 at 1:34 p.m. at the Marshall Visual Arts Center.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of May 14th were approved as distributed.

III. Treasurer's Report

Tom Speir reported that there was \$2,588.85 in the bank account, \$5,502.28 in the savings account, and \$3,219.12 in the Greenwood Cemetery account. Tom noted that Deon Behrman, treasurer, wishes to be relieved of his duties as soon as a replacement can be found. Deon has the checkbook. No checks have been written during his tenure. Rose Mary Magrill and Margaret Agnor are the current signatories for the account. Concern was expressed over the high service charges (\$14.81 on the most recent statement). Ann Brannon volunteered to check into getting the service charges removed. We will deal with the item of a new treasurer next month.

IV. The standing committee reports are as follows:

A. Archaeology

As reported last month, the Texas Historical Commission wants to compile a list of the Rosenwald Schools and their locations throughout the state and are beginning their efforts by asking our commission to work on the project. Austin has supplied the names of the schools in our county but wants us to report the locations.

Tom Speir reported that he has located St. Mark's Cemetery, but he has not found his notes on who wanted the information. If the form for registering the existence of the existence of a cemetery as an archeological site is filled out he will be happy to file it since if he does the filing there will be no charge. (He has already filed the form recording St. Mark's as an archeological site.)

Robert Wood has talked with Oliver Hurd who attended the Rosenwald school in the Woodlawn community. It was called the Morning Star Elementary School. It ceased to be used in 1955. Alaina Jones shared a list of the Rosenwald schools which she received from Jennifer Larned. She will share copies of the list.

B. Archives

No report.

C. Cemeteries

For a report on St. Mark's cemetery *see IV.A. above*. Thomas Richardson reported that Hallsville has a new mayor. He also noted that James Mizell, long-time caretaker at the Hallsville Cemetery, is very weak but still up and around. He will, however, need to be replaced. Ann Brannon reported that the city is currently taking good care of the Greenwood Cemetery grounds. Alaina Jones noted that at some point it would be good to have the Greenwood Cemetery account held by the commission moved to the custody of the new committee that is looking after Greenwood. Tom noted that he had reviewed the "Single Grave Cemetery Law" with Hugh Taylor, county judge. Basically, the law gives the same legal status to a single grave site being recorded and protected as that given to a multi-grave cemetery.

D. Education

Tom Speir reported that the Education Committee has been hard at work. The committee has contacted Harleton, Waskom, Hallsville, and Elysian Fields ISDs. Harleton and Elysian Fields have not responded yet. Barbara Judkins will meet with representatives at Hallsville on July 8th.

Sarah O'Brien (Bo Ellis' replacement) suggested that the commission have a booth at the Region 7 Education Service Center in Kilgore. There will be some 175 social studies teachers from East Texas at the meeting. Tom contacted Region 7 and secured an invitation for us to have a booth and he has been gathering brochures for Barbara to take: so far on New Town, the Buard Trail (DVD), Michelson Art Museum, and T.C. Lindsey & Co. Store.

Tom noted that he hoped to be successful in bringing back the history fair next year in the Marshall ISD.

E. Historical Markers

Tom Speir failed to make contact regarding the status of the free undertold stories marker on Marshall as the birthplace of boogie woogie. Gladewater on June 25th from 2-4 p.m. will host a marker workshop. The Piney Cemetery marker dedication is this Saturday, June 13th at 10 a.m. Tom found two broken markers in his exploration of the commission office. One is for the depot. It has been replaced. The broken one will be given to the depot museum for any use they care to make of it. (Robert Wood believes they may have volunteers who will repair it.)

The other damaged marker is for the Stagecoach Road. Robert reported on the history of its theft and recovery. It was recovered in Colorado by police while making a traffic stop there. They contacted Robert and shipped it back to him with, to his surprise, a \$98 C.O.D. bill attached. Reinstalling the marker was discussed. It may need to have a turnout created. Various options for its location were discussed. It will be an expensive project and the commission will need more information from the Texas Historical Commission about what is considered safe and legal and from Robert if any land is available before we can approach the county commissioners' court with a recommended plan. In the meantime, Barbara Judkins will check with Tom Gillis, a private landowner who may live near the former site, about possible locations.

F. History Museum

Tom Speir reported that the museum will hold the 4th Annual Harrison County History Rocks summer day camp for kids from June 22-26 (9 a.m. to 12 noon) for Kinder to 5th grade. Camp fee is \$35, which includes a camp T-shirt. Allison Jimerson (ajimerson@gmail.com) is the contact for this event.

G. Oral History

The need to begin working in the area of oral history was discussed. Tom reported that the commission may have recording equipment in the office which would be useful for this purpose. Ann Brannon noted that the Historical Greenwood Cemetery Facebook page has some oral history.

H. Preservation

Tom reported that the county judge, Hugh Taylor, is not interested in preserving the Harrison County Airport Terminal. Even so, Tom has asked him to at least set up a time when interested people could view the building. On May 20th Preservation Texas presented an award in connection with the restoration of the facade of the 1902 Elks Building.

I. Publications

Tom showed a sample of a WWII recipe book, a supply of which he found in the commission's office. On motion, these will be given to the history museum for its use in raising funds for the military exhibits in Memorial City Hall. Tom has met with Sarah O'Brien regarding our financial support for various publications.

K. Goals

Tom hopes that we can develop a website in the future.

L. Annual Preservation Awards

Jean Birmingham and Tom Speir have met and come up with nominations for the Lale, Perkins, and Merit awards. (Bo Ellis could not make the meeting.) Tom did not share their nominees for the Perkins and Merit awards so that other nominees could come from the commission. Nomination forms were passed out. He did share that the nominating committee is recommending that the Lale Award be given posthumously to Jennifer Larned. The awards will be presented in July.

V. Special Reports

A. 1901 Courthouse

No report.

B. T & P Depot Museum

Robert Wood reported nothing new at this time. He did note that the depot made \$6,500 on last month's "casino night / boogie woogie music" fundraiser.

C. Starr Home

Barbara Judkins reported that the Starr Home was putting in an ADA pathway to the gazebo. At the dedication she hopes to involve members of the former "Friends of the Starr Home" since their organization financed the gazebo. The home has purchased an inflatable movie screen which will enable the showing of movies at the gazebo. On the home's Facebook page, there are plans to include materials regarding the passing of prohibition in the county. Also the home will open up parts of its serving areas for viewing. The book club selection for August is *Last Call*.

D. Michelson Museum of Art

No report.

E. Historic Designation of Downtown Marshall

No report.

F. Historic Landmark Preservation Board

Alaina Jones reported that the awards ceremony went well; as did the workshop for board members. The HLPB still needs to replace one member. Also, they are trying to get the cost down on the actual landmark plaques. There was discussion regarding what legal restrictions the property owner of a landmarked building actually faces. The seller of a landmarked building has the obligation to inform a purchaser of the landmark status. The HLPB can take action to delay the demotion of a landmarked building for ninety days.

VI. Other

New Member. Tom introduced Elizabeth Bradshaw as a new member from the Marshall Public Library. She reported that the library is in the midst of its summer children's reading program. She has volunteered to display history-related pamphlets in the library.

Grant Writing Assistance. Robert Wood called our attention to the need of grant writing assistance at the depot museum. Elizabeth Bradshaw and Barbara Judkins offered their help.

VII. Administrative

Agenda/Call Additions. Tom noted the addition of this heading to our agenda and certain changes in the call.

Appointment of Commission Members. His aim is to get all current members re-appointed to the commission at the meeting of the commissioners court on June 27th. The membership list was reviewed and suggestions made regarding the retention/elimination of current members and the addition of possible new members. In the case of new members we will need their names, mailing addresses, e-mail addresses, and 3-4 sentences regarding why each would be a good fit in view of the commission's responsibilities.

Membership Training. Each member is required to obtain their on-line certificate of completion of training in (1) the open meeting act and (2) the public information act. (These are one-time certifications.)

Mail. Incoming mail was reviewed and referred as needed.

Organizations in Which the Commission Holds Memberships. The commission engaged in a brief preliminary review of the various memberships which it has held (and paid for) in the past. At the moment, only the East Texas Historical Association membership is active. This review will be on next month's agenda with a view toward concluding which memberships should be continued.

Office Arrangements. Tom reported that the 1901 Courthouse Preservation Council has an office in the basement which has two filing cabinets that it might give to the commission for use in its office in the courthouse annex.

He showed his temporary door sign and indicated he is seeking a permanent sign, a telephone, and internet-connected computer equipment from the county.

Meeting with Hugh Taylor. Tom also reported on his meeting with Hugh Taylor, county judge. We should be able to keep our office in the annex building for the foreseeable future. The address on our letterhead will drop the reference to Room 140 in the new courthouse. (This room has not been ours for some time.) It is unsure whether we can secure a table near the entrance to the new courthouse for the display of pamphlets, but Tom has made the request.

They discussed the single grave cemetery law (*see above IV.C.*) and the Harrison County Airport Terminal (*see above IV.H.*)

Of particular interest to the judge was the upcoming enactment of a fictitious Civil War battle at Hallsville. There will be two battle enactments each day for four days and there will be thousands of re-enactors and spectators present for this event.

VIII. Adjournment

The next meeting will be July 9th 2015 at the Blake House of the Starr Home (with popsicles provided). The meeting adjourned at 3:31 p.m.

Submitted by Richard Magrill