

# HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

## Meeting Minutes

August 13<sup>th</sup> 2015

**Members Present:** Tom Speir, Richard Magrill, Joe Hudson, Rose Mary Magrill, Thomas Richardson, Jean Birmingham, Doc Holliday, Debbie Gullett, Marty Vaughan, Elizabeth Bradshaw, Alaina Jones, and Robert Wood.

**Visitor Present:** Mary Hendrycks, president of the board of the Marshall Depot Museum.

### I. Call to Order

Tom Speir, as acting chair, called the meeting to order on Thursday, August 13<sup>th</sup> 2015 at 1:35 p.m. in the conference room of the Marshall Depot Museum. He expressed appreciation to Mary Hendrycks, president of the Depot Museum board, for her gracious hosting of our meeting.

### II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of July 9<sup>th</sup> were approved as distributed.

### III. Treasurer's Report

Elizabeth Bradshaw reported that she is working with Rose Mary Magrill on getting paperwork completed for the various financial accounts of the commission. She passed out a report showing \$5,520.28 in the brokerage CD account, \$3,300 in an additional CD, \$3,217.76 in the Greenwood Cemetery Fund, and \$2,618.46 in the bank account. Tom read two lengthy e-mails regarding the various funds, one from Ann Brannon and one from Audrey Kariel. Rose Mary Magrill asked that the current Greenwood Cemetery Committee come up with a request/plan to use monies in the Greenwood account and that the request/plan be circulated to Audry Kariel and Margaret Agnor for their comments and counsel. If

completed in time this request/plan can be considered at our called meeting on Thursday August 27<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m. at the Depot Museum.

#### **IV. The standing committee reports are as follows:**

##### **A. Archaeology**

Tom Speir reported on the work which he had done in connection with Robert Wood on archeological sites in the Woodlawn area. Thanks to Robert, three archeological sites — the Rosenwald (Morning Star Elementary) School, the Mount Zion Baptist Church Cemetery, and the D.D. Hurd Store — have been recorded.

##### **B. Archives**

There was no report and Tom Speir questioned the purpose of this item on the agenda. Rose Mary Magrill indicated that the archives committee had, in the past, been involved with the files of the commission. Tom reported that he has secured a used file cabinet. He expects to need at least one more. Legal size files are needed.

Tom noted that Judge Hugh Taylor had reported to him that the amount recommended for new fiscal year for our budget is being cut from \$4,000 to \$3,000.

##### **C. Cemeteries**

Thomas Richardson will meet with Tom Speir in the fall to visit several cemeteries. He shared photographs that he had taken of the abandoned metal bridge over Ward Creek and another unnamed metal bridge in the Hallsville area. These pictures were prompted by the Texas Department of Transportation survey, although, because these bridges are no longer in use, they do not fall within the parameters of that survey. Tom will help get the Ward Creek bridge recorded as an archeological site.

#### **D. Education**

Tom Speir reported all county ISDs have been contacted regarding the historic sites in the county and the brochures available relating to them. Shirley Fletcher was contacted at MISD and looks forward to using the same services as last year. Carol Greer has been doing a presentation on Hallsville history in the schools for years. Tom will make a presentation to his wife's advance placement class in August. Jean Birmingham suggested we view this presentation at one of our meetings.

#### **E. Historical Markers**

Gail Beil has taken over this responsibility for the commission. Tom will meet on Monday with the administration of East Texas Baptist University regarding the location of their two markers. One is to be placed in front of Marshall Hall and one in another appropriate location. Tom plans to ensure that all commission members are invited when the dedication of the markers is finally scheduled.

Robert Woods has followed up on where the Stagecoach Road marker might be located in order to protect it from further vandalism.

He suggested that the new location might be on the grounds of the Pine Bluff Church in Woodlawn. This African-American church is about 3 miles off the road but the sign on Stagecoach Road calling attention to the marker is near the intersection with the road leading to the church. Robert will try to contact the pastor. If the pastor is Paul Taylor, Jean Birmingham may know him and will assist in trying to make the contact. Tom indicated that he had already checked with THC and that it has no problem with the marker being located at the church site.

We still have two broken markers in the commission office. Perhaps the broken one relating to the Depot could be displayed in the Depot Museum. Unused broken markers are to be returned to the foundry in San Antonio so that the aluminum can be recycled.

## **F. History Museum**

Jean Birmingham reported that the Museum staff and volunteers are all excited about the Veterans Memorial exhibit on the second floor of Memorial City Hall. She has forms available for individuals to submit names and photographs of veterans to be included in the exhibit. There will be a charge for submitted applications in order to help defray the costs of the exhibit. The hope is to get enough submissions so that the Museum can rotate exhibits in this area. During discussion of criteria for inclusion, the commission suggested areas to be considered: can non-native veterans living here now and those buried but not born here be included? It was suggested that an article in the *Marshall News Messenger* could publicize this work.

Tom Speir reported that he is still working on the Native American artifacts at the museum to assure compliance with the requirements of NAGPRA.

## **G. Oral History**

Tom Speir reported that the commission was in possession of a micro-cassette recorder which he has turned back in to the county. The possibility of securing updated equipment for the commission to use in oral history was discussed. Tom has looked at a digital recorder at Office Depot. It was suggested that our new device be capable of recording video and that it be compact and easy to use. Tom will write up specifications and is authorized by the commission to purchase the equipment out of this year's budget either directly or through the county. Gaylord is a good company to check into because they specialize in archival equipment and materials.

There was discussion of exploring the possibility of acquiring the video and audio tapes made over many years by Will Avery.

Tom reported that there is a Betamax machine with accompanying tapes in the commission office.

Debbie Gullett indicated that she is willing to interview people in connection with oral history.

## **H. Preservation**

Tom Speir has met with Mary Smith regarding the Buard Trail marker for Ward Chapel A.M.E. Church. About four of the trail markers have been stolen recently. It was noted that copies of the Buard Trail video are to be placed in school/public libraries, etc. and also a copy sent to Austin. Alaina Jones reported that the idea of drafting a short curriculum to accompany the video has been abandoned and instead the videos will be distributed this fall with the Buard History Trail brochure.

## **I. Publications**

In regard to preparation of the new brochure giving the texts and showing the locations of the historical markers in the county, Richard Magrill reported that he is hoping to get the texts of our more recent markers in machine-readable form from THC. He has scanned the 98 texts listed in our existing brochure which leaves us needing the 39 texts for the more recent markers.

Tom Speir reported that the Stagecoach Road and the Lale Trail brochures are running out. We will split the cost with the City of Marshall on the brochures. Our half will be \$545.53. Doc Holliday suggested that the commission would benefit from knowing which locations distribute the brochures and the approximate quantities.

## **K. Goals**

Tom Speir reported that we now have a home page as part of the county website. Our current photo is of the county historical marker. We still want other pictures. We have started a Facebook page. Out of 581 visitors, 70 have liked our efforts. Most of our visitors fall in the age range of 25-35 years old. Word of mouth will help spread awareness of our work and Harrison County's history.

Tom reported that in doing annual report to THC, we have to have three new projects that we complete each year in order to be recognized for our work. During this year our efforts with the Region 7 Education Center in Kilgore will be one. Tom will reach out to city governments in the county as a second project. A

third project proposed is repainting historical markers that are weathered and in need of refurbishing. Alaina Jones said that she is interested in helping with this project. Redoing the three markers at the courthouse is a place to begin. They could be re-done in three hours. Alaina said she can do all of that and can get car-quality paint donated. It was noted that we will need before/after photos as well as photos of the job being done. Debbie Gullett volunteered to help.

Tom expressed a desire for photos of all the historical markers in the county for the website. Joey Hudson suggested that we could get Boy Scouts to help clear away weeds and brush from around the markers where needed.

#### **L. Annual Preservation Awards**

Tom Speir called attention to the photos posted on the website of the recent presentation of the annual awards and reminded the commission that it is time to think about nominees for the 2016 awards.

### **V. Special Reports**

#### **A. 1901 Courthouse**

No report.

#### **B. T & P Depot Museum**

Robert Wood reported that the Depot Museum would like to secure preservation grants for the repair of cracks in the structure of the building. While the roof has been repaired, there is still a need to repair the damage occasioned by the leaks.

#### **C. Starr Home**

Tom Speir reported that the work load at the Starr Home has prevented Barbara Judkins from being present at this meeting.

#### **D. Michelson Museum of Art**

Elizabeth Bradshaw mentioned that the current MAXAM exhibit of Spanish paintings at the Michelson is quite remarkable. The commission took note that Susan Spears and one other lady are all the staff currently available at the museum and that, as a result, Susan is not able to be present at our meetings. There is a need for more volunteers at the museum.

#### **E. Historic Designation of Downtown Marshall**

This agenda item will be removed. In the future, the Historic Landmarks Preservation Board will take care of any reporting regarding the Historic Designation of Downtown Marshall.

#### **F. Historic Landmark Preservation Board**

Alaina Jones reported that HLPB still needs two additional members and is still working on reorganizing. Please contact Wes Morrison with the City of Marshall if you are interested in serving on this board.

### **VI. Other**

**Annual Luncheon Panel Discussion.** There has been no progress on the annual luncheon panel discussion and for the time being it is tabled.

### **VII. Administrative**

**Incoming Mail.** Tom Speir read a “thank you” from Jennifer Larned’s sister in appreciation for the posthumous presentation of the 2015 Max Lale Award. There was a letter from the National Trust for Historic Preservation regarding the National Preservation Institute and from the East Texas Historical Association regarding its meeting on October 8-10 at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches.

**Bylaws Revision.** Discussion of the bylaws revision was deferred until the called meeting on August 27<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m. at the Depot Museum.

**Civil War Re-enactment.** Tom Speir shared a poster regarding the September Civil War Re-enactment in Hallsville.

***The Medallion.*** Richard Magrill reminded new members that if they wish to receive *The Medallion*, the free publication of the THC, they will need to log onto the THC website and personally request it. (THC will not add people whose names are furnished by the chairs of county historical commissions.)

**Organizational Memberships.** Organizational memberships have been renewed and/or will be renewed for the following: Preservation Texas, National Trust for Historic Preservation, East Texas Historical Association, Texas Archeological Society, Texas Historical Association, and American Association for State and Local History.

**Other Items.** We have already discussed the Facebook page, but we need to let Tom know what additional information we would like on the page. We have received our 2014 Distinguished Service Award from THC. We need to hang this and all our past awards on the office walls. Commission members have received our appointment/reappointment letters from Judge Taylor. Tom has completed the 2014 annual report to THC.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

The next meeting will be September 10<sup>th</sup> at the Marshall Visual Arts Center at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 3:44 p.m.

**Submitted by Richard Magrill**