

HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

September 10th 2015

Members Present: Tom Speir, Richard Magrill, Carol Fletcher, Thomas Richardson, Ann Brannon, Barbara Judkins, Tracy Mayer, Becky Palmer, Jean Birmingham, Debbie Gullett, Marty Vaughan, and Robert Wood.

Visitor Present: Glenda Ponder.

I. Call to Order

Tom Speir, as acting chair, called the meeting to order on Thursday, September 10th 2015 at 1:32 p.m. in Marshall Visual Arts Center.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of August 13th 2015 were approved as distributed.

III. Treasurer's Report

There was no treasurer's report but related items were discussed.

Tom Speir announced the formation of the Friends of the Harrison County Historical Commission. The annual membership fee will be \$10. The papers are in Austin for filing and he has e-mailed suggested bylaws for the organization.

Richard Magrill passed out the proposed mission statement for the commission:

The Harrison County Historical Commission (HCHC) is the county agency in Harrison County, Texas for historic preservation. Its mission is to assist the commissioners' court and the Texas Historical Commission (THC) in the preservation of our county's historical and cultural resources and to protect and preserve the county's historic and pre-historic resources for the use, education, enjoyment and economic benefit of present and future generations.

Ann Brannon addressed the matter of the Greenwood Cemetery account. She reported a bid for \$1635 from Meadowbrook Funeral Home for resetting some stones (5 singles and 3 doubles) and for resetting a fence. In the bid, \$500 is for renting a tractor. Buddy Power may know how to save that. The commission voted to spend up to \$1635 on these restorations from the Greenwood Cemetery Account.

IV. The standing committee reports are as follows:

A. Archaeology

Tom Speir received e-mail from the Gregg County Historical Commission concerning the Swancy or Swanzy Cemetery which is within the city limits of Longview. It is on Texas Eastman property in Harrison County. Tom will meet with representatives of the Texas Eastman Company and then record the location as a lost cemetery. (It is behind Cracker Barrel in Longview, down in the woods.)

Tom reported that we need to do something about recording the bridge sites near Hallsville (Ward Creek Bridge and one other). Someone has backed a huge lowboy into the woods near Ward Creek. Tom has contacted the state regarding it. He will try to get with Thomas Richardson to check out the situation and see that the site is recorded.

B. Archives

Tom Speir reported that Alaina Jones thinks that there are a couple more filing cabinets available for the commission

C. Cemeteries

Tom Speir reported that he had received a request from commission member Bea White wanting information for Eagle Creek Cemetery. This information has been supplied.

Tom also reviewed briefly the history of work and attendant problems in preserving the Love Cemetery. There will be a cleanup of the cemetery on

September 26th. Participants will meet at the Scottsville community center. Marty Vaughan will try to be there for it. Tom will try to get Joey Hudson to assemble a group of able-bodied folks that can be available for these kinds of physically demanding activities.

D. Education

Tom Speir reported that a collection of history-related brochures (Starr Home, Lale Trail, New Town, T.C. Lindsey Store, etc.) has been distributed to the Marshall Public Library, the Hallsville City Hall, and the Michelson Art Museum. Tom will meet with the Mayor of Waskom tomorrow morning. Marty Vaughan will take some brochures for display in the Waskom Public Library.

E. Historical Markers

Tom Speir reported that Gail Beil is doing better. Oct 22nd is Founders Day at East Texas Baptist University and they plan to dedicate their two historical markers on that date. Wiley College is planning to dedicate its three markers that same weekend. We are hoping that the ETBU dedication will be in morning and the Wiley dedication in the afternoon. Scheduling both on the same day will be a convenience for folks coming in from out of town for the events.

In regard to the Stagecoach Road marker, Jean Birmingham and Tom have contacted Pastor Prescott of the Pine Bluff Church and the church is agreeable to the marker being placed on church property. Rather than being mounted on a post it will be set in concrete and therefore we may be able to reuse the original marker (since only its post attachment on its base was damaged). Tom is going to ask Alaina Jones and her volunteers to practice their marker cleaning skills on the Stagecoach Road marker.

F. History Museum

Becky Palmer, education director at the History Museum, reported on “The Taste of Downtown” events. These luncheon presentations will begin on Tuesday, October 13th and continue for the following three Tuesdays. Topics for the four

presentations are as follows: “From Greece to Harrison County: Pedison Family Journey,” “Millie Brown Sanders,” “Regulator Moderator War,” and “Hellships and the Experience of Cary Abney, Jr.” The museum will post small posters downtown. Persons desiring to participate can join and make reservations at the museum website, the museum, or the Visitors Center.

Becky expressed the need to get into the Waskom schools. She has developed lesson plans and will go into social studies classes and teach. (She is a retired teacher.)

Jean Birmingham repeated the fact that the city commission is meeting tonight and the museum hopes to get final approval for the space for the veterans exhibit in Memorial City Hall. She noted that at least two of the original Tuskegee Airmen came from the county.

Tom Speir received information from a workshop on the basics of artifact photography and passed it on to the museum. Someone needs to photograph the artifacts in the museum. Anything would be better than nothing. He will talk with Janet Cook next Tuesday about this matter.

G. Oral History

Tom Speir displayed new equipment whose purchase was authorized at our last meeting. This new county equipment consists of a video camcorder and a sound recorder for use in preserving the oral history of our citizens.

H. Preservation

No report.

I. Publications

Tom Speir reported that we have gone half and half with City of Marshall on the cost of the Stagecoach Road and Lale Trail Brochures.

K. Goals

Tom Speir reported that our Facebook page visits have gone up 12.5% since last week. He indicated that we will need an Information Technology committee in order to provide help to Elizabeth Bradshaw. The committee will need to be added to the agenda for monthly reports.

Tom reported on a goal which he had originally planned to mention next year but decided to go ahead and mention now. It is the U.S. Highway 80 corridor project. It has already been designated by the Texas Department of Transportation as the World War II Veterans Memorial Highway. On September 1st 2005 the legislature made it official and TXDOT will work with our county in putting up signs. Two signs will cost a total of \$3,450 (one for each end of the county). We will need to get the Friends working on this project and fund it through the Friends and not through the county commission. This project will link both ends of the county together. We will ask for the county commissioners blessing on this project. The historical commission approved this project.

L. Annual Preservation Awards

Be thinking about nominees for next year's awards.

V. Special Reports

A. 1901 Courthouse

The commission in charge of preserving the 1901 Courthouse is slowly reorganizing.

B. T & P Depot Museum

Robert Wood reported that the depot museum had discovered this week that the historical medallion that relates to the steam engine on the museum grounds is in one of the rooms. The museum and will work on displaying it.

Tom Speir had two items related to the depot museum. First, the museum may get some filing cabinets as a result of our solicitations for equipment for the commission. Second, he suggested that the museum could start a dining car raffle.

To that end, he donated two tickets to a Chinese restaurant in Shreveport to help kick-off the project.

C. Starr Home

Barbara Judkins reported that the picket fence at the Starr Home is about to be re-painted. The 7th annual Victorian Fair featuring “The Way We Wore” Fashion Exhibit will be held on October 15th 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.. Also, the home is hosting all the managers of other historic sites under the Texas Historical Commission at the end of September.

In celebration of Texas Archeology Month the home will have an introduction at the courthouse for doing gravestone rubbings on October 11th at 1 p.m. This program will feature Marshall, Greenwood, Powder Mill, and Wiley cemeteries. There will be docents at each of the sites. By this means the home hopes to raise awareness of cemeteries, including those cemeteries located outside of Marshall.

D. Michelson Museum of Art

Low staffing continues to make it impossible for Susan Spears to attend our meetings but she reported via Tom Speir on the museum’s work. The MAXAM Spanish art exhibit has been extended until September 24th.

Catalogs of the exhibit collection are available to all commission members and were passed out. These paintings were commissioned by the explosives and ammunition company founded by Alfred Nobel (of Nobel Prize fame). Each painting, commissioned annually from 1900 to this year, has something in it referring to firearms or explosives.

The Spanish interpreter for the collection will be holding a Spanish language tour of the art collection September 12th and 19th from 2-4 p.m. An e-mail with this information has been sent to the superintendent of each of the ISDs in Harrison County, as well as Shirley Fletcher, Social Studies Curriculum Specialist for the Marshall ISD.

E. Historic Landmark Preservation Board

No report.

VI. Other

Annual Luncheon Panel Discussion.

No report.

VII. Administrative

Commission Chair. The commission instructed its secretary to send a letter to the county judge, Hugh Taylor, asking that he appoint Tom Speir as our chair.

Incoming Mail. Tom Speir will confer with The Print Shop on the bill for reprinting the Stagecoach Road and Lyle Trail brochures which came in at twice the amount agreed.

Special Meeting on Bylaws Revision. These minutes with the proposed revision of the bylaws will be mailed out at a future date.

Facebook Page. We still need photos for the Facebook page. Please send yours for inclusion to promote historic and cultural resources.

Cannon for Hallsville City Park. On August 31st Tom Speir met with Mayor Steve Eitelman of Hallsville. Planning is underway for a new Veterans City Park. The mayor wanted Tom to find a cannon for the park. Tom thinks that he has found one!

Waskom. Tomorrow Tom meets with Mayor Jesse Moore of Waskom to seek ways the commission can be of help.

Friends Organization. Friends of the Historical Commission bylaws have been e-mailed to commission members. Annual membership fee is \$10 and if paid now will cover both 2015 and 2016.

Organizational Memberships. The membership fees for the organizations in which the commission participates are all up to date.

Vice Chair. Tom Speir expressed a need for a vice chair to be nominated at the next meeting. He believes we need to have someone who is familiar with the work of the chair of the commission to stand in whenever necessary.

Civil War Re-enactment. September 19th - 20th there will be the Civil War re-enactments at Maple Springs Farm near Hallsville.

VIII. Adjournment

The next meeting will be October 8th at the Marshall Visual Arts Center at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 3:02 p.m.

Submitted by Richard Magrill