

## HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

### Meeting Minutes

October 8<sup>th</sup> 2015

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.

**Members Present:** Tom Speir, Rose Mary Magrill, Richard Magrill, Carol Fletcher, Marty Vaughan, Doc Holliday, Joe Hudson, and Robert Wood.

**Visitor Present:** Glenda Ponder.

#### **I. Call to Order**

Tom Speir, as acting chair, called the meeting to order on Thursday, October 8<sup>th</sup> 2015 at 1:32 p.m. in the Marshall Visual Arts Center. He called attention to the changes to the standing agenda and the addition to the official announcement of the meetings of the mission statement which has been approved by the appropriate authorities.

#### **II. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of September 10<sup>th</sup> 2015 were approved as distributed.

#### **III. Treasurer's Report**

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

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

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

Tom Speir reported that he had participated in the Love Cemetery clean-up and that he has recorded it as an archeological site. The trinomial assigned to the cemetery is 41HS997.

That same day he met with the Texas Historical Commission (THC) folk in Jefferson where they did a presentation of the Timber Hill site (at the last site occupied by the Caddo Indians in the 1800s before their move to Oklahoma). The timber company which owns the land is very cooperative and wants the sites marked so that their logging operations will not disturb them. The THC folks will come back in January for further exploration of the site. (The Caddo Lake Historical Research Committee had made the request for the meeting with the THC.)

Robert Wood reported that he had made an excursion to check out the two abandoned bridges on Old US80. Kitty Henderson, his cousin, is head of the Texas Historical Bridge Commission. She is very interested in seeking to preserve these bridges. Robert took photos which he shared with the commission. (Tom has not been out there but he had asked of Robert and Thomas Richardson to visit the sites because they brought them to our attention.) Robert thinks that the iron bridge dates from the 1930s. However, according to a letter received from the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) the Warren Pony Truss bridge dates from the 1920s. It was part of the Harrison County road system and is not owned by TXDOT. The TXDOT letter was referred to Kitty Henderson. Tom can record the bridge as an archeological site. It is near oil-field operations.

The Texas Archeological Month cemetery tour on October 11<sup>th</sup> will begin with a meeting at 1 p.m. at the 1901 Courthouse. The Michelson Museum will be in charge of the tour of the Marshall Cemetery, the Starr Home will be at Greenwood Cemetery, and the History Museum at the Powder Mill Cemetery.

## **B. Archives**

Tom Speir reported that our receipt of two donated filing cabinets is still in the works. Also, the T&P Museum should continue to pursue the other two filing cabinets which have been offered.

## **C. Cemeteries**

Tom Speir reported on the Swancey Cemetery. Texas Eastman is recorded as paying taxes on it but says it is not their property. Red Oak Baptist Church is spearheading a cleanup. Texas Eastman has granted permission to access the cemetery through their property.

Marty Vaughan asked if there are cemeteries in the east of the county that have not had their graves/names listed. Tom indicated that there are some 200 cemeteries in the county and that there is a man at The Print Shop who has been listing on line all the graves in the county.

## **D. Education**

Marty Vaughan reported that 400 people attended the recent Waskom event. Gail Beal was the commission representative. Marty said she could not tell how much literature was distributed.

## **E. Historical Markers**

Tom Speir checked and all commission members present had received their invitations for the East Texas Baptist University marker dedications on October 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 a.m.

Tom reported that the commission has been asked to secure a marker in relation to Bishop College. Richard Magrill reminded the commission that the Wyalucing marker at the former First Presbyterian Church location should be considered in deciding on a location for any Bishop marker since the former Wyalucing plantation was the site of the college.

Richard also suggested that Tom follow up with Bo Ellis regarding the Bishop College archives. Some years back in one of our meetings, Bo reported on an effort to secure the location of the archives in a building in downtown Marshall.

The Wiley College markers (three) will be dedicated the week following the ETBU dedication.

#### **F. History Museum**

Becky Palmer sent her apologies for not being able to be here today. She reported that the Tuesday “Taste of Downtown” luncheons appear to be set for a good start. Tom Speir and Janet Cook visited the Gregg County Museum this summer and there is an informal pledge of mutual support between the two museums. The Gregg Museum has notified us of their “Crossroads of Empire: Early Printed Maps of the American Southwest” exhibit. It will run from October 2<sup>nd</sup> to October 24<sup>th</sup>.

#### **G. Information Technology**

Tom reported on our website statistics. We now have permission to post our agenda and minutes on the county website. Our minutes will be posted only after they have been approved by the commission.

#### **H. Oral History**

Tom Speir reported that Debbie Gullett is still interested in doing work in this area. He plans to encourage her to begin. Richard Magrill suggested that Debbie might want to see if she could start with interviewing Margaret Agnor.

#### **I. Preservation**

No report.

#### **J. Publications**

Tom Speir shared draft copies of a joint brochure by the T&P Railroad Museum, the Starr Home, the Michelson Art Museum, and the History Museum.

The four museums will cover the cost of the brochures and the commission will try to help with the distribution.

Tom also reported that he had attended the fall meeting at Davison Chapel and shared their brochure on the life and work of Judge T. Whitfield Davidson (1876-1974).

### **K. Goals**

Tom Speir reported that he is waiting on getting our Friends organization up and running before going further with the project to erect signs on US80 celebrating it as the World War II Veterans Memorial Highway. He has spoken with the mayors of Hallsville, Marshall, and Waskom regarding this project. The Hallsville and Marshall mayors have volunteered to help with fund-raising.

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

Tom Speir asked that commission members be thinking about nominees for next year's awards, indicating that we will probably need the nominations by March in order to present the commission awards in May jointly with the Landmark Preservation Board awards.

## **V. Special Reports**

### **A. 1901 Courthouse**

No report.

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

Robert Wood reported that the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party for the T&P Museum's Engine 400 is slated for this weekend. This engine is a "Mocassin" so-named because it was designed with high wheels for traveling through high water when tracks are flooded. The museum has located someone who will work in the gift shop. Things are going pretty well. There is a tremendous amount of money being spent on restoration at the Ginnochio Hotel. Workers are engaged in pulling off the

stucco and exposing the original brickwork. Robert urged commission members to stop by and see the results of this work in progress.

### **C. Starr Home**

Barbara Judkins was not present since the Starr Home is busy in preparation for the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Victorian Fair featuring “The Way We Wore” Fashion Exhibit which will be held on October 15<sup>th</sup> 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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

Today, 4:30-6:30 p.m., is the opening of the American Society of Watercolor Traveling Exhibit at the Michelson. “It has been years,” reported Susan Spears, “since we have had this great show.” The exhibit will be at the museum until December 19<sup>th</sup>.

### **E. Historic Landmark Preservation Board**

No report.

## **VI. Other**

### **Annual Luncheon Panel Discussion.**

No report.

## **VII. Administrative**

**Commission Chair.** Tom Speir reported that the letter to the county judge requesting his appointment as chair has been received and should be acted on at the next commissioners court meeting.

**Incoming Mail.** We have received two membership cards from the American Association for State and Local History and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The quarterly newsletter from the Texas Archeological Society was passed around.

**Special Meeting on Bylaws Revision.** These minutes with the proposed revision of the bylaws will be mailed out so that we can consider them at our next meeting.

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

**Protection of Old US80 Truss Bridge.** Robert Wood expressed concern that the iron bridge on Old US80 be protected from damage by erecting some form of barrier to prevent vehicular traffic on it. Any such a barrier would have to be requested of the county.

**Waskom.** Tom Speir has met with Mayor Jesse Moore of Waskom. He noted that there was concern by some that Waskom did not have any historical markers. Tom had to remind them that applications for markers are locally instigated and that the commission will gladly work with Waskom folks as they seek to apply for markers celebrating the history of the city. He reported that the commission now has a supply of brochures promoting Waskom and they have a supply of ours.

**Friends Organization.** The Friends organization has received its Certificate of Filing from Austin.

**East Texas Area Maps.** Tom Speir reported that he has gotten a stack of topographic quad maps an inch thick which cover an area reaching from Harrison County to Galveston Bay. These maps were secured from the Texas Historical Commission and were prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey. The map of Harrison County was explored by commission members both during and immediately following the meeting.

**Civil War Re-enactment.** Tom Speir reported that he had attended the Civil War re-enactments at Maple Springs Farm near Hallsville. Photos of the event have been posted on our web page. There was a good showing at the event but it did not draw the number of attendees originally anticipated.

### **VIII. Adjournment**

The next meeting will be November 12<sup>th</sup> at the Marshall Visual Arts Center at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

**Submitted by Richard Magrill**