

HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

January 14th 2016

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, Marty Vaughan, Rose Mary Magrill, Richard Magrill, Doc Halliday, Robert Wood, Thomas Richardson, Elizabeth Bradshaw, and Becky Palmer.

Visitor: Sharon Dews.

I. Call to Order

Tom Speir, chair, called the meeting to order on Thursday, January 14th 2016 at 1:31 p.m. in the Marshall Public Library. Tom welcomed all present and wished us a Happy New Year!

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of November 12th 2015 were approved as distributed.

III. Treasurer's Report

Elizabeth Bradshaw gave the treasurer's report which showed \$2,499.98 in the checking account. Two Capital One Greenwood Cemetery accounts have been closed. The Greenwood Fund is now at Bancorp South. The brokerage account still

exists. The county auditor has authorized in writing the transfer of funds to the Friends organization.

IV. The standing committee reports are as follows:

A. Archaeology

Tom Speir reported that the Warren Pony Truss bridge on Old Highway 80 (41HS998) and the other old bridge on old Highway 80 (41HS999) have both been recorded as archeological sites. There will be an intensive walking tour of the Timber Hill site in Marion County on January 24th (this was the last recorded village of the Caddo Indians before moving the tribe to Oklahoma). Paperwork must be completed regarding release of liability for the timber company before a person can participate in the tour.

Tom still needs to get with Robert Wood to record sites in the Davidson area; also Swansea Cemetery still needs to be recorded.

B. Archives

Tom Speir reported that on December 7th Ann Brannon helped with the filing. We will still need more help. (Tom and Ann got two boxes done on the 7th.)

C. Cemeteries

Thomas Richardson reported that the Coldwater Cemetery plus two more in Hallsville need to be recorded as archeological sites. He plans to call Tom Speir when ready.

Tom Speir reported that he had received a letter from a Mr. Lateff who had applied for a historic cemetery designation a couple of years ago for the Adams Cemetery. The Texas Historical Commission (THC) in Austin lost the application.

St. Joseph's Cemetery has purchased two lots to the east of the existing cemetery and will clear the lots in order to expand the cemetery.

Ann Brannon needs to know that the funds are in a new account for Greenwood Cemetery repairs. Tom has also made a Powerpoint presentation on recording and preserving historical cemeteries in Harrison County to the DAR.

D. Education

Tom Speir reported that the Region VII Educational Service Center has invited us back this June 13th to give two presentations of our work to area social studies teachers.

Sharon Dews from the Marshall ISD has taken a personal day to come speak to us about reviving the History Fair. She wants to help us recapture the experience for students. (She has been involved in history fairs since the 1990s.) Kids get to pick a topic of interest to them. She reported on past projects and explained the various levels of the competition. There are many scholarship opportunities especially at the high school level. Junior Historians are open to individuals and groups. A project may be to adopt a building, or adopt a cemetery. Grades 4-12 can participate and compete for awards. Fort McCavitt is where the annual history camp is held. Participants can learn about Indians, Buffalo Soldiers, Hispanics, etc. The camp is for grades 9-12. Students detail their entry's process and compile an annotated bibliography.

Sharon reported on the Texas History Day competition. It is very structured and very competitive. The Marshall ISD used to "own" the competition, that is, we were the usual winners. Now, because of standardized testing there is no time to spend in promoting this work. Work toward participation in National History Day in June often starts the previous spring when the state competition is over in April. Becky Palmer suggested that the History Museum and the Inez Hughes Research Center would be natural partners in promoting these activities. Elizabeth Bradshaw offered the help of the Marshall Public Library. Participants can do a research paper, a performance, or develop a web site. Winners' web sites stay up indefinitely. History Fair is more quality than quantity.

Tom expressed appreciation to Sharon for her presentation and asked where to begin? Sharon replied that we can start our own History Fair. We could work on

it in the summer. Now would be the time to contact teachers. Marshall ISD will be unlikely to participate since the 8th grade is geared toward the standardized test. Marshall High School and Junior High School are both out. It may be possible to involve Marshall at the middle school level if teachers can point to persons outside school that can help students interested in participating. Here we are talking about 5th and 6th graders. (Incidentally the Science Fair has gone the way of the History Fair.) Trinity Episcopal School might be interested in participating. The Marshall Junior High has had a lot of administrative changes.

We will need a location to house a history fair. We cannot leave exhibits up at school (they need to be left up for three days). Tom indicated that we need to develop a list of what we need to do. Becky made a commitment that the museum will help in this effort. The maximum participation the first year would be about 50 projects. We will need the list at our next meeting for us to address. Sharon, Becky, and Elizabeth have offered to take the lead on this project and report back.

E. Historical Markers

Tom Speir reported that there are three marker presentations scheduled at Wiley College in March. Commission members should receive individual invitations.

The Coach “Pop” Long marker for Wiley College has been put on hold and will be applied for next season. Doc Halliday is working on the marker for the Old Hallsville Bank. Gail Beil successfully submitted the application to the THC for the James Farmer, Jr. marker. Gail and Doc are working on gathering data for historical markers for Bishop College and Dr. Lawrence A. Nixon, M.D. and for the Elks Building as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark.

County Judge Hugh Taylor has offered to find granite stone for the Stagecoach Road marker to be re-mounted on to prevent any future theft of the marker. We have permission to erect that marker at the Pine Bluff Baptist Church. Doc is trying to find a group to help with refurbishing the marker.

F. History Museum

Becky Palmer reported that the Museum will be having an event on February 26th to hear Jean Birmingham speak on Milly Brown Sanders. Admission will be by donation and the event will be held in the courtroom of the 1901 Harrison County Courthouse. In the first week in April there will be a two-day adult day camp about the Caddo Indians and about the Civilian Conservation Corps. There will be speakers in the morning and field trips in the afternoon. At the end of June there will be the annual children's day camp. Tom reported that the inventory of Native American artifacts at the museum has been completed and both the Caddo and Alabama-Coushatta tribes have been notified.

G. Information Technology

Tom Speir reported that he and Elizabeth Bradshaw have connected with the IT Director for Harrison County. There is also a lot of Harrison County information on servers at Stephen F. Austin State University and we have permission to link those websites on our website. We also have permission to use this online material from the author of the website material, Natalie Bach-Prather. Using these resources is a way to build up an online presence.

H. Oral History

Tom Speir reported that Doc Halliday has volunteered to learn how to use our oral history equipment.

I. Preservation

No report.

J. Publications

Tom Speir reported that all publications are still awaiting completion.

K. Tourism

Geraldine Mauthe at the Convention and Visitors Bureau is out for an extended period due to health issues. Sarah O'Brian is the contact there now.

L. Goals

Tom Speir noted that we are in a holding pattern on the WWII Veterans Memorial Highway 80 project until we can gather donations for the signs, using the new Friends of the HCHC as a vehicle.

M. Annual Preservation Awards

Tom Speir asked that commission members be thinking about nominees for this year's awards, indicating that we will probably need the nominations by March in order to present the commission awards on Sunday May 15th 2016 jointly with the Landmark Preservation Board awards.

V. Special Reports

A. 1901 Courthouse

No report.

B. T & P Depot Museum

Robert Wood reported that "We are still in business and trying to prioritize needed repairs." The severe leaks have been fixed. There is still a problem with rotting wood.

C. Starr Home

Tom Speir reported that we have not heard from Barbara Judkins. Richard Magrill and Rose Mary Magrill reported that they had attended the December dedication of the Starr Home Gazebo in memory of Margie Perkins (longtime commission member). It was a very nice affair with plenty of hot chocolate and cookies and a lively duo who led the attendees in singing Christmas carols.

D. Michelson Museum of Art

Tom Speir reported that “Folk Life in the Piney Woods of East Texas” is the current exhibit at the Michelson which includes folk art paintings, gourd art, pine needle baskets, etc.

E. Historic Landmark Preservation Board

No report.

VI. Other

Annual Luncheon Panel Discussion.

No report.

Rotary Presentation. Tom Speir will do a presentation for Rotary on the 28th of February to explain what the Commission does.

VII. Administrative

Commission Vice-Chair. Tom Speir reminded us that we need to elect a vice-chair. Doc Halliday was elected.

Annual Report. Tom Speir reported that he was still working on our annual report to the THC. Under the category of hours spent on commission business Jennifer Larned had used 6500. By consent, that figure will continue to be used.

One item asked the percent of members who have completed the open meetings training. Tom will e-mail the sites again so that members may complete this training.

Incoming mail. Tom Speir reported that we had received: “History News: State and Local History;” the “Texas Archeological Society Annual Bulletin;” and the “Preservation Texas Newsletter.” By consent, we will renew the Texas Archeological Society membership.

Facebook Page. Tom noted that we still need photos for our Facebook page. Additionally, our Facebook page has reached nearly 2500 persons.

Business Cards. Business cards are available at the office.

Banner. On motion, the Commission authorized the purchase of a banner for use on tables when we have displays. It will simply say, “Harrison County Historical Commission.”

VIII. Adjournment

The next meeting will be February 11th at the T & P Depot Museum at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

Submitted by Richard Magrill