

HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

February 11th 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, Rose Mary Magrill, Richard Magrill, Robert Wood, Thomas Richardson, Elizabeth Bradshaw, Becky Palmer, Barbara Judkins, Gail K. Beil, Jean Birmingham, and Ann Brannon.

I. Call to Order

Tom Speir, chair, called the meeting to order on Thursday, March 10th 2016 at 1:31 p.m. in the T&P Depot Museum. Tom expressed appreciation to the museum for hosting our meeting and welcomed all present.

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of January 14th 2016 were approved as distributed and corrected.

III. Treasurer's Report

Elizabeth Bradshaw gave the treasurer's report which showed \$2,470.35 in the checking account. The two Commission accounts at Capital One are being closed out to Bancorp South. These will be transferred to the Friends organization in accordance with the authorization in writing from the county auditor. Elizabeth and Rose Mary Magrill will hopefully accomplish that transfer later this afternoon.

IV. The standing committee reports are as follows:

A. Archaeology

Tom Speir reported that the Swancey Cemetery has been recorded as an archeological site (41HS1000).

B. Archives

Tom Speir reported that on February 2nd and 9th Gail Beil came down to the office and significantly aided the filing project.

C. Cemeteries

Thomas Richardson commented on the newspaper report on the Fort Crawford Cemetery. (The Fort Crawford referred to is the inspiration for the fictitious Civil War battle that is now re-enacted each fall.) Thomas pointed out that the article says that the Fort was established in 1849, but that is not correct as there is no record concerning when the Fort was built.

Tom Speir reported that he and Robert Wood had visited the Bluff Springs Cemetery in northwest Harrison County. It is well cared for and enclosed with a chain link fence.

Richard Magrill reported that a new iron fence is going up at Ewing Chapel Cemetery.

D. Education

Tom Speir shared a report from Sharon Dews that she had sent out two e-mails to all MISD middle school ACE (afternoon program) coordinators regarding our hope to revive the History Fair. She has also sent e-mails to the two middle school principals and the Junior High School principal. Two replies have been received: Carver Elementary declined to participate and Robert E. Lee Elementary said they would like to participate.

Barbara Judkins was added to the History Fair Committee to serve with Sharon Dews, Becky Palmer, and Elizabeth Bradshaw.

The Commission took note of several speaking engagements by Tom Speir: Rotary Club, Master Naturalists, and Forum 50 (a woman's club).

E. Historical Markers

Gail Beil reported that there will be a Wiley College / Southern Methodist University debate to raise money for the James Farmer marker. This event is to help raise awareness of James Farmer, his life and work. On Friday the 18th of March, Wiley will hold a dedication ceremony in its Julius S. Scott, Sr. Chapel for the historical markers celebrating the lives of Matthew W. Dogan, Sr., H.B. Pemberton, and Melvin B. Tolson.

Gail also reported that she is working on a marker application for Lawrence Aaron Nixon who mounted the successful court challenge to the all-white primary system in Texas.

Tom Speir reported that the marker application for Coach "Pop" Long will be sent in this fall.

There was discussion of having markers powder-coated. The foundry that makes the markers will be contacted to see if they can do the work. The tricky part of the process is removing the powder-coating from the letters. It was noted that the marker at First United Methodist Church and the Confederate Marker at Marshall Cemetery are among the five or so in the county that have been powder-coated.

F. History Museum

Becky Palmer reported that the Museum will be having an event on Friday February 26th with seating beginning at 5:30 p.m. for a 6:00 p.m. presentation on Milly Brown Sanders by Jean Birmingham. Admission will be a donation and the event will be held in the courtroom of the 1901 Harrison County Courthouse. Ms. Sanders was commended by Douglas McArthur for her work in the Philippines. If the Museum gets fifty advance reservations then those spots will be guaranteed. Last minute folks may not get a seat since space in the courtroom is limited.

Becky noted that the adult day camp is now scheduled for the 27th and 28th. The Research Center may be open on Wednesdays. The Internet connection comes and goes. Anyone hoping to use the Research Center will need to check with the museum to see if volunteers are present and be prepared for lots of dust.

There is an organization in Dallas called Bishop Blue that is trying to collect from individuals any papers that are related to Bishop College and to deposit the same in Marshall in a house. We need to see if we can provide a more fireproof location.

G. Information Technology

Tom Speir reported that he and Elizabeth Bradshaw are adding links to our web page.

H. Oral History

Tom Speir reported that Elizabeth Bradshaw and Doc Halliday have been to the office to work with our oral history equipment.

I. Preservation.

Tom Speir reported that on February 18th Preservation Texas is having a summit. He also noted that the H.B. Pemberton Heritage Center at Wiley College has new brochures. Samples were passed out to those present. Tom plans to meet with Sabine Farms to see if they can put together a brochure for us to promote. He will also try to work with Davidson Chapel on a brochure.

J. Publications

Tom Speir reported that all publications are still awaiting completion.

K. Tourism

Tom Speir reported that on March 28th Sarah O'Brian will have a workshop on social media and how to promote events/organizations.

L. Goals

Tom Speir asked if anyone had any new goals to discuss. He noted that we are in a holding pattern on the WWII Veterans Memorial Highway 80 project until we can gather \$4,000 in donations for the signs, using the new Friends of the HCHC as a vehicle. We must get all of the Friends organizational documents and filings completed in the next few weeks in order for the organization to be able to receive gifts and provide the funding. A Mr. Wong who is a TxDOT official will scout for locations for the signs. At this point it appears that we will be the first county to provide such signs.

M. Annual Preservation Awards

Tom Speir asked if there were any nominations for the annual awards. We could ask the public for nominations. Ann Brannon, Elizabeth Bradshaw, and Barbara Judkins will serve as the awards committee. Tom suggested that we avoid if possible nominating members of the commission. We will 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

Becky Palmer reported that some repairs are anticipated, including water issues related to condensation on the windows.

B. Texas & Pacific Depot Museum

Robert Wood reported that the school tours that are being requested can be performed by anyone with a few minutes of training. The Depot Museum could use help in handling these tours. Happily, attendance is increasing at the depot.

C. Starr Home

Barbara Judkins reported that the Starr Home has filed a five-year plan. The garage that faces Travis Street will become a visitor center and the area in the house will be returned to home use. Money is available but it may take time to get the work done. The flooring in the Blake House will be renovated. Lots of improvements are planned which will make space available for more events. Fun programming is planned for spring break including giant games outside.

D. Michelson Museum of Art

Tom Speir shared information on a special Valentine's Day event at the Michelson. There will a screening and reception. "Rendez-vous," a short film inspired by Isadora Duncan's autobiography will be shown.

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

The Medallion. All Commission members are not yet getting it.

Mail. Various items have been received. The new East Texas Historical Journal was passed around.

Annual Report. The annual report has been finished and sent to the Commissioners Court for approval.

Facebook Page. Photos are still needed for our Facebook page.

Signage. Bids for the table banner authorized at the last meeting were discussed. Tom Speir will check into the cost of a pop-up sign as alternative to the table banner. Will need the banner/sign/something to use the first time in early June.

Bylaws. The new Bylaws of the Commission were approved and signed by the County Commission. They are done!

Now we need to complete the Bylaws for the Friends organization.

VIII. Adjournment

The next meeting will be March 10th at the T&P Depot Museum at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 3:11 p.m.

Submitted by Richard Magrill