

HARRISON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

March 10th 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, Barbara Judkins, Gail K. Beil, Ann Brannon, Alaina Jones, and Joey Hudson.

Visitors: Sarah C. Randow (Gregg County Historical Commission), Thomas Chevaillier (son of Ann Brannon), and Robin Richardson (*Marshall News Messenger*).

I. Call to Order

Tom Speir, chair, called the meeting to order on Thursday, March 10th 2016 at 1:32 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 February 11th 2016 were approved as distributed and corrected.

III. Treasurer's Report

Elizabeth Bradshaw reported that she and Rose Mary Magrill had completed all the transfers authorized by the county auditor to the Friends of the Harrison County Historical Commission (hereinafter, "the Friends"). These transfers include the following:

Brokerage account	\$ 5,520.28
Certificate of deposit	3,300.00

Certificate of deposit	7,075.12
Greenwood Cemetery Fund	3,223.02
HC Historical Commission Fund	4,295.35

Tom Speir noted that in the future Elizabeth would make reports on these funds to the Board of Directors of the Friends and that he would be giving the treasurer's report to the Commission in relation to expenditures from the budget provided by the Harrison County Commission.

IV. The standing committee reports are as follows:

A. Archaeology

Tom Speir reported the following recorded as archeological sites: Bluff Springs Cemetery (41HS1001); Sabine Farms Town (41HS1002); and Harrison County Old Airport Hanger 11 (41HS1003). With regard to Hanger 11 it should be noted that the slab of the original location has been recorded; the actual building has continued in use on a site near the terminal.

A visit to Hynson Springs is planned.

Barbara Judkins reminded the Commission that October is Texas Archeology Awareness Month. The Starr Home is considering having a story time during that month. There will also be a cemetery tour like the one held last year.

B. Archives

Tom Speir reported that work continues slowly in this area. He has been transferring files into the new cabinets from the older ones, but he has not been able to address the filing of the boxes.

C. Cemeteries

Thomas Richardson is working on access to the Young Mill's Pond. He has gotten permission to visit the Young Cemetery

Tom Speir reported that the materials that Mr. Lateff had prepared to secure a historic cemetery designation for the Adams Cemetery had been located in the Commission's office and the application is being forward. He passed around a copy of the *Origin & History of Adams Cemetery: Black Pioneers Who Helped Shape Harrison County*.

Rose Mary Magrill invited all members of the Commission to attend the annual Ewing Chapel Cemetery Day on April 2nd (the Saturday after Easter

Sunday). Activities will start at 9:30 a.m. at the Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Marshall (corner of Indian Springs Road and FM 31) with registration, coffee, and conversation. At 10:00 a.m., Doc Halliday, a member of the Commission, will speak on the Civil War period in and around the cemetery. He will be followed by Patty Craig who will share information about the experiences of individual cemetery families during the Civil War. All are invited for the lunch as well as the program. The lunch is free but please notify Rose Mary at rmmagrill@gmail.com. (Lunch reservation deadline is March 25th.)

Tom also called attention to an upcoming meeting at Peoples Funeral Home Annex regarding the Powder Mill Cemetery.

Sarah C. Randow, a member of the Gregg County Historical Commission, reported on Swancey Cemetery. She and her husband have located around 30 tombstones (out of 80 death certificates indicating burial there). The cemetery has three pre-1900 graves and 1966 was last burial. She and her husband have been the only workers and would appreciate any who would be willing to help with this work. The cemetery is within the city limits of Longview but is located near Texas Eastman just inside Harrison County.

Tom noted that Mr. Lateff (mentioned in connection with the Adams Cemetery above) had also supplied a list of African-American cemeteries which he has recorded at the county clerk's office.

Ann Brannon reported that the work authorized at Greenwood Cemetery has not progressed well. Meadowbrook Funeral Home is currently owed \$180 for work completed. The cemetery committee is currently looking for alternatives in securing the restoration work that is needed.

D. Education

Tom Speir noted that the meeting of the History Fair Committee (composed of Sharon Dews, Becky Palmer, Barbara Judkins, and Elizabeth Bradshaw) had been postponed due to high water. The committee will bring recommendations when a meeting is held.

Tom also reported that he has been asked to make a presentation on the work of the Commission to the W.W. Heartsill Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans on March 22nd.

E. Historical Markers

Gail Beil reminded the Commission that on Friday the 18th of March, Wiley College 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. Tom reported that a recent email had urged commission members to rsvp for this event.

Gail also reported that there will be a Wiley College / Southern Methodist University debate. This event, originally planned to raise money for the James Farmer marker, is now primarily focused on raising awareness of James Farmer, his life and work.¹ People need to know that Farmer, leader of the Congress of Racial Equality, was one of the “big four” in the civil rights struggles of the 1960s along with Whitney Young of the National Urban League, Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, and Martin Luther King of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. These debates will take place in the courtroom of the 1901 Harrison County Courthouse. Each night there will be a debate on affirmative action accompanied by an oral interpretive presentation. One night the presentation will deal with the Tuskegee Airmen and the other night will include readings from the works of James Farmer. Any funds contributed beyond expenses will be provided to Wiley College for the support of its debate team.

The James Farmer marker will be located on the corner near the old Paramount Theater. It is expected that the restoration work on the Paramount’s exterior front and the interior lobby will be completed in time for its use as a venue for events connected with the marker dedication. The marker will be dedicated by Bill Moyers sometime in September.

Gail also reported that she continues to work on a marker application for Lawrence Aaron Nixon who mounted the successful court challenge to the all-white primary system in Texas. She is also working on a marker for the old Cities Service gas service station building just north of First United Methodist Church.

Work also continues on a marker for the old Elks Building.

Doc Halliday is working on a marker application for the Hallsville Bank building.

The dedication of the marker for the Bethel United Methodist Camp Meeting and Church in Elysian Fields is scheduled for August 21st.

Concerning restoration work on markers, Tom reported that Judge Taylor has located a source for a granite block on which to mount that Stagecoach Road

¹ Funds for the marker have been provided by a private donation.

marker at its new location. He also reported that the foundry that produces the markers questions the value of powder-coating them. The THC recommends using automobile grade enamel for restoring the painted surfaces of faded markers. He noted that work on the Stagecoach Road marker can be done more easily, since it is currently not yet remounted. Other faded markers will have to be restored where they are mounted. We will need portable tools for work on them. Gail Beil asked that Commission members note and report any markers that are faded and in need of refurbishing. Tom noted that the Sons of Confederate Veterans would like to refinish the Powder Mill and Powder Mill Cemetery markers.

F. History Museum

Tom Speir's meeting with Becky Palmer this morning was cancelled.

G. Information Technology

Tom Speir and Elizabeth Bradshaw reported that our website is upgraded with many improvements and looks good.

H. Oral History

Elizabeth Bradshaw reported that she has not been able to find time to read the manuals accompanying our new oral history equipment. Tom Speir noted that we have a long list of people that need to be interviewed. His wife plans to work on the list this summer.

I. Preservation.

Tom Speir reported on the plans for the resurfacing of Stagecoach Road. It will need an eight inch proper foundation. It will have gravel on top to give the road its proper historic appearance. Work will probably take place this summer. The THC has given its blessing regarding the plans.

Tom reported that the Harrison County Airport Terminal Building is eligible for the national register and that it has been moved to the Preservation Texas list of most endangered buildings for 2016. Tom has met with the County Judge and assured him that we are not opposed to a new terminal at the airport but do have a responsibility to advocate for the preservation of the old terminal. Right now nothing will happen due to the need to abate the lead paint and asbestos. Individuals are planning to organize to seek its preservation.

Barbara Judkins reported on a building at the Starr Ranch. The house is a pretty piece of architecture. The Federal government (which owns the land) does not have the money to preserve it nor does the Commission. Barbara expressed the hope that if the building is demolished that we will at least seek to have a historical marker erected at the site. Local citizens may organize to seek the preservation of the home. Barbara noted that it could be used as a place for local meetings and other events.

Tom reported on plans to collect materials at Sabine Farms and place them under a roof so that they can be used in future restoration work at the site. He noted that Sabine Farms is currently well kept.

J. Publications

Tom Speir noted an advertising piece which he had picked up at the Central Fire Station and wondered if it would be useful to place a Commission ad in it. Joey Hudson explained that the advertising company solicits the ads and the Central Fire simply provides space where they can be picked up. Joey thinks there are better ways to spend the Commission's advertising money. Tom reported that all publications are still awaiting completion.

K. Tourism

Tom Speir reported that on March 28th Sarah O'Brien at the Convention and Visitors Center will be leaving. She will be moving to Bastrop to assume new duties there.

Gail Beil wondered if it was time to begin a revival of Stagecoach Days.

L. Goals

Tom Speir asked if anyone had any new goals to discuss. With regard to the signs for the WWII Veterans Memorial Highway 80 project we are waiting until we can gather \$4,000 in donations for the signs, using the new Friends of the HCHC as a vehicle.

M. Annual Preservation Awards

Ann Brannon, Elizabeth Bradshaw, and Barbara Judkins reported on possible recipients of the various awards. Ann Brannon submitted Tony Crosby for the Max Lale Award for Historic Preservation. Barbara Judkins submitted Ivan O.

White for the Marjorie Perkins Award for Outstanding Volunteer of the Year. Elizabeth Bradshaw submitted Janet Cook for the Award of Merit.

There was a lengthy discussion of the awards. It was pointed out that Ivan O. White was an employee of Wiley College and his work on the markers there was a part of his paid work and not as a volunteer. It was also suggested that Janet Cook may have already received an award. (Subsequent research showed that she received the Chairman's Award in 2012.)

The addition of a Civic Service Award which could be given to persons in recognition of their service to Commission projects in the course of their employment (as distinct from volunteer work) was suggested as a possibility.

The current nominations were tabled and the Commission will consider any revised recommendations and nominations next month.

V. Special Reports

A. 1901 Courthouse

No report.

B. Texas & Pacific Depot Museum

Robert Wood reported that the Depot Museum was "plugging along." Work continues on getting parts to repair the handicapped elevator. All the caulking of the windows, etc. has been done and paid for. As it disbanded, the MarTex Lions Club made a gift to the museum.

C. Starr Home

Barbara Judkins reported there will be giant games next week during spring break. The Blake House is being improved.

D. Michelson Museum of Art

The Folk Life in the Piney Woods exhibit will close on March 12th.

E. Historic Landmark Preservation Board

No report.

VI. Other

Annual Luncheon Panel Discussion.

Gail Beil reported that the History Museum is providing annual luncheon panel events. The Commission will support the museum's efforts and suggest topics and speakers for the discussions.

VII. Administrative

Annual Report. The annual report was approved by the Commissioner's Court and was submitted to the THC within the proper time-frame.

Workshop. On May 6th the THC will hold a workshop in Alto, Texas to provide training for members of the county historical commissions. Tom Speir and several other commission members are planning to attend.

Signage. Portable signage for use by the Commission when making presentations is still under consideration. A pop-up sign will probably cost \$500. However, such a sign would be very functional.

Bylaws. The Bylaws for the Friends organization will be considered at its meeting following this one.

VIII. Adjournment

The next meeting will be April 14th at the T&P Depot Museum at 1:30 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 3:11 p.m.

Submitted by Richard Magrill

