

Hays County Historical Commission

Minutes of May 27, 2021

The meeting of the Hays County Historical Commission was held May 27th virtually on ZOOM. Kate Johnson, chair, called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm (CST).

Roll Call

A quorum was present at roll call.

Present: Cynthia Allison, Delbert Bassett, Marie Bassett, Eric Beckers, Linda Coker, Anthony Davis, Robert Frizzell, Jeremy Garrett, Patrick Gibson, Kate Johnson, Lila Knight, Jo Landon, Cindy Meyer, Ralph Meyer, Sally Ramirez, Willie Tenorio, Alison Tudor, Rosina Valle, Vanessa Westbrook

Absent (all excused): Cindy Hunter, Ryan Patrick Perkins, Trish Randow, Daphne Tenorio
Guests: Anita Collins; unidentified caller on phone

Citizens Comments

There were no citizens comments.

Approval of Minutes

Patrick Gibson made a motion to accept the minutes from April 22, 2021. The motion was seconded by Robert Frizzell and passed unanimously.

Announcements

Chair Johnson announced that the HCHC will begin meeting in-person June 24th in Buda. This will be an indoor-outdoor event and she recommended comfortable shoes (heels are not advisable). Details will be forthcoming.

A significant historic house is threatened with demolition in the Dunbar Historic District (locally designated by the city). This house is an outstanding example of early 20th century vernacular architecture and is associated with the Ulysses Cephas family. In addition, the recent survey of San Marcos lists it as a high priority property individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. I will keep you informed on this.

Officers' Reports

Secretary Knight reminded everyone to send in their volunteer hours each month. She also encouraged anyone who has not yet taken the Open Meetings online training to please do so and forward the certificate of completion to the Secretary.

Willie Tenorio gave the Treasurer's report in the absence of Daphne Tenorio. The budget for the forthcoming year is being filed with the Auditor's Office. There will be no increase in the amount requested from Hays County from our current fiscal year. The auditor is forwarding all balances to the Treasurer this week and she will make a report available at the next meeting. The treasurer reminded everyone to please submit copies of any expenditures to her and to consult with her on making any deposits.

Committee Reports

African-American Heritage Committee

Committee Chair Vanessa Westbrook reported there will be a Proclamation for Juneteenth on the June 1st agenda for the Hays County Commissioners Court. She urged everyone to attend and people should arrive by 8:45 am.

There will be a series of events taking place throughout the county to celebrate Juneteenth. She will send a list of events to Lila for distribution to all the members.

Cemetery Committee

Committee Chair Jo Landon reported that the revised inventory (spreadsheet) for San Vicente Cemetery is a work in progress. She recently met with Marie Bassett and Cindy Dally. Ms. Dally suggested adding the location of gravesites which would be useful to family members in locating their family members.

The THC has received the funds for the historic cemetery designation application for the Peal-Pleasant Valley Cemetery's Medallion plaque (with name and date). Once approved by the THC at their quarterly meeting, the plaque will be ordered from the foundry.

Chair Landon is planning a field trip to several cemeteries on June 3rd. Details will be sent to committee members and the trip may focus on small family cemeteries.

Certified Local Government Committee

Committee Chair Lila Knight reported on the committee meeting held May 14th. A regular schedule of future meetings will be held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 2:00 pm (CST). She reported to the committee on the recent review of three Section 106 projects. The committee also reviewed the CLG Program requirements.

Knight applauded all of the members of the Committee for their enthusiastic participation in the committee and for everyone having completed the required CLG training so quickly.

Courthouse Committee

Committee Chair Linda Coker announced the museum reopened Saturday, May 8th. She thanked Rosina Valle and Lila Knight for opening the museum so the chair could take a short family vacation. Attendance at the museum over the last month has been very good. Chair Johnson asked if there have been any private tours requested yet, but Coker reported not at this time.

There will be an event at the reopening of the Merriman Cabin, located in Veramendi Plaza, on June 26th. She encouraged everyone to attend as they will be mentioning the Courthouse Museum.

A member of the Nance Family contacted Coker and wanted to donate family papers and photographs. Those should be arriving in the archives soon. Knight volunteered to help with this.

Anita Collins has scheduled a meeting in June to begin working on plans for Christmas decorations. Coker thanked Ms. Collins for her help on this.

Vanessa Westbrook added that the opening of the museum on Tuesdays is also going well with good attendance.

Hispanic Heritage Committee

Committee Chair Willie Tenorio reported on the event held on Tuesday, May 4th for Cinco de Mayo at the Courthouse. The Hays County Commissioners Court signed a Proclamation in Celebration of Cinco de Mayo. Afterwards, copies of the book on the Hispanic History of San Marcos, *Sueños y recuerdos del pasado*, were sold in the rotunda. Many people were interested in the book as its existence is not well known since its first publication in 2000. Tenorio thanked Rosina Valle for helping at the booth and Chair Johnson complimented Ms. Valle on the beautiful decorations she provided.

The committee will be pursuing the publication of a second volume that will encompass the entire county. Many people have reached out to the committee with offers of their family stories. This will be discussed at the next committee meeting.

Historical Marker Committee

Committee Chair Marie Bassett reported that the committee finally held an in-person meeting on May 8th with all but one members in attendance. Everyone was excited to finally be able to meet in person once again. The committee reviewed the status of pending marker applications, the upcoming Undertold Marker schedule, and preliminary plans for the future dedication of the Jacob's Well marker (probably in the fall). The next committee meeting will discuss any additional marker reviews and edits, a strategy for inventorying our existing markers, and the possibility of a third volume on markers (probably in digital form).

Chair Bassett stated the THC deadline for marker applications closed May 15th. Only one application was received during this period. Henry Oles submitted an application for a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark marker for the Old Mill in San Marcos. Bassett thanked Eric Beckers for his last minute review and sharp eye in finding typographical errors.

Chair Bassett gave an update on the status of pending markers, commenting that it appears the THC Marker Program is finally catching up after numerous delays from the pandemic and the search for a new foundry.

The latest version of the inscription text for the La Sociedad Mutualista Cuauhtémoc marker is undergoing review by the committee and the sponsor.

The final text for the marker inscription for the Kyle Depot has been submitted and is awaiting approval by the THC at their next quarterly meeting on July 29th. After final approval, it will take approximately two months to receive the marker from the foundry.

The first version of the text for the inscription for the Alba Ranch Marker is currently being reviewed by the committee and the Alba descendants.

The first version of the text for the marker inscription for the William B. Travis League has been reviewed by both the committee and the sponsor. The edited text is awaiting approval by the THC staff.

Bassett was pleased to announce that the requested replacement of the Don Felipe Roque de la Portilla marker has been approved by THC. The first version of the inscription for the Don Felipe Roque de la Portilla marker has been reviewed by the committee. With the approval of THC staff, it was also forwarded to a representative of the Welder family (the sponsor for the original 1976 marker) for their comments. The Welder family suggested some editorial changes (no factual changes), but those might exceed the maximum number of characters.

The next marker application window will be for Undertold Markers. Application forms will be available on the THC website in August. Applications must be submitted to the THC between October 1st and November 1st. The applications for this particular type of marker can be submitted either directly to the THC or through the HCHC marker committee. Everyone should be advised that if submitted to the HCHC marker committee, the applications should be submitted before November 15th so there is adequate time for review by the committee members.

Chair Bassett thanked all her committee members for their dedicated work.

Kyle Railroad Depot and Heritage Center

In the absence of Committee Chair Trisha Randow, committee member Patrick Gibson gave the report. The Kyle Railroad Depot and Heritage Center reopened on May 1st. In less than a month, there have been 38 visitors. It is wonderful to open the doors to our visitors again, who have shown an enthusiastic response for the reopening.

There have been several donations to the Kyle Depot this past month. Chair Kate Johnson donated a steamer trunk with all the original hangars and other details. Frank Herzog donated a 1953 Olympia typewriter. HCHC member Allison Tudor donated an antique cotton bale dolly. Life Changes Estate Sales donated two more steamer trunks, two hat boxes, and some antique clothing. The Kyle Depot also received a donation of additional signal lights, including one from the IG&N. We also have received several donations and the sale of items has been brisk.

Although we have experienced several very heavy rains with high winds, there have been no further leaks into the Caboose.

Marie Bassett mentioned that there were several visitors, teenagers, who were very engaged and excited.

Natural Heritage Committee

Committee Chair Delbert Bassett reported on the success of the Beacon Hill tour with Minnette Marr, a representative of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. It was well attended and everyone learned about new plants and enjoyed the tour.

The committee will begin to research how plants were used in the past by Native Americans and early settlers during our future tours. The recent rains have prevented many of the committee's outside activities (but the rain is most welcome).

Chair Bassett stated he was going to continue his practice of having a committee member to add to the report to the HCHC meeting each month. Ryan Patrick Perkins was to report this month, but a previous meeting with the City of San Marcos prevented him from making his report this evening.

Chair Johnson suggested Bassett bring some actual examples or photographs of these plants at a future meeting.

Old Jail Committee

Committee Chair Johnson has no report, but the committee will be meeting next month.

Oral History Committee

Chair Kate Johnson reported that the oral history committee has been suspended for June and July. She expressed her appreciation for the committee members' patience during the pandemic.

Technology and Website

Committee Chair Vanessa Westbrook on the quarterly report on the statistics for the HCHC website. There have been 13,607 visitors and 190,420 hits on the website. The month of March had the largest volume of traffic. We now have a "gallery" section with photographs and captions. Please submit historic photographs if you have any. They should be at least 50 years of age. Westbrook will meet with Jo Landon, chair of the cemetery committee, June 1st to review the cemetery section of the website.

Vanessa Westbrook reported that we currently have 886 followers on our Facebook page. There were 822 "likes" with our most popular post being the Natural Heritage post (275 people viewed it in April and remained on the page for a considerable time). In May, 757 visited the website during the period when we highlighted the Hispanic Heritage Committee event and book sale. Chair Westbrook will post a screenshot of our current meeting.

Adjourn

Delbert Bassett made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Vanessa Westbrook seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:51 pm (CST)

Submitted by Lila Knight, Secretary