

Hays County Historical Commission

Minutes of August 24, 2023

The meeting of the Hays County Historical Commission was held August 24, 2023 at the Kyle Railroad Depot and Heritage Center, Kyle, Texas. Linda Coker, chair, called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. (CST).

Roll Call

A quorum was present at roll call.

Present: Cynthia Allison, Frank Arredondo, Alex Banbury, Delbert Bassett, Marie Bassett, Linda Coker, Anita Collins, Nico Costilla, Anthony Davis, Johnny Flores, Robert Frizzell, Jeremy Garrett, Hoot Gibson, Faye Haskins, Jim Herbert, Kate Johnson (ex-officio), Lila Knight, Jo Landon, Echo Uribe

Absent: Cindy Meyer, Ralph Meyer, Ryan Patrick Perkins, Sally Ramirez, Robert Rizo, Rosina Valle

Citizens Present: None

Citizens Comments

There were no public comments from citizens.

Announcements

Chair Linda Coker reported several members attended recent training and history conferences, including the Saving Texas History Conference, sponsored by the General Land Office, and the El Camino Real Trail Association in Goliad. She announced upcoming events, including the Preservation Texas Regional Preservation Summit in San Marcos on September 21st. She described the program and encourage people to sign up following the meeting. The HCHC is a member of Preservation Texas.

The Chair met recently with County Commissioners Ingalsbe and Cohen to inform them of our activities.

Chair Coker introduced our newest member, Alex Banbury, who will be replacing Janofa Banbury. Alex is the President of the Dunbar Heritage Association. The organization was founded by Harvey Miller and sponsors the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. March, Black History Month events, the Harvey Miller Day of Service in San Marcos (with plans to go county-wide),

Juneteenth events, and Kwanzaa celebration one the Courthouse Square (held for the first time in 2022).

Everyone was asked to take out their phones and sign up for two Facebook pages (Hays County Historical Commission and the Kyle Railroad Depot and Heritage Center) and to subscribe to the HCHC You Tube page. Anthony Davis helped any member as necessary. It was also suggested they follow the Dunbar Heritage Association one their Facebook page

Chair Coker announced that Ryan Patrick Perkins recently resigned as chair of the Historic Jail Restoration Committee. Coker appointed Lila Knight as he new chair.

The Chair also reviewed the responsibilities of the chairs. She asked each chair to include her on all correspondence and meeting dates so we can keep a centralized record in the HCHC archives. Per our bylaws, changes in membership of a committee should be reported to both the HCHC Chair, the secretary and the committee chair for record-keeping purposes. The Bylaws state that anyone can volunteer for a committee, as long as the committee chair has not set a maximum number of members. If any committee has a quorum of the entire HCHC membership (13) on the committee, it will be necessary to comply with the Open Meetings Act and properly post the agenda 72 hours in advance of the meeting. The HCHC Chair also requested all committee chairs submit their written report to the secretary to ensure proper spelling and accurate information.

Approval of Minutes

Several members made corrections to the minutes of June 22, 2023. Jim Herbert moved to approve the minutes of June 22, 2023, as corrected. The motion was seconded by Hoot Gibson and passed unanimously.

The secretary, Lila Knight, apologized for not having the May minutes completed. She thanked Anthony Davis for supplying her with a recording of the meeting, as she was out sick with covid. The approval of the May minutes was postponed.

Treasurer's Report

Cynthia Allison reported on the fund balance for the HCHC accounts as \$12,268.35. Chair Coker added that there are several purchase order requests in process including approximately \$5,500 for display cases for the Courthouse Museum and the Kyle Railroad Depot and Heritage Center. Additional upcoming expenses include costs for continuing education and exhibitions (Hispanic Heritage exhibit and updates to existing displays).

Jo Landon had a question about how much money was remaining in the cemetery budget. She will contact the Treasurer's Office for clarification.

Executive Committee Report

Chair Coker reported a meeting was held July 7th. The updates to the Bylaws will be postponed until later as they were amended only two years ago. The committee members agreed the no changes were needed immediately. The Executive Committee also held a general discussion of the organization of the HCHC as a whole and our progress thus far inn 2023.

Anita Collins asked if the Bylaws Committee had been dissolved. Chair Coker explained it was an Ad Hoc Committee and not a required standing committee nor a committee regarding a building and exhibits, nor a significant area for Hays County history.

Anita Collins asked if Chair Coker would consider placing a request for an amendment to the Bylaws on a future agenda. Chair Coker responded she could see no reason why she would not honor a request for an agenda item. But the specifics of an amendment would need to be sent along with the request so that all of the HCHC members could be well-informed before they voted on such an agenda item.

Committee Reports

Historical Marker Committee

Committee Chair Jeremy Garrett gave an update on the many markers currently in process:

(1) Completed the first round of edits for two RTHL marker inscriptions: 108 S. Nance St. and the Max E. Schiwitz Homestead

(2) Currently editing the second draft of the marker inscription for: San Vincente Cemetery, which is much improved over the first draft. The THC included our suggestion to include the fact that the cemetery was established during segregation. THC also incorporated our suggestion to include the Mendez family, who have been custodians of the cemetery for generations.

(3) Final approval for the following marker narratives were submitted to THC: Peal-Pleasant Valley Cemetery and the Bunton Branch Bridge replacement marker (destroyed bay a truck hitting it). Those will go up for the approval of THC at their next quarterly meeting We hope to have the marker inscriptions by late this year,

(4) The Undertold Marker application window will be open from Oct 1st through Nov 15th.

(a) Wallace Mountain Cemetery's association has expressed an interest in applying for an Undertold marker. Marie Bassett is helping others to edit the narrative. If the cemetery is not granted an Undertold marker, they may submit this for a regular Historic Texas Cemetery Marker in the spring.

(b) Marker Committee members are currently doing independent research for some Undertold applications, as well as working with a local sponsor to get their application out that fall. I'll be updating you on those submissions at our next few meetings.

Committee Chair Garrett reported the marker for the San Marcos-Blanco Cemetery was recently destroyed by a car and moved to the county's Yarrington Road facility.

The Committee is reviewing the marker's inscription for any incorrect information, which would allow the HCHC to receive a free replacement marker next year. Garrett thanked members Marie and Echo for their work on obtaining a replacement marker for Dr. Joseph Pound (recently approved by THC).

Committee Chair Garrett invited the entire HCHC membership to a marker unveiling this coming weekend. Vista Brewing and the Driftwood Historical Conservation Society will unveil the William B. Travis League Marker this Saturday at 12:30pm. Vista Brewing has graciously acknowledged our hard work on this marker.

Cemetery Committee

Committee Chair Jo Landon reported that the San Vicente and the Allen-Good cemeteries will be added to the maintenance contract when it is rebid in January. The County is currently maintaining 12 to 13 cemeteries.

The paper work for the Historic Texas Cemetery (HTC) Designation of the Allen-Good Cemetery should be received in the next couple of weeks. Jardine's Texas Foods in Buda are considering sponsoring the subject marker. The HTC Designation for Skyview Cemetery will be the committee's next priority.

Anita Collins wanted to know the difference between the cemetery maintenance fund and the cemetery preservation fund. Committee Chair Landon explained the difference: the maintenance fund allows for periodic mowing of cemeteries with no active cemetery associations to care for them while the preservation fund pays for miscellaneous items such as deed filings for HTCs and repairs to fences.

CLG Committee

Committee Chair Lila Knight reported on the CLG Committee held August 2nd. The committee members approved our statement of goals and objectives per THC requirements.

The members had a lengthy discussion on what type of project to propose for a CLG grant project. It was decided to do a multi-phase project to begin with a re-survey plan followed by a survey of the rural areas of the county, ETJs of incorporated cities and smaller cities with no historic preservation ordinance. Currently, five cities in Hays County have their own historic

preservation ordinance and are undertaking their own surveys. Any grant, however, is contingent upon our ability to have a 50% match in the HCHC budget. The discussion will be continued at the September meeting.

The members of the committee will be reviewing the Wimberley Downtown Square National Register nomination and will submit comments to THC per the CLG requirements.

Anita Collins asked why precincts one through four in that order for a re-survey. Knight responded that the re-survey plan would determine the order of precincts. CLLG committee member Echo Uribe added that we looked at ethnic make-up of the four precincts and other factors (such as growth rates), but a final decision would not be made until the re-survey plan was underway.

Information Technology and Social Media Report

Anthony Davis reported that, as off noon today, the HCHC website has had 25,990 visits with 18,675 unique visitors and 252,028 hits. In the month of July, the website has had 3,294 visits with 2,450 unique visitors and 30,784 hits. The month of August witnessed 2,470 visits with 1,884 unique visitors and 24,112 hits.

Anthony explained the difference between “hits” and “visits.” Hits are the activity from the website’s server per website requests. Visits are the activity from the website being loaded from the server. Hits always outnumber visits as each asset on a page (like the banner, hyperlinks, tab models, etc. are loaded and recorded as hits

On Facebook, the HCHC page has 950 likes and 1,030 followers. The largest number of views was on August 14th with a post on the passing of Richard Kidd (272 total). The Train Depot page has 762 likes and 796 followers. The largest number of views was on August 3rd with a post on the the Texas State Railroad and Strasburg Railroad No. 90 (90 total).

Since its recent establishment over the summer, the HCHC You Tube channel has 15 subscribers with a total of 601 views. There has been a total of 76.9 hours of viewing. The most popular videos viewed are “Next Stop Kyle” (152 views and 2 likes); “Captain Jack” (143 views and 1 like), and; “The 101 Ranch” (48 views and 1 like). Two videos on our You Tube channel, “Captain Jack” and “A Road Remembered” are now fully subtitled in English and Spanish. The next upload project is an oral history series from Kyle provided to us by Preservation Associates Inc.

Anthony reported he is working to start an Instagram account to allow for double-posts from the Meta Services. The Linked-In page is now up but he is uncertain of the type of content. He is considering a “dedicated” page for anyone wanting to apply their work and volunteer information to their own profiles.

Anita Collins requested a “calendar of events” page on the HCHC website. It was suggested that events might be more timely if posted on the Facebook page.

African American Committee

There was no report.

Anita Collins demanded to know why the African American Committee has not been meeting. Chair Coker responded that the committee chair had resigned and we were waiting for a replacement appointment from County Commissioners Court before a new chair was named.

Hispanic Committee

Committee Chair Frank Arredondo read the minutes from the July 25th committee meeting (called by Chair Linda Coker) and the August 15th meeting called by the chair of the Hispanic Committee. At both meetings the discussions focused on the need for a volume two of the *Sueños y recuerdos del pasado* book which former HCHC member Ofelia Vasquez-Philo had wanted to pursue. Anita Collins suggested the formation of an ad hoc committee for the book project so that the Hispanic Committee could concentrate on other goals. The other topic discussed was a greater representation of the Hispanic community in the exhibits at the Courthouse Museum. Anita Collins suggested that the Hispanic Committee work with the Council of Indigenous and Tejano Community to prepare such an exhibit. This will be discussed further at a future meeting.

Delbert Bassett asked why he has not been invited to any of these meetings since he volunteered for the committee and has been a former member for five to six years. Committee Chair responded that he wants new blood on the committee and all committees were limited to only five members. The contentious discussion continued for some time until Nicholas Costilla made a point of order to return to the agenda with the committee reports.

Kyle Depot Committee

Committee Chair Hoot Gibson reported that the volunteers on his committee did a great job while he was out of town and everything ran smoothly. He is scheduling a committee meeting in the upcoming weeks and a new volunteer schedule will be going out soon.

The committee has worked with the Kyle Arts and Cultural Commission on a project too have local artists paint the depot. These have been displayed in City Hall and are currently one display in the Depot.

Planning for a Halloween event for children is underway. And we hope to acquire some display cabinets in the near future.

Courthouse Committee

There was no report as Committee Chair Rosina Valle is out of town. In her absence, Chair Coker mentioned that a larger table will be needed for the Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) altar in the atrium of the Courthouse due to its popularity last year.

Historic Jail Restoration Committee

There was no report.

Before adjournment, Anita Collins asked if *Sueños y recuerdos del pasado* could be re-printed. Chair Coker responded it is being discussed.

Delbert Bassett moved to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Hoot Gibson. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m. (CST).

Submitted by Lila Knight, Secretary