

Hays County Historical Commission

Minutes of October 26, 2023

The meeting of the Hays County Historical Commission was held October 26, 2023 at the Kyle Railroad Depot and Heritage Center, Kyle, Texas. Linda Coker, chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 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, Nico Costilla, Anthony Davis, Robert Frizzell, Hoot Gibson, Faye Haskins, Kate Johnson (ex-officio,) Lila Knight, Jo Landon, Miguel Pena, Sally Ramirez, Robert Rizo, Rosina Valle

Absent: Anita Collins, Jeremy Garrett, Jim Herbert, Cindy Meyer, Ralph Meyer, Ryan Patrick Perkins

Citizens Present: Joe Ramirez

Citizens Comments

There were no public comments from citizens.

Announcements

Chair Coker announced Johnny Flores resigned earlier this month due to his activities on the Hays CISD Board of Trustees.

She introduced new member Miguel Pena. He is serving in Judge Becerra's office as an intern. He is currently a history major at ACC and plans to transfer to the history program at Texas State University.

Forthcoming events include:

November 4 - Third Annual Harvey Miller Day of Service in San Marcos sponsored by the Dunbar Heritage Association. Volunteers are needed to help clean several streets in the Dunbar Neighborhood. The group will meet at 9:00 am at Eddie Durham Park and will converge at the Dunbar Recreation Center. Food will be collected there for the Hays County Food Bank. There will also be a planting of a tree in the park in honor of Harvey Miller.

November 5 - PALS Pet Fest, San Marcos Plaza Park (10:00 to 4:00)

November 15 - Preservation Associates will hold the monthly “Kyle History Talk” (focusing on Veterans from Kyle) at the Kyle Public Library, 6:00

There will be *no meeting in November* due to Thanksgiving.

Approval of Minutes

Rizo made a motion to approve the minutes of September 28th, as corrected. the motion was seconded by Landon and passed unanimously.

Valle made a motion to approve the minutes of August 24th, as corrected. the motion was seconded by Gibson and passed unanimously.

Approval of May 25th minutes were postponed.

Treasurer’s Report

The Treasurer’s report was postponed as the chair did not have time to go to the office to log in to the county’s website to print it out. It cannot be accessed from a personal computer.

Other Action Items

Chair Coker asked if the HCHC would want to participate in the November 17th Christmas Lighting at the Courthouse. We would help Santa by handing out candy canes and taking photos with peoples’ cameras. The event would begin at 5:00 pm and continue until 8:00 pm.

Gibson moved for the HCHC to participate in the event. The motion was seconded by Valle and passed unanimously.

The following members volunteered for the event;

Robert Rizo

Nico Costilla

Rosina Valle

Linda Coker

Committee Reports

Historical Marker Committee

Marie Bassett gave the report in the absence of Committee Chair Garrett (he is working at an event at the Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center this evening). She commented that Jeremy Garrett is doing a great job as Marker Chair. She also welcomed Miguel Pena to the committee.

The marker committee approved the final draft of the inscription for the Peel-Kretzmeier House (108 S. Nance Street). The inscription will go up for final approval at the THC's January meeting, and then the order will be sent to the foundry.

The inscription for San Vicente Cemetery marker is now complete. The first draft from THC was below standards, but thanks to our marker committee comments, it is now much improved. The sponsors are very grateful for the work both the cemetery and marker committees have put into making this marker a success.

The application window for Undertold Markers is currently open, and we'll soon have at least three applications ready to submit before the Nov. 15th deadline:

The Wallace Mountain Cemetery; Ruben Ruiz (first Mexican American elected to San Marcos City Council and the County Commissioners Court), and The Beat (the Black commercial district in the Dunbar neighborhood).

These three will be submitted through the HCHC rather than directly to THC.

Jeremy is coordinating with committee members Robert Rizo and Hoot Gibson to select a date for a seminar on refinishing historical markers.

Early next year, the committee will work on an updated narrative and justification to apply for a free replacement marker for the San-Marcos-Blanco Cemetery (destroyed by a car).

Cemetery Committee

Committee Chair Jo Landon reported the Cemetery Committee did not meet this month. The public now has full access to the gate for Cementerio del Rio.

CLG Committee

Committee Chair Lila Knight reported on the CLG Committee held October 4th. The committee submitted written comments on the Wimberley Downtown Square National Register nomination as required per THC CLG requirements. We are continuing to monitor potentially threatened properties and to insure that SAL permits are properly filed.

The members also thoroughly discussed and approved a CLG grant proposal to THC (it must receive final approval by Commissions Court). The grant will be for a multi-phase historic resources survey of the rural resources of Hays County. The initial phase will be a Survey Plan, followed by a rural survey of all unincorporated areas, in addition to ETJs of the five cities with

historic preservation ordinances and smaller towns (Uhland, Niederwald, Driftwood). Thanks to Linda Coker for submitting a budget that will allow us to provide the required local match for this grant. It has been many years since such funding was available. Additional thanks to the Commissioners Court for continuing to support our efforts in preserving the history of Hays County.

Information Technology and Social Media Report

Anthony Davis reported on the metrics of the HCHC website, the Facebook page and the YouTube channel.

For October, there were 2,611 visits to the HCHC website with 1,826 unique visitors and 24,559 hits.

The year to date metrics are: 33,080 visits to the website with 23,737 unique visitors and 314,721 hits.

As a reminder: “hits” are activity from the website’s server per website requests. “Visits” are activity from the website being loaded from the server. For each visit on a page, each asset on that page (like the banner, hyperlinks and tab modules) are loaded and recorded as “hits.” Thus, hits will always outnumber visits.

The HCHC Facebook received 1,028 likes and 1,113 followers. The largest number of views were on the October 28th post regarding the Dia de los Muertos display at the courthouse. The Train Depot Facebook page has: 820 likes and 856 followers.

The HCHC YouTube Channel has a total of 30 subscribers (6 new ones in October). We have had 1,731 views thus far with 756 of those in October. The total amount of watch time is 243.1 hours with 107.5 hours in October. The most popular programs were the “101 Ranch,” “Captain Jack,” and “Next Stop Kyle.”

The recently established HCHC YouTube channel now has oral histories from a monthly presentation on Kyle History by Preservation Associates. In addition, KTSW has reached out about doing future collaborations.

Black History Committee

Committee Chair Alex Banbury announced a committee meeting will be held soon. He announced the change in the name of the committee to “Black History Committee.”

Hispanic Committee

Committee Chair Frank Arredondo reported on a meeting held yesterday (October 25th) at the Courthouse and read the following written report into the record:

“Attendees were Linda Coker (HCHC chair); Frank Arredondo (HHC chair); Rosina Ruiz [Valle] (Courthouse Committee chair); Gina Rogers (CITC chair); and Anita Collins (CITC Treasurer).

Ms. Coker provided historical background on the County Museum that included provision of the space for the museum, receipt of furniture, artifacts, and contributions of labor and materials by members and benevolent citizens.

Ms. Coker shared an attempt made for a Museum District which could attract passing tourists. The Calaboose Museum, LBJ Museum, Centro Museum, and County museum were all interested in the concept, especially as the the City Visitors bureau offered to cover the cost of highway signage. However, the Calaboose Museum lost their curator, the LBJ Museum did not have staffing, and then COVID became an issue and nearly all activity became dormant.

There has been no activity at the Courthouse Museum for six months of this year. The attendees discussed ideas on improving the museum including removing stagnant material; bringing in material from the HCHC publication Suenos Y Recuerdos to begin and and gradually rotating material and artifacts. Plans are to begin in the next two months. Possibly after the holidays, in January-February updated material will be installed.

Since the majority of the artifacts are San Marcos based we discussed bringing material from throughout the county.

At a previous Hispanic Heritage committee meeting, Rosina Valle agreed to spearhead gathering material for a second edition of Suenos Y Recuerdos to include history of Dripping Springs, Kyle, Buda and Wimberley. An Ad Hoc committee of partners will be recruited to begin gathering information along with oral histories.

A follow-up meeting will be held in two weeks to assess and continue collaboration.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 pm.”

Chair Coker added that the CITC group will be doing an exhibition in a part of the museum space, In addition, HCHC has reserved the traveling exhibition sponsored by the Camino Real Trails Association at a date to be announced next year.

Kyle Depot Committee

Committee Chair Hoot Gibson reported a steady stream of visitors this past month with several small groups every Saturday.

The Kyle Founders' Day Parade on the 14th of October brought in lots of people. But it was late in the day so the Depot stayed open later to accommodate them. We may look at changing our hours to open a hour later, and close an hour later.

We will have a Halloween event on October 28th from noon to 3:00 and will be handing out treats to all the little Goblins, Super Heroes, Princesses and other characters who visit. Following Halloween, we will begin our fall decorations for November. In addition, November 11th is Veterans' Day with a parade. After Thanksgiving we will decorate the Depot with the holiday theme for Christmas with trees, lights and other decorations. This is our busiest time of year and I think we are all looking forward to decorating and having Santa make his annual visit the Depot.

As always, thank you to my Committee and Docents for your efforts and commitment to this wonderful Depot, our community and all our visitors.

Courthouse Committee

Committee Chair Rosina Valle reported that Frank Arredondo had already covered most of her report, so she will not repeat the information. The committee is currently reviewing the list of fourteen topic areas currently on display for updates on future exhibits. The committee will be inviting other groups to be involved in the updating of exhibits, including Centro, the Calaboose, the HCHC Cemetery Committee, and others.

She also noted the Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) was a “display” and not an altar as previously described in the minutes.

Historic Jail Restoration Committee

There was no report.

Delbert Bassett moved to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Hoot Gibson. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m. (CST).

Submitted by Lila Knight, Secretary