

Minutes for JCHC Bi-Monthly Meeting
Noon, Wednesday, November 18, 2020
Jefferson County Courthouse – Agriculture Auditorium
1225 Pearl Street
Beaumont, TX 77701

Call to Order – Chair Theresa Goodness called the meeting to order at 12:01 pm. In attendance were: Jay Camp, Theresa Goodness, Kate Hambright, Bruce Hamilton, Brenda Jackson, Steven Lewis, Les McMahan, Linda McMahan, Doug Porter, Paul Prosperie, Lynn Simon, Don Smart and Jen Trenbeath. All members were present. There was no guest attending and no Citizens Communications were received.

Secretary's Report – Jen Trenbeath

Consideration of Minutes of Previous Meeting – Chair Theresa Goodness asked if there were any additions or corrections to the Minutes of the previous meeting. There were none. A motion to accept the Minutes as printed was made by Don Smart, and seconded by Kate Hambright. The vote was unanimous.

Treasurer's Report – Linda McMahan reported:

- After all bills and expenses were paid from the FY2019-2020 budget, \$6,236.32 remained unspent. Because of the pandemic, and with no travel, ordering of supplies or repair / replacement expenses for historical markers, the JCHC had few expenses during 2020.
- As of November 2020, only \$130 had been spent from the 2020 – 2021 Budget. This was renewal of one membership subscription.

Chair's Report – Theresa Goodness reported information had been mailed to JCHC members in regards to the election of Executive Officers for 2021 – 2022 consisting of Chair, First Vice President, Second Vice President and Secretary. Nominations should be made and presented in writing to the general membership. Nominations may also be accepted from the floor from any voting member with the consent of the nominee.

It was reminded that the position of Treasurer is not a position voted on by JCHC membership. As an employee of the County and approved by Commissioners Court, this person is the sole individual responsible for handling all financial matters of the JCHC, with the consideration of suggestions made by the JCHC.

Nominations for Executive Officers was held from the floor.

- Theresa Goodness was nominated as Chair by Jen Trenbeath.
- Bruce Hamilton was nominated as 1st Vice Chair by Steven Lewis.
- Don Smart was nominated as 2nd Vice Chair by Bruce Hamilton.
- Jen Trenbeath was nominated as Secretary by Bruce Hamilton.
- Linda McMahan was nominated as Treasurer by Steven Lewis.

A motion to accept the nominations by acclamation was made by Kate Hambright and seconded by Steven Lewis. The vote passed unanimously.

Committee Reports

Historical Preservation:

Early African-American Schools and Educators – Lynn Simon reported he had taken a tour of Beaumont's Evergreen Cemetery. It is currently maintained by the Jefferson County Adult Probation Department. He is researching and looking for graves of Buffalo Soldiers that are believed to be buried there. Mr. Simon shared to locate such graves would be good not only to preserve history but it would also be good for tourism.

Mr. Simon shared that he had been contacted by Gordon Williams, a professor at Lamar University, who wanted to interview him in regards to a documentary on the Charlton Pollard neighborhood and high school. Linda McMahan shared that Mr. Williams has won many awards for a documentary he wrote and filmed on the Beaumont Race Riots of 1943.

Beaumont Historical Landmark Commission – Theresa Goodness reported the Beaumont Historical Landmark Commission had NOT met since her last report in September, 2020 due to no items on the agenda.

Port Arthur Historical Landmark Commission – Les McMahan reported the Port Arthur Historical Landmark Commission had not met due to no meetings being scheduled at this time.

6 Tyrrell Historical Library - Steven Lewis reported the Tyrrell Historical Library is open from 9 am - 5 pm, Monday through Friday. The treasurer of the Tyrrell Historical Library Association (THLA), Allen Lea, left his position as director of the McFaddin-Ward House to take a job at the Fulton House Museum in Rockport, Texas. Because of the Covid 19 pandemic, the THLA missed their quarterly Board meetings, so Steven emailed Board members for suggestions for a new treasurer. Jan Droptini, sister-in-law of one of the Board members, volunteered her service for the position. She is currently the Treasurer of NSDAR. Steven emailed the Board and all but one approved her nomination.

Photos of Historic Buildings – Steven Lewis took 178 photos of the CCC building at Tyrrell Park. The old roof and rafters have been removed and new roofing timbers is underway. He was able to take photos inside the building since the fence is down at the entrance. Since all the debris has been removed from inside the structure, the inside looks good. The wrought iron that reinforced the joints of the rafters have been saved and installed on the new timbers.

Steven has continued to document new FEMA home construction. Since the last meeting, a new house was started on his street and he has found another one on Elgie Street. So far, he has found 35 new homes on pilings.

Texas Energy Museum Project: After finishing the cabinet cards, Ryan Smith provided Steven with the last part of the collection, unmounted photographs. Like the rest of the collection, documentation of the photographs is scant. However, some do have captions on back that identify location and / or people in the image. As with the other items scanned, the actional scanning does not take that long but the documentation takes longer. Steven has scanned 700 of the 985 photographs. The quality of the photographs varies from very good images with good contrast to photographs so poor that it is hard to determine the contents of the image.

Sam Houston State Library / Early Sports – Don Smart reported he had nothing new to report.

Tyrrell Park Coalition – Bruce Hamilton reported that he checks the progress of the building once a week. The Supervisors have been very friendly and cooperative. Wooden lintels have been eaten by termites and are beyond repair or reuse. They currently hope to reuse the largest lintel from the

front. Bruce spoke with Beaumont Councilman Mike Getz and was told that the City does not have much support for the suggestion to add roofing to the remainder of the building. Timeline for completion is expected to be springtime.

Caroline Gilbert Hinchee House- Bruce Hamilton reported there has been no new physical repair on the home. A workday was scheduled for November 21, 2020. The house is still in the running for a Texas Parks and Wildlife grant and are currently sixth on the waiting list. The Halloween Event was cancelled.

Military History - Kate Hambricht reported since September most of her research efforts have been focused on volunteer work at the Beaumont Police Department, where she has been organizing and beginning the work of digitizing the historical records of the Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association. She hopes to digitize other department's records as well. The research that she has done on the Beaumont Light Guard has been shared with Steven Lewis.

History Markers and Research – Les McMahan

Marker Committee – Les McMahan reported draft inscriptions for our two markers for the 2020 cycle have yet to be received but delays had been expected.

The Humane Society requested that the State 1936 Spindletop Camp Confederate marker be relocated during their construction of a new shelter. Commissioner Alfred's crew did not have the equipment to move the marker, but would allow it to be stored at the Hebert Center if JCHC had it moved. We were able to get JC Engineering Department to go out and set stakes and tape around the marker to warn contractors to avoid it. THC has sent a letter to the JCHC allowing the marker to be moved, but has yet to inform us if they could provide any funds to help move it. So far, no damage has occurred, though the marker does have a number of gunshot chips on it (some of which have been poorly repaired).

For the 2021 Marker application cycle, we currently have four potential marker requests:

Solid Rock Baptist Church – Port Arthur

Home now Broussard's Mortuary – Nederland

Private Home – Nederland

Original Our Lady of Guadalupe Church (site only) – Port Arthur

(The JCHC had been in contact with a group wanting to do a marker – site only – for St. Mary Hospital in Port Arthur but we have not heard from them since well before the hospital was closed.)

Marker Survey / Maintenance – Les McMahan reported in 2021, the JCHC needs to do another marker survey to document the condition of our markers with pictures and notes. Linda McMahan will be getting a list together of our markers for members to select groups of markers they wish to survey.

History Appreciation:

Courthouse Mini-Museum – Linda McMahan reported the JCHC is very appreciative of Archeology Chair Brenda Jackson's Texas Archeology Month Exhibit in the Mini-Museum. We have extended the Hinchee House group an invitation to put in an exhibit the first of the year on the Hinchee House and work going on there. We have also extended this invitation to several individuals but we have had no feedback.

The JCHC has been contacted by the Sabine Neches Chapter of Texas Master Nationalist Association to possibly put in an exhibit the early part of 2021. Linda has sent Nancy Angell, their contact person, pictures and measurements of the cabinets in the museum to see what they would have available to exhibit there. We have not heard anything back at this time.

Web Site / Facebook Friends of the JCHC – Jen Trenbeath reports all the 2020 Historical Calendar events have been uploaded and scheduled to post as “On This Day” posts. Views and likes to the web site continue to grow.

Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Museum- Don Smart reported that on December 1 – 13, 2020 a food drive will be held for food donations for the Southeast Texas Food Bank. Anyone donating will have a free admission to Gladys City.

December 12th is Christmas in Boomtown. There will be vendors for shopping, craft bags will be given out, letters to Santa, hot chocolate, music, places for picture taking and awesome decorations and lights in the City.

January 9th is the Spindletop Anniversary. Everyone will be able to come for free thanks to donations from the ExxonMobil sponsorship. There will be food to buy, demonstrations, shootouts, music by the Harmony Exporters and fun all around. Gushers will be at 10:30 am and 3:30 pm. A kids’ blacksmith class will be going on as well.

Boomtown is doing well in attendance, but still not back to normal. The car show went well. Girl Scout Day went well. Committees are being formed to help out in different areas. A donation was received that will redo the sidings on the old Visitors Center. This is to get the building ready for a new exhibit on steam engines.

Report on Coastal History - Jay Camp shared an article on Jean Lafitte that he wrote that was published in a local newspaper.

Archeology Committee – Brenda Jackson

Archeology Committee – Brenda Jackson reported the Archeology Exhibit can remain in the Mini-Museum until there is a new exhibit to replace it.

The McFaddin-Ward House reopened to the public on September 23, 2020. She has resumed twice monthly docent tours of the house.

Debbie Eller and Brenda spoke to the Texas Master Naturalists at the Museum of the Gulf Coast on November 14, 2020. Their program was based on the archeology chapter from the TMN handbook and was part of TMN required training. They used a power point presentation, handouts and discussion.

Cemetery Committee

Cemetery Committee – Paul Prosperie reported that on Saturday, November 14, 2020 he visited several Jefferson County cemeteries:

Hurricane damage to a cedar tree at Magnolia Cemetery was noted. Evergreen Cemetery was overgrown. Lincoln Cemetery was completely overgrown. Communication with Commissioner Alfred should help address some of the issues.

Sabine Pass was in good condition. No damage was noted from Hurricanes Laura or Delta.

Courthouse and Sub-Courthouse Oversight Committee

Courthouse Oversight Committee – Linda McMahan reported that some damage to the Sub-Courthouse was reported from Hurricane Laura. She has not received any word from Engineering of work going on.

In September, Commission Arnold had inquired concerning possible use of the JCHC Conference Room for a non-profit group called Disaster Recovery that helps coordinate volunteers, donations and other interested groups that wish to assist with natural disaster recovery for Jefferson County residents. The group works closely with the county's Emergency Management Department. We informed Commissioner Arnold the Conference Room was available but as of today's meeting no one has used the room.

Certified Local Government (CLG) – Theresa Goodness

Report on letter from THC regarding Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Project Review, Ruby Ruth Fuller Building, 1500 Procter Street, Port Arthur, Texas.

- On September 24, 2020, JCHC received a copy of THC's Division of Architecture recommendation letter concerning plans for the Ruby Ruth Fuller Building at Lamar State College Port Arthur (LSCPA). Due to the final designs not reflecting THC's recommendation concerning a proposed addition, THC will make a determination after construction completion as to whether the RTHL designation should be removed.

Report of status of Historic Resources Survey and Preservation Plan project to be conducted under the National Park Service Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Marie Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund Grant.

- Purchasing is in the process of tabulating sources from the evaluation committee.
- An item will be placed on the agenda for the first week of December to enter into contract negotiations with the highest scoring firm.
- Once contract negotiations are complete, the county attorney must review the contract before it may be placed on the court's agenda for approval.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 1:26 pm. The next meeting will be held January 20, 2021.