



JEFFERSON COUNTY

Historical Commission

Theresa Goodness
Chair

Jen Trenbeath
Secretary

Linda McMahan
Coordinator/Treasurer

Bruce A. Hamilton
1st Vice-Chair

Donald Smart
2nd Vice-Chair

Minutes

**For the Regular Meeting of the
Jefferson County Historical Commission (JCHC)
Wednesday, March 10, 2021 at Noon
Agriculture Auditorium, 1225 Pearl Street, Suite 200,
Beaumont, Texas 77701**

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Chair Theresa Goodness. Attending were Jay Camp, Theresa Goodness, Kate Hambright, Bruce A. Hamilton, Brenda Jackson, Steven P. Lewis, Les McMahan, Linda McMahan, Paul Prosperie, Lynn Simon, Don Smart and Jen Trenbeath.

It was determined a Quorum was met. There was no Citizens' Communication. Brenda Jackson introduced her Guest, Debbie Eller, Archeology Stewart.

ACTION ITEMS:

Secretary's Report – Jen Trenbeath – Chair Theresa Goodness asked if there were any additions or corrections to the Minutes of the previous meeting. There were none. Don Smart made a motion, seconded by Les McMahan to accept the Minutes as printed. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Linda McMahan reported that \$423.44 had been spent from the \$11,700 FY 2020 – 2021 Budget leaving a remainder of \$11,276.56. The budget year runs October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021.

Chair's Report – Theresa Goodness

1. **Discussion of Marker Survey** – Goals were discussed in January for the 2021 year. It was discussed that a Marker Survey was needed to reassess damage after Hurricanes Laura and Delta. It was reported that a list of the JCHC's 149 THC markers were being mailed to each of our 13 members. Please email Coordinator Linda McMahan a list of the markers you wish to survey. She is keeping a Master List to prevent any duplication of markers being surveyed. Each marker will require:
 - Three pictures: First picture will be up-close showing the condition of the marker. Second picture is to show if the marker is leaning or

needs to be moved. Third picture will show the surrounding area of the marker.

- Completed marker survey form which details the condition of the marker and what recommendation is made to preserve the marker.
2. Discussion of 2022 JCHC Historical Calendar project – A master list of remaining calendar months available to provide pictures and historic dates is being sent to each JCHC member for the 2022 JCHC Historical Calendar. Please contact Linda McMahan with your choice so it can be included on the Master List. All information will be due by October 1, 2021 to be printed and distributed before the beginning of 2022.

Committee Reports

Historical Preservation:

Early African - American Schools and Educators - Lynn Simon – Lynn has researched information regarding promoting the Commission through TV networks and would like the Commission to consider using Media to connect with the public.

Beaumont Historical Landmark Commission - Theresa Goodness

The Beaumont Landmark Commission has met once since last report. On March 8, 2021, the Beaumont Landmark Commission met to review the following Request(s) for a Certificate of Appropriateness:

- PZ2021-0: Request for a Certificate of Demolition to demolish a house.
Applicant: City of Beaumont
Location: 2354 Laurel Street
The request was approved.
- PZ2021-1: Request for a Certificate of Demolition to demolish a house and garage apartment.
Applicant: City of Beaumont
Location: 2355 Pecos Street
The request was tabled until next month. Two residents spoke against the demolition, and the property is currently in foreclosure.
- PZ2021-14: Request for a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a new storage building.
Applicant: Ashley Knerr
Location: 233 N. 7th Street
The request was approved.

- PZ2021-47: Request for a Certificate of Demolition to demolish a house and a Certificate of Appropriateness for a new construction.
Applicant: Tom Cockerill
Location: 2234 Evalon Street
The request was approved.

Port Arthur Landmark Commission – Les McMahan

No activity to report.

Tyrrell Historical Library - Steven Lewis

The library is open from 9 to 6, Monday through Friday. As far as I know, there have been no pandemic related closures.

The negatives of the SPARE Beaumont 1977 have been in my possession for a while. I had to scan them twice to get better images. Since they belong to the Beaumont Heritage Society, I asked Alicia McKibbin, Executive Director, if I could donate them to the Tyrrell Historical Library in the name of the BHS. She filled out the donation documents and gave them to Bill Grace. Yesterday I brought the negatives and the PowerPoints of my research and gave them to Jennifer, the archivist. This morning I talked to Bill about the negatives and my work.

Bill Grace informed me that another large collection, 65 boxes, were recently donated to the THL. The donor is Berrie Scardino Bradley, an architectural historian. She has written a number of books on the architecture of Houston. The collection consists of her works and other architectural books. Her husband is a retired Lamar English professor who has written poetry. They are moving to the east coast but she wanted to give her collection to a Beaumont institution.

The Tyrrell Historical Library Association has had filing cabinet in the Tyrrell for years as a depository for documents of the THLA. I recently placed some old financial records in the last empty file drawer. I purchased another filing cabinet shortly thereafter so our institutional archives can expand.

Photos of Historic Buildings - Steven Lewis

As reported at the last JCHC meeting, every Sunday I make a photo run to Tyrrell Park to check on the progress on the CCC building. The installation of new roofing timbers, the decking, and membrane was completed on the east and west wings of the building. Installing roofing timbers, decking, and the laying of felt was started on the entrance part of the building but still nothing on the “courtyard.” As of Sunday, all the roofed area has been shingled. There is one set of rafters in the “courtyard” section, but I have been told that it is part of the plan for the partial roofing of the building.

I have continued to document new FEMA home construction. All the houses I had found were on wooden pilings. Last week I found a house in my neighborhood that is on concrete pilings. The owner saw me taking photographs and came to the door. I asked her how old her house was. Her reply was just over a year and that her house was the last one to have concrete pilings. So far, I have found 45 new homes on pilings.

In December of last year about 20 courses of bricks fell from the top of the Nathan building. I am concerned about this building since I have been photographing it since 2013. In January 2021, repairs were begun on the building. On February 4, a scaffold four stories high was erected and the replacement of the bricks began. By March 2, the repair was finished and by March 7, the scaffolding had been removed. The owner of the building is Lee Wheeler, a realtor with an interest in history. His immediate plan is to make the structure water tight and use it for storage.

Scanning of personal and family photographs: I have 50 rolls of medium format film. Some are photos that I have taken in the 1970s. Others are from the 1940s and 1950s taken by family members. A couple of rolls were taken in Tyrrell Park around 1944, a year after the CCC Community building had been used as a German POW camp. A number of structures (firepits, picnic tables, and a spillway) are either no longer present or terribly degraded.

My aunt Inez traveled a lot in the 1950s and I have been scanning her negatives. Unfortunately, the bane of the historian is poor documentation. None of the negative envelopes have a date or a location. One photograph showed a building that is obviously a memorial with a statue of an elk. The cityscape looked like Chicago so a search of “elk memorial Chicago” resulted in the Elks War Memorial and numerous photographs of the same building in my aunt’s pictures. Another unnamed location showed what appears to be a train station. I emailed Les a photograph, and within a short period of time he emailed me “Union Terminal, Cincinnati, Ohio.” I am impressed. Searching eBay for Cincinnati postcards, I found numerous cards of the train station but also found ones with other structures that were in my aunt’s photographs—Eden Park Conservatory, Kemper log cabin in Zoo gardens, and the water tower in Eden Park.

Sam Houston State Library – Don Smart reported there was nothing new to report.

Tyrrell Park Coalition – Bruce A. Hamilton – Bruce reports that the coalition has reached out to all City Council members of Beaumont and mayoral candidates to request consideration for the roof on the CCC building. Four members have committed to vote yes if the issue can be placed on the Agenda. The public will be requested to contact their council members as well speak at a Council meeting.

Caroline Gilbert Hinchee House Restoration – Bruce A. Hamilton – Bruce reports that the volunteers for the Hinchee House are learning the grant writing process and have applied for three grants. They are assembling a team to stabilize the structure and get a roof on it. Their focus will be the service aspect of the project. They are seeking volunteers to do hands-on renovation work once it is safe inside.

Military History – Kate Hambright and Doug Porter – Kate Hambright reports that her research for the JCHC Calendar has led her to information on the South Texas State Fair (1915) and early fairs and carnivals. The first Rice Festival was held in 1899 and educating farmers on new technologies was part of the purpose of the event.

Historical Markers and Research – Les McMahan

We have been contacted by a fifth sponsor regarding a possible 2021 Cycle marker application. This will be for Dr. Laidecker who practiced medicine in China, TX many years ago and was involved with the community in other ways. The sponsor was provided with the JCHC application guidelines and a copy of an approved application narrative that fits her subject.

None of the other four possible applicants that have previously contacted us have come forward with any updates or their efforts to produce narrative ahead of the date for THC to be issuing the current year's application forms.

We still have yet to receive draft marker inscriptions for our 2020 Cycle approved markers – The Methodist Church in China, TX and W. G. ("Bill") Hall – Gulf Coast Recording Company in Beaumont. Contact was made with THC on two occasions, and we were told that Covid 19 and staffing issues were still delaying creation of all marker narratives.

The 2021 Marker Survey information has been prepared and is available for commission members to select those markers they wish to survey. All are encouraged to sign up with Coordinator Linda McMahan for a group of markers.

History Appreciation:

Courthouse Mini Museum Exhibits – Linda McMahan The JCHC has extended invitations to several members to place exhibits in the Mini-Museum highlighting various JCHC members' committees but have not received any feedback. Due to COVID, there has been limited outside contact with other organizations. Linda said she would be glad to talk to anyone after the meeting interested in putting in an exhibit.

After the meeting, Steven Lewis shared he was interested in putting in an exhibit highlighting the "SPARE Beaumont 1977 Survey".

Website and Social Media - Jen Trenbeath – Jen hopes to be able to have a website committee meeting by the end of 2021 to regroup and plan goals for the website going forward. It was discussed to add the resource survey and potential slideshows to the website.

Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Museum – Don Smart

Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Museum has been doing well. In January we had visitors from 29 different states outside of Texas and 36 different cities within

Texas. In February, while attendance was down because of the winter storm, we still had visitors from 21 states outside of Texas and two foreign countries.

We have two events coming in April. April 10 is Gladys City Live and April 23 is our first Wine and Jazz night. Gladys City Live is free admission but for a donation, visitors receive 1901 money to spend in the buildings. Visitors will also be able to interact with characters from 1901. Wine and Jazz night is free to museum members but \$10 a person to others. We will relax inside the saloon or outside with a few drinks and great music.

Impossible Engineering, a program on the Discovery Channel, will be filming here Monday, March 15. We are actively in pursuit of grants and donations for our capital campaign. We are trying to raise \$300,000.

At the moment, our gusher is not working but efforts to fix it are underway. We are looking forward to the Spring months and better weather.

Report on Coastal History Jay Camp – Jay read an article he wrote about the Intracoastal Waterway.

Archeology Committee – Brenda Jackson – The Texas Archeological Society is planning a safe return to their annual field school tradition after missing last year because of the pandemic. It is scheduled for June 12 – 19, 2021 along the banks of the Guadalupe River in Kerr County. Kerrville is the ideal location.

The program provides training in archeological techniques to Society members and contributes important new data to the state's archeological and historical heritage. Activities and learning opportunities are offered for all ages, including excavation techniques, survey methods and special training for newcomers and teachers.

This year's Field School will also offer a unique opportunity to participate in a cemetery workshop hosted by the Texas Historical Commission's Preservation Program. The workshop will include hands-on learning opportunities covering cemetery topics such as research, site recording, archeological investigations, preservation, remote sensing demonstrations, and tours of local cemeteries with various challenges and / or cultural influences.

For detailed information, go to www.txarch.org.

Cemetery Committee – Paul Prosperie – Paul reported that Magnolia and Brewer Cemeteries appear to be fine after Winter Storm Uri, and he plans to visit to Sabine Pass Cemetery. Greenlawn Cemetery has some damaged oak trees but is otherwise OK.

Courthouse and Sub - Courthouse Oversight Committee – Linda McMahan

Commissioner Pierce has inquired about a screen on the wall in Commissioners Court for presentation and/ or sharing of Court information. THC has been contacted and we are awaiting their reply.

County Departments in County Buildings are continuing to monitor COVID safety rules of wearing masks, available hand sanitizer and social distancing to protect County employees and the public. Our County Judge and Commissioners, Emergency Management, Maintenance and County employees are to be commended for their hard work in keeping everyone safe.

With more vaccines available, we are all looking forward to the day when our work environment will be less restricted. Until then, we are truly living and making history.

Certified Local Government (CLG) – Theresa Goodness

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

- An amended sub-grant agreement has been proposed by the Texas Historical Commission due to pandemic related delays in the project, necessitating an extension of the grant deadline to March 31, 2024. The extension has been approved by the National Park Service, and Commissioner's Court will consider approval at their next meeting.
- A vendor contract is also in the final stages of approval, and may also be considered for approval at the Court's next meeting on 3/23/2021.

Unfinished / New Business – Bruce Hamilton is working with the VFAW on the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial and the dedication will be on Vietnam Veterans Memorial Day, March 29, 2021 at 11:00 AM. The dedication will be open to the public with a reception to be held at the Ben J. Rogers Visitors' Center. The reception is hosted by the VVA and VV Association.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned. The next scheduled meeting will be May 19, 2021.