

Jefferson County Historical Commission
JCHC Conference Room,
Thursday, March 21, 2013

Call to Order – Chair Theresa Goodness called the meeting to order at Noon. In attendance were Glen Cummings, Bill Cummings, Ron Ellington, Bruce Hamilton, Ramona Hutchinson, Ethelyn Jenkins Mike McGreevy, Leslie McMahan, Marianne Petry, Paul Prosperie, Jef Russell, Nancy Scott and Coordinator Linda McMahan.

Consideration of Minutes of Previous Meeting - Chair Goodness said everyone should have received a copy of the Minutes for the January meeting and asked if there were any corrections. There were none. A motion was made by Jef Russell and seconded by Leslie McMahan to accept the Minutes as printed. The motion was passed unanimously.

Budget Report – The Budget Report was given by Secretary / Treasurer Paul Prosperie. A motion was made by Glenn Cummings and seconded by Mike McGreevy to accept the report as presented. The motion was passed unanimously.

Chairman's Report – Theresa reported on the **Lincoln Cemetery**, aka Broussard Cemetery, on LaBelle Road. She reported that she and Linda had met with Judge Branick regarding using county resources to clean and maintain Lincoln Burial Park. Judge Branick noted that the County needs to maintain ownership of the acreage before County resources can be utilized. Theresa discussed the tract with Shane Howard and was advised that cemeteries are regarded as an exempt account so no taxes are due. The last known owner of the property was Cemetery Development Company. CDC forfeited their corporation in May 1950. Judge Branick agreed that County resources and inmate labor can be used to clean up the plot, but since the statute says “at the discretion of Commissioner’s Court,” the request will need to be placed on Commissioner’s Court agenda for approval of those resources. Such a request was scheduled to be on the Court’s Agenda for Monday, March 25, 2013.

Ramona Hutchinson brought up the fact that we may need to contact THC’s Antiquities Council because of archeological concerns. State agencies and political subdivisions of the state must notify the Texas Historical Commission before a publicly owned cemetery that is 50 years old or older can be altered beyond on-going maintenance and daily cemetery activities. It was agreed that the JCHC goal is not to disturb any grave and that markers will be placed at known burial spots before cleanup begins. Linda said she would contact THC about the matter.

Marianne Petry shared that it had been 15 – 20 years since the cemetery had been cleaned. There have not been any records found as to how many graves sites have been used. The cemetery is believed to be approximately 10 acres.

Linda shared that she had visited with Mildred Wright by phone to verify that the information the JCHC had on file corresponded with her records. A copy of the information had been requested by Commissioner Alfred for his review as the cemetery is in his precinct.

Coordinator's Report – Linda passed out a list of **2013 JCHC meetings** and also a **Volunteer Hours form**. She reminded everyone to please report their hours each month, turn them in at JCHC meetings or email them to the office.

Linda reported that there were several things members needed to take care of for JCHC / THC files:

1. Members need to fill out the **State of Texas – Oath of Office form** today and turn in before leaving.
2. Members need to fill out the **Statement of Appointed Officers**. Since JCHC members are appointed by Commissioner's Court, it is necessary that each member fill this out and return.
3. One of the questions on the JCHC Annual Report sent to the THC each spring is how many of our members have had **Open Meetings** training. At this time only three members have had this training. Linda shared that in the packet handed out was information telling how to go online to take the training. At the end of the training, an access code and a certificate will need to be printed and turned in to the JCHC office.

Linda shared that one of the joys of her job is getting to meet people from all over the state and nation. Several weeks ago, she was visited by two ladies whose grandfather was one of the original workers on the present courthouse. While working on the outside of the courthouse, he fell and died several days later. Linda shared with them that she did not have any information concerning their family member and wondered if they had information they could share for JCHC Courthouse files. A week later, the two ladies returned with not only a copy of a newspaper clipping but also a death certificate. When they left the JCHC office, they were on the way to the County Clerk's office to see if there were any copies of the list of workers on the Courthouse. Their visit helped to protect and preserve our **Courthouse history**.

Linda shared that she was including in the handout packet a copy of the latest **Friends of the Sabine Pass Battleground** newsletter. It contains information about the 150th anniversary and also about the Walking Beam. The Friends are undergoing some organizational changes this year and there are no 2013 dues being charged.

Committee Reports

- Archeology – Ron Ellington – No action taken
- Cemetery Committee – Marianne Petry (Included in Chairman's Report)
- Certified Local Government (CLG) – Ramona Hutchinson – No action taken
- Courthouse Oversight Committee – Rebecca Bowden has resigned from the JCHC due to a job change and relocating out of town. It was mentioned that a new chair was needed and if anyone would like to volunteer for the job, please contact Theresa or Linda.
- History Appreciation – Jef Russell shared about a visit by telephone with Rick Ferguson, Executive Director of the Houston Film Commission (HFC), concerning local interest in the establishment of a film alliance / commission. Due to legal red tape, the JCHC would not be able to establish such, but does encourage one be formed. The Governor's Office has, under its domain, The Texas Film Commission. This office schedules regional workshops for the

purpose of certifying communities as film partners. It is part of their Film Friendly Texas program. The workshops provide training and ongoing guidance on how communities can effectively deal with on-location filming, and put their best foot forward in marketing their resources. It was also noted that the HFC office recently sent a European company that is making a documentary to the Beaumont Convention and Visitors Bureau to inquire about any permits required by the City to film. Jef will continue to keep us informed.

Jef thanked the JCHC for allowing him to represent the Commission on the Beaumont Landmark Commission. The duties of the Commission is to provide technical assistance through the processing of zoning change and specific use permit requests, subdivision plat requests, requests for variances and special exceptions to the regulations of the zoning ordinance and requests for certificates of appropriateness, historic tax exemptions and historic preservation loans especially in the Old Town area.

- History Preservation – Charlotte Holliman was not able to attend the meeting but did report that the scanning of the cemetery books was complete and had requested to know how the information was to be made available. It was agreed that the information should be placed on DVD for easy use.
- Marker Committee – Leslie McMahan reported that on Sunday, April 7th, Wesley United Methodist Church will hold a marker dedication ceremony for the THC historical marker for 2012 that commemorates the Beaumont church's history in Beaumont

The Harry James historical marker for 2012 has been received by the Port Arthur Historical Society, and Dr. Sam Monroe will begin to develop plans for the dedication ceremony for this marker which will be in Beaumont on Neches at MLK.

The Moon Mullican (Beaumont), Magnolia Missionary Baptist Church (Beaumont), Community Retirement Home (Port Arthur), and Central Baptist Church (Port Arthur) marker have yet to arrive.

The JCHC application for a marker for Fort Sabine was accepted by the THC for 2013.

The Evergreen Cemetery Association application for a marker for Evergreen Cemetery was not accepted by the THC. We were informed that not only were there more state-wide applications than available markers for 2013, there was also a large number of cemetery applications that had to be denied. We were advised that the Evergreen application needed more historical detail. The THC suggested that the marker be applied for under the "Untold Stories" category, and that if accepted, THC would pay for the cost of the marker. We have received the historical information from the Evergreen group and will begin to scour it for additional information to be added to the rejected application's text.

Unfinished Business / New Business – None

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 PM. The next meeting will be Thursday, May 23, 2013.