

JCHC Bi-Monthly Meeting
Noon, Wednesday, May 17, 2017
JCHC Conference Room – Third Floor

Call to Order – Chair Theresa Goodness – The meeting was called to order by Chair Theresa Goodness at Noon. In attendance were Sarah Bellian, Bruce Hamilton, Brenda Jackson, Steven Lewis, Les McMahan, Linda McMahan, Paul Prosperie, Don Smart, and Jean Trenbeath. Guest speaker was Andrew Tingler.

Introduction of Speaker Andy Tingler – Chair Theresa Goodness Andrew Tingler is a Johnson Bayou / Cameron Parish native. He received a degree in atmospheric science from the University of Louisiana at Monroe. After college, he worked in Duluth, MN and Miami, FL. He is currently working for the NWS in Lake Charles, LA. While residing in Minnesota and Florida, he visited several lighthouses and became appreciative of the architectural and historical aspects of these structures. He is very interested in the Sabine Pass Lighthouse and shared possible plans for preserving the lighthouse.

Consideration of Minutes of Previous Meeting – Chair Theresa Goodness shared that the Minutes of the March 23, 2017 meeting had been emailed to members for their review. Les McMahan made a motion, seconded by Paul Prosperie, to accept the Minutes as printed. Motion passed unanimously.

Budget Report – Secretary Linda McMahan shared that \$1,696.81 has been spent with \$9,903.19 remaining in the 2016-2017 budget. She will be preparing a supplies order in the near future.

It was also reported that the 2017-2018 budget must be complete and in Auditing by May 31, 2017. Linda will leave the budget as is and ask that no money be removed from the marker line item as we hope to pay for a marker for the Cheek Rodeo Association. If anyone wants to work on a marker to come from the 2018 budget, please let Les know.

Chair's Report – Chair Theresa Goodness reported last month Les McMahan contacted her regarding Eddingston Court in Port Arthur, specifically the condition of the sculptures by Dionicio Rodriguez which largely contributed to the property being placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The entire property is in poor condition. It was agreed the best course of action was to send a letter to the owner. Les drafted a letter, and Theresa located the owner in the public records.

On May 1, 2017, Glenn Foreman, owner of Eddington Court, called to discuss the recent letter. He was very gracious and gave contact information for the caretaker, Simon Carron. The gate is locked, but the JCHC is welcome to contact Mr. Carron to arrange a time to enter the property to document the sculptures and take photographs.

According to Mr. Foreman he has had significant problems with gangs and vandals damaging this property. One of the buildings has significant damage from the windows and sashes being completely destroyed. The last time he visited the property the sculptures were still in good condition. Despite contacting the City and the Police, he has been unable to make headway on finding the culprits responsible for the damage.

In his opinion if the brush is cleared away, it will draw attention to the sculptures, possibly causing the vandals to focus on them.

Mr. Foreman does have plans to restore the buildings and property. Currently he is looking into grant monies for housing for Veterans. He would at least like some funds to help secure the property, although he can't keep people from accessing the site from the seawall side.

Les McMahan plans to contact the caretaker soon so that he and Paul Prosperie can document the condition of the sculptures and take photographs.

Coordinator's Report – Linda McMahan reminded everyone to turn in their volunteer hours. All members must turn in at least 50 hours per year.

A reminder was made that monthly memorial services for persons lost on ships attacked by German U-boats sailing from or to Southeast Texas continue to be held at the Seafarers' Center at the end of Procter Street in Port Arthur. As dates are determined, a notice will be sent out to JCHC members.

Committee Reports

About Town – Steven Lewis received a list from the Fire Marshall's office of 54 locations that were supposed to be the oldest hydrants in Beaumont dating from 1919. However, the list apparently has not been updated when hydrants were replaced. Steven has photographed hydrants at 28 of the locations on the list plus five others. All the replacement hydrants are made by American Valve & Hydrant at 3525 Hollywood in Beaumont. Steven was given a tour of the facility. He has

also visited the Beaumont Water & Sewer Services on Langham Road. Steven has talked with two of the men that replace hydrants and they said they would see if they can find the oldest hydrant and notify him.

Because of interest in the history of fire hydrants, Steven has agreed to bring the Commission up to date at the July Bi-Monthly meeting.

Archeology Committee – Brenda Jackson reported nothing out of the ordinary was found during the beach nourishment project at McFaddin National Wildlife Refuge. This work replaced some of the sand lost in recent hurricanes and will help prevent salt water getting into fresh water marshes.

Brenda also reported she will be sitting up an exhibit this summer at the David French House highlighting the archeological excavations done there in the early 1990s. She will also be working at the Texas Archeological Society's Annual Field School in June to be held at Mission Lorenzo de la Santa Cruz near Camp Wood.

Beaumont Historical Landmark Commission – Jessie Davis – No meeting to report.

Cemetery Committee – Paul Prosperie and Jimmy Sparks reported the Heritage Happy Hour at Magnolia Cemetery on April 20, 2017 seemed to be a great success. There were 96 paid attendees, along with several JCHC members volunteering.

Our next cemetery tour will be on August 3, 2017 at 5 PM for the 130th anniversary of the founding of Magnolia Cemetery. We have at least four docents available to talk on several histories of Beaumont's past.

We are also in the process of planning the annual October tour. The tour dates have yet to be determined but will probably be around the first week in October. It is hoped to include Hebrew Rest in the tour.

Certified Local Government / Museum of the Gulf Coast – Sarah Bellian reported that she has finished a Certified Local Government interview with Buddy White, a muskrat trapper from Sabine Pass.

Lamar University Professor of Public History, Josh Howard, has students out contacting people on Sarah's oral history list. More information will be shared at a later date.

The Museum successfully opened "Betting, Booze, and Brothels", an exhibit of the history of vice in our region including the James Commission. At least 275 were in attendance and all were very complementary. The next exhibition is the "No Man's Land" project (WW I).

Some of our local McFadden Beach paleontology will be radiocarbon dated as part of a bison project.

Courthouse Oversight Committee – Linda McMahan shared there is no new Courthouse projects going on at this time.

Dick Dowling Days / Spindletop Days – Mike McGreevy – Nothing to report.

Marker Committee – Les McMahan reported the St. Paul United Methodist Church marker has been approved by the THC. Because the St. Paul payment was 149 out of 150 on the latest marker list, and inscriptions are written by THC in the order payment is received, it may be a while before a draft inscription is ready for review by the JCHC and the sponsor.

No new inquiries for 2018 markers except for the Cheek Rodeo Association, which is being worked on at this time.

Port Arthur Landmark Commission – Les McMahan – No meeting to report.

Sam Houston State Library / Early Sports – Don Smart reported that he would like to suggest that alumni from local high schools no longer in existence be invited to place exhibits in the mini-museum to remind people of the early educational history of the area. French High, represented by Don Smart, would like to be the first to place an exhibit. After discussion among members, Don was given the OK to begin work on placing the exhibit in the Jefferson County Mini-Museum located in the lobby of the historic Courthouse.

Tourism / Ben Rogers Visitors Center – Jessie Davis was not in attendance due to helping Commissioner Alfred host a conference at the Holiday Inn on tourism.

Web Site / Facebook Friends of the JCHC – Jen Trenbeath reported that the new Facebook page has received 150 likes. She shared this is not a huge amount but that she was pleased. If members or the public have topics of discussion to be placed on the page, please let her know. Jen is contacting different museums for information on upcoming events.

Unfinished Business / New Business – None

Adjournment – Next meeting is scheduled for Noon, Wednesday, July 17, 2017 in the JCHC Conference Room. The meeting was adjourned.