

Minutes for the Jefferson County Historical Commission Bi-Monthly Meeting
Noon, Wednesday, March 11, 2020
Jefferson County Courthouse – Third Floor JCHC Conference Room
1149 Pearl Street, Beaumont, TX 77701

The meeting was **Called to Order at 12:01 PM** by JCHC Chair **Theresa Goodness** after it was determined a Quorum was met. In attendance were: Jay Camp, Theresa Goodness, Bruce A. Hamilton, Steven P. Lewis, Les McMahan, Linda McMahan, Paul Prosperie, Don Smart and Jen Trenbeath. One visitor, Elton Truss, was also in attendance.

There was no Citizens Communication to be shared.

Secretary Report - Jen Trenbeath Chair Theresa Goodness asked if there were any additions or corrections to the Minutes for Wednesday, January 22, 2020. There were none. Chair Goodness also shared that Doug Porter had been welcomed at the previous meeting as a new member but never officially voted on. A motion was made by Les McMahan to accept the Minutes as printed and to officially accept Doug Porter as a new member to the JCHC. The motion was seconded by Jay Campbell, and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer Linda McMahan reported on past expenditures and the remaining budget. (See attachment #1). It was reported due to more members traveling, two budget line items (Mileage and Travel) in the 2019-2020 Budget were very low. These areas would be reviewed before a new budget is submitted to County officials on May 29, 2020 in preparation of the 2020-2021 Budget hearings held in July.

Chair's Report – Theresa Goodness

Chair Goodness reported on the status of the JCHC 2019 Annual Report to the Texas Historical Commission. She shared that highlights of the report included a total of 3,465 volunteer hours was turned in, the 2020 JCHC Calendar, and ongoing training efforts for members which included webinars in Emergency Preparedness for those caring for archival materials, the Texas Historic Cemetery Designation Program and “Markers, Heritage Tourism and Surveys”. The 2019 Annual Report will be submitted to Commissioner’s Court in the near future and all members are invited to attend Court for that meeting.

Chair Goodness reported that the JCHC 2019-2020 Budget allows for \$2,000 travel expenses and \$500 for mileage. We are excited we have more members wanting to attend state and regional meetings. To help our budgeted money cover more people, the JCHC will not be able to pay all expenses as before. As each trip is considered, we will need to see what expenses the JCHC will pay and which expenses the member will have to pay themselves. This is in no means trying to stop travel but to be more careful in our spending.

Committee Reports

Historical Preservation:

Early African-American Schools and Educators - Lynn Simon was absent. No report was given.

Beaumont Historical Landmark Commission – Theresa Goodness shared a report on three Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness for demolition considered and approved by the Beaumont Landmark Commission.

Port Arthur Landmark Commission – Les McMahan reported no meeting(s) had been held and no case(s) submitted.

Tyrrell Historical Library – Steven P. Lewis reported the successful grand re-opening of the Tyrrell Historical Library on January 22, 2020 and the Beaumont Heritage Society Happy Hour on February 27, 2020. The Tyrrell Historical Library Association (THLA) participated in both events. It provided members at both events to help Bill Grace show people around the library. Steven Lewis donated two framed panoramic photographs of the interior of the library taken during the renovation and three unframed images. These photographs were paid for by the THLA. At happy hour, the THLA rented a tent that was set up on the lawn of the library for serving of beer and wine. The Happy Hour was well attended with 127 individuals.

Photos of Historic Buildings – Steven Lewis circulated photographs of:

A then-and-now comparison of the Jack's Tire Service building at 915 College Street. Across the street was the foundation of the former Ayres Manufacturing Company building. Photographs of the site and the camper shell forms that are present on the site were shown. The company is still in business along IH 10 between Sam's and College Street. Steven contacted the founder and asked if he had any photographs of the exterior of the original building.

The remaining part of the Alamo Block (268 Pearl) is being renovated for a company software company. Scaffolding was present on February 7, 2020 and on February 15 new plaster work was added to the façade of the building.

The purchase of a postcard showing Earl's Motel on College Street in 1959 caused Steven to research businesses on College Street in that year. Using the 1959 Beaumont City Directory and Google Earth images, he located the Circle Drive-in, Earl's Motel, Cedar Motel, Hub Diner, Circle Courts, and Pat's Trailer Sales, all on College Street. He had postcards of all these locations, except the Circle Drive-in. Additionally, he had postcards of the Austin Motel and the Circle Trailer park on Eleventh Street. On March 8, he took then-and-now photographs of the sites. The only place still in existence is the Circle Trailer Park.

Sam Houston State Library – Don Smart reported on the up-dating of several exhibits and suggested if you have not been to the Library recently, you might want to visit.

Tyrrell Park Coalition – Bruce A. Hamilton reported on the status of plans by the City of Beaumont to renovate the Tyrrell Park Community Building built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. He shared that several meetings were attended by several JCHC members.

Caroline Gilbert Hinchee House Restoration – Bruce A. Hamilton reported on the status of the restoration of the historic home. He included groups helping, work in the yard and information about fund raisers.

Military History – Kate Hambright was absent due to the flu.

Historical Markers and Research – Les McMahan

Report on Status of Marker Application / Dedications

The JCHC is still awaiting delivery of “Nancy Tevis” and “Beaumont Lumber Mill City of the Nineteenth Century” replacement markers lost to the Neches River during TS Harvey. Production orders have been sent to the new foundry by the THC.

The Marker Chair is working with prospective sponsors on “The Methodist Church in China, Texas” and “William G. (Bill) Hall (Gulf Coast Recording Company)” marker applications.

Report on Marker Survey / Maintenance - There are no updates on marker survey and no maintenance activities completed.

History Appreciation:

Report on Current Courthouse Mini-Museum Exhibits and Discussion of Proposed Exhibits - Linda McMahan reported the Forest Park High School exhibit is presently housed in the mini-museum. She shared she had sent out request to several members about putting in a new exhibit but as of today no one has volunteered.

Report on updates to JCHC website and social media – Jen Trenbeath reported the Friends of the Jefferson County Historical Commission Facebook page continues to get a few new likes each week. She has added “On this Day” posts pulling from the 2020 JCHC calendar. Jen also shared interesting posts from other preservation groups.

Report on events to Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Museum – Don Smart reported on activities and repairs going on at the Museum. He passed out a list of Upcoming Events for 2020.

Report on Coastal History – Jay Camp reported he has a new article about Coastal History to share at our next meeting.

Archeology Committee – Brenda Jackson

Report on activities that promote the preservation of archeological resources. Brenda was absent. No report given.

Cemetery Committee – Paul Prosperie reported on helping find information on the Hillebrandt Cemetery located on the Hillebrandt Bayou. One of the Hillebrandt family members wanted to visit the cemetery when passing through the area. Mary Ann Petry, advisor to the JCHC, visited the location to see how to get in the cemetery as it is surrounded by private property. We did receive thanks from the family member for the JCHC's valuable help in locating the little visited cemetery.

Courthouse and Sub-Courthouse Oversight Committee – Linda McMahan

Courthouse - On Monday, March 2, 2020 the JCHC received a call from Maintenance concerning some of the masonry around the base of the Texas flagpole in front of the Courthouse. Linda took pictures, consulted with Theresa and agreed that she should get in contact with THC and also Don LaBiche about which direction the County should take. After discussion with THC's Susan Gammage (Architect and Senior Reviewer of Texas Courthouse Preservation Program), Commissioner Arnold, Don LaBiche, Engineering, Maintenance and others, we are waiting to hear which direction the County will take for repairs.

Sub-Courthouse – We have a request for guidance concerning some rusting windows at the Sub-Courthouse. Not being on the Courthouse lawn, the Sub-Courthouse does not have the same restrictions as the County Courthouse. We are in contact with THC concerning requirements, which will involve a submission of a project plan and other attachments such as engineering or architectural plans and a permit application for Historic Building and Structures. We have also asked for information for any grants that could be used toward this project.

Courthouse Master Plan–The Courthouse Master Plan is almost complete. The County is waiting a copy to review and discuss before submission.

Certified Local Government (CLG) – Theresa Goodness – History Preservation Officer

Report of status of THC sub-grant application for the National Park Service Hurricanes, Harvey, Irma and Maria Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund Grant – A first draft of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for this project has been prepared and submitted to THC for review and comments. Lisa Hart, Program Specialist for the HIM ESHPE Grant Program, has responded with comments and suggestions for the RFQ. The funding agreement which the county and THC will sign has not yet been approved by the state.

Report on status of 2019 Certified Local Government Annual Report to the Texas Historical Commission

was submitted to the Texas Historical Commission on February 12, 2020. Some highlights of the report include our grant application to conduct an historic resources survey plan, an historic resource survey, and a preservation plan; our research on the Old Spanish Trail through Beaumont as part of a multi-state commemoration, and our Emergency Pocket Response Plan developed in the event of a disaster affecting our JCHC files.

The 2019 Annual Report will be submitted to Commissioner's Court in the near future and all members will be invited to attend Court for this meeting.

Report on consultations conducted under Section 106 of the National Historical Preservation Act

Eddingston Court, National Register Property – Glenn Foreman, Jr., owner of Eddingston Court, a National register property located on Procter Street in Port Arthur, contacted us on January 22, 2020 about the property because one of the buildings was largely destroyed by fire in January. Mr. Foreman is concerned about the property and the sculptures because vandals continue to cause problems despite efforts to secure the buildings. According to Mr. Foreman, even the plywood he puts up to cover the windows and doors has been stolen in the past. He keeps some areas of the property overgrown intentionally to hide the sculptures by Mexican artist Dionicio Rodriguez in an effort to protect them from vandals.

Initially, Mr. Foreman stated the City of Port Arthur wanted him to demolish the building that had been damaged by fire. He was concerned that the property being listed on the National Register would prohibit him from doing so. He was provided with the City Manager's name and contact information, so he could discuss the matter with him directly.

I contacted Gregory Smith, the Coordinator for the National Register program with THC, by email in order to inform THC of the fire at Eddingston Court, and to make inquiries regarding whether Mr. Foreman could demolish a building that was a safety hazard. Mr. Smith called me back and confirmed what THC's website states that being on the National Register does not prohibit a property owner from demolishing a property, but certain state and federal tax credits were available for restoration of eligible National Register properties.

On January 27, 2020, Mr. Foreman called me again, and I shared the information Gregory Smith had given me as well as his contact information. Mr. Foreman then stated the City was now telling him he would have to ask permission from the Landmark Commission to demolish the building. As the Port Arthur Landmark Commission has not met for some time, I suggested Mr. Foreman inquire as to when the next meeting will be scheduled.

On February 20, 2020, THC sent a letter to the City of Port Arthur, Demolition Division, requesting more information from the City before making a full determination of effect of the proposed demolition.

Letters on behalf of JCHC finding no adverse effect on any known historic sites were sent on the following projects:

February 23, 2020. Consultation Under Section 106 of The National Historic Preservation Act and the Antiquities Code of Texas for **City of Nome Street Improvements** Under Hurricane Harvey Recovery Grant – GLO 20-065-027-CO92 & Water Improvements 7219200.

February 23, 2020. Consultation Under Section 106 Of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Antiquities Code of Texas For **City of China Street Improvements** Under Hurricane Harvey Recovery Grant – CDBG-DR GLO 20-065-049-C156.

February 23, 2020. Consultation Under Section 106 Of the National Historic Preservation Act and The Antiquities Code of Texas For **City of Groves Street Improvements** Under Hurricane Harvey Recovery Grant - GLO 20-065-049-C156 & Sewer Improvements 7219179.

March 4, 2020. Consultation Under Section 106 Of the National Historic Preservation Act and The Antiquities Code of Texas for **City of Port Neches Sewer Facilities Improvements** Under CDBG TDA 7219331 and Water Facilities Improvements Under Hurricane Harvey Disaster Recovery Grant – GLO 20-065-084-C243.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 1:42 PM. The next meeting will be May 13, 2020.