



JEFFERSON COUNTY

Historical Commission

Theresa Goodness
Chair

Linda McMahan
Secretary/Treasurer and Coordinator

Ron Ellington
Past Chairman

Leslie McMahan
1st Vice-Chairman

Paul Prosperie
2nd Vice-Chairman

**Minutes of the Certified Local Government Meeting
Monday, August 24, 2015, 10:00 a.m.
Jefferson County Precinct 1 County Office
20205 W. Hwy 90, China, TX 77613**

Members and Guests Present:

Ron Ellington
Bruce Hamilton
Ramona Hutchinson
Linda McMahan
Ronald Kuebodeaux (Box 23, China, TX 77613)
Barry Adams (barry4w@att.net)
Absent: Sarah Bellian

The third meeting of the 2015 Certified Local Government (CLG) Committee met at the Jefferson County Precinct 1 County Office in China in order to continue to align citizens of the County around sharing and learning about our history and discover opportunities to preserve that history.

Minutes of July 20, 2015 Meeting were approved. A motion was made by Ron Ellington and seconded by Linda McMahan to accept the Minutes as printed. Motion passed unanimously.

Identification and Evaluation of County's northernmost Historic and Cultural Resources

The CLG Committee was delighted to have Ronnie Kuebodeaux and Barry Adams, local historians, attend the CLG meeting. Both are longtime citizens of China. Ronnie was born in Crowley, LA and his family moved here to farm, first in Meeker, TX then China, TX. Ronnie also attended school in Amelia and in other communities in Jefferson County. Barry's father, L. I. Adams, authored the book, *Time and Shadows*, a history of China and the surrounding area. Barry grew up near the Spindletop tank farm and is interested in digitizing his collection of photographs. His family moved to China in 1948 or 1949.

Ronnie Kuebodeaux over the years has developed and saved a large collection of photographs, articles and artifacts documenting China which is housed and displayed in a building he built for

that purpose on his property. One of the collections is a display of the China's winning Ladies Basketball Team.

We also learned that Ronnie was the Leader of Boy Scout Troop 10 for nearly 45 years. Among many accomplishments and recognition of the contributions of Troop 10 is an article about the Troop in the November 1990 "Texas Monthly" magazine. One of the activities Ronnie had for the Troop was to clear years of trees, brush and weeds in the China Cemetery.

We also talked about the World War II Prisoner of War Camp in China. Ronnie's wife, as a child, remembers the prisoners enjoying playing ball while the kids watched. Ronnie had several stories about the POW Camp and the Dishman family, who now own the property where the camp was located.

We also identified historic themes for the China region, including:

Farming – rice, of course, but also cotton, tobacco, wheat, sunflowers and most recently eucalyptus.

Lower Neches Valley Authority (LNVA) Canal

Schools- including the Henderson School, a Black school.

Railroad

Churches – one Catholic, one Methodist, and two Baptist.

Historic Buildings – the railroad depot, a few historic houses, and the Catholic Church.

Sawmills – north of China

Other settlements, such as Freedom Colonies, or African American, or Black settlements – one in the

China area was known as "Hungry Hill" south of the railroad tracks.

Review and Discussion of Request for Information for the CLG Sub Grant

The meeting included a review of the Certified Local Government program in Jefferson County and we gave Ronnie and Barry copies of the most recent list of the County's National Register Nominated Properties, a list of the Recorded Historic Texas Landmarks and Cemeteries, and a list of Historic Markers.

Regarding the CLG Sub Grant, a draft of a Request for Information, RFI, (instead of the Request for Qualifications mentioned in last month's newsletter) has been forwarded to the County's purchasing agent. We hope to meet with her and review the draft RFI, and affirm our request meets the CLG Sub Grant's requirements. We assured committee members that they will have an opportunity to review the replies the County receives to the RFI in order to select one best suited to our budget and needs.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:05 a. m. We were pleased to tour Ronnie Kuebodeaux's museum building and view his amazing collections of photographs and artifacts.

Next Certified Local Government Meeting: Yet to be scheduled.