

Milam County Historical Commission Meeting
Chamber of Commerce Building – Rockdale, Texas

August 1, 2022

Call to Order: Chairperson Joan Ratliff called to order the meeting of the Milam County Historical Commission on August 1, 2022, at 10:00 am. The meeting was held at the Chamber of Commerce Building in Rockdale, Texas.

Attendance: The following members were in attendance: Lynn Young, John Pruett, Geri Burnett, Lucile Estell, Holly Jentsch, Jennifer Patton, James Bradford, Zane Stigall, Eunice Stigall, Doug Kleypass, Joan Ratliff, and Paula Sisco.

Recognition of Guests: The following guests were recognized: Chuck Keagy, Linda Jo Conn, Jasmine Otto, and Kyle Barrett.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: The minutes were distributed by email to all members. Geri Burnett made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting on April 4, 2022, as amended. James Bradford seconded the motion that passed. The following are the corrections made:

In the paragraph, Recognition of Guests, the correct spelling was made for Brian not Ryan Beard.

In the paragraph, for the CLG, three corrections were made: (1) El Rancheria Grande, not El Rancho; You Tube, not UTube; and National Registered Architectural Site, not National Park.

Approval of Treasurer's Reports: The beginning balance of the General Fund on May 1, 2022, was \$65,526.95. There was interest revenue of \$48.33 and no disbursements resulting in an ending balance on May 31, 2022, of \$65,605.90 of which \$4,000 is designated to the Rosenwald School.

The beginning balance of the Preservation Fund on May 1, 2022, was \$12,174.12. There was interest revenue of \$8.98 and no disbursements resulting in an ending balance of \$12,183.10 on May 31, 2022.

The beginning balance of the General Fund on June 1, 2022, was \$65,605.90 . There was interest revenue of \$66.00 and disbursements of \$3,100.00 (a Rockdale Preservation Grant to the Kay Theater) resulting in an ending balance on June 30, 2022, of \$62,571.90 of which \$4,000 is designated to the Rosenwald School.

The beginning balance of the Preservation Fund on June 1, 2022, was \$12,183.10. There was interest revenue of \$12.25 and no disbursements resulting in an ending balance of \$12,195.35 on June 30, 2022.

Lynn Young made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Reports as presented. James Bradford seconded the motion that passed.

Committee Reports

Certified Local Government Committee (CLG) – John Pruett. The committee did not conduct its bimonthly meeting lacking a quorum to do so. Summer schedules of the members had too many conflicts. However, individual member efforts continue on the currently major efforts underway:

- El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail. John shared that he and Lynn Young are now off the board but continue their participation. There are several meetings and efforts ongoing to extend the trail's advocacy in several nearby counties. The acquisition of Sugar Loaf Mountain is part of that effort.
- Freedom Colonies (Include Rosenwald Schools and currently focused on the Liberty Hill and Milano sites). Commission member, James Bradford, is a descendant of the Liberty Hill colony. John shared that Andre Roberts, Professor at Texas A&M, has moved to Virginia, but the project will continue via Texas A&M.
- John shared a presentation on the Freedom Colony Project as a whole. There is a database for recording various historical information focusing on the political and social situations and events of the black population from 1865 to 1954. As information (stories, sites identified, events) is discovered or developed, it is sent to the team at Texas A&M and reviewed for credibility. One activity the MCHC is sponsoring is Elissa Benford's current project of preserving black community history in East Rockdale.

Other current activities involving CLG requirements include:

- Maintaining a system for surveying...protecting properties and districts of *historic significance*
- Maintaining/updating surveyed properties/districts inventory

Standing Committees

Cemetery Committee - Holly Jentsch reported that the Mendoza Cemetery has been photographed. Research continues on the Bryant Place Cemetery near Buckholts. She has been working with John Bailey for information on the Six Mile area. Hopewell Church is now abandoned in the Six Mile area. She has had several requests for information on the Pin Oaks area; Linda Conn shared

that there have been recent discussions of the legal requirements to maintain the perimeters of a cemetery. Holly shared that the trial for the accused perpetrator of property damage to the Prospect Cemetery is now scheduled for August.

Marker Committee - Lynn Young. (provide assistance and guidance to applicants for historical markers and designations; work with CLG and marker recipients in coordinating efforts to maintain markers).

- The Lawrence Hubert House Marker Dedication will be September 7, in Cameron at 5:30 pm. All members are invited to attend this celebration. The Bistro will feature fine dining and tours are available.
- The Rockdale Old City Cemetery marker has been redone and shipping is in progress. Delivery and dedication are to be determined.

Preservation Grants - Holly Jentsch (administers MCHC funded grants and oversees accountability of recipients). The following Preservation Grants have been awarded for 2022:

- The Kay Theater Foundation \$2700.
- Milam County Railroad Museum 4136.00
- Samuel Park Storyboard \$3000.00 (Elissa Benford shared progress on this project with the CLG committee in May)
- The 1895 Project: \$5000.00 (Geri Burnett will routinely share progress on this project)

All grantees have work in progress.

Old Business

Update from the Texas Historical Commission (THC). Joan Ratliff shared that the recipients of the Distinguished Service Award for 2021 have been announced. The Milam County Historical Commission is again a recipient of this award. The presentation of the award will be made by and in Commissioners Court at a date to be announced. All members are encouraged to attend.

Sugar Loaf Mountain bridge repairs. Holly Jentsch shared that these needs have been requested to both Precinct Commissioners but no action has been taken. Followup is needed.

1895 Old City Hall Preservation. Geri Burnett shared that the Rockdale Sesquicentennial is in 2024. The front façade is moving forward. The custom windows have been ordered; work on the tower is to start sometime in September. The model of the building is at the Rockdale library currently but will be moved to the current City Hall later.

New Business

Declaration of Support for 1895 Preservation Project. After the discussion of the project, Joan Ratliff noted that endorsements are needed to assist in the project's fund raising and approval to the Rockdale City Council. Geri Burnett made a motion, seconded by Jennifer Patton for the Chairman to write an official letter declaring the Commission's support of this project. The motion carried.

Recognition of Member Emeritus Delores Mode. By consensus, the commission members agreed to let the Executive Committee find a suitable memorial for recognition. Two donations to the Commission have been made in Delores Mode's memory. The Secretary will write the family to inform them of the remembrances.

October's 1st Friday, October 7, 2022. We sponsor the October 1st Friday coffee at the Lucy Hill Patterson Library. Geri Burnett shared that she will add some archeology materials to honor October as archeology month. A signup sheet was passed around for members to designate the refreshments they would provide.

Nominating Committee: Joan shared that our bylaws include the following: "The Officers of the Commission shall be: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer and shall be elected by a majority vote of the voting members present at the October meeting of even-numbered years. Their term shall be for two years and for two terms (a total of 4 years)". She appointed Lynn Young to chair the nominating committee.

Future Meetings.

- October 3, 2022
- December 5, 2022

Adjournment

There being no further business, Holly Jentsch made a motion, seconded by Geri Burnett, to adjourn. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Eunice Stigall, Secretary