Agenda for Bastrop County Historical Commission

3rd Quarterly Meeting 2021 December 9, 2021 - 2 p.m.

To be held in person in the meeting room of the Bastrop County Courthouse, Bastrop, Texas,

and by Zoom

Please inform the chair if you must attend by zoom, or will be unable to attend at all – Ken.Kesselus@gmail.com

**Ken Kesselus invites you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.**

**https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83735406839**

**Meeting ID: 837 3540 6839**

**Dial by your location +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)**

* Call to Order and Roll Call
* Declaration of Quorum
* Notification of Possible Action – All items listed, unless noted otherwise, are subject to action by majority vote of those present in person or by zoom.
* Approval of minutes as follows or with as amended:

Bastrop County Historical Commission – 3rd Quarter Meeting Minutes

The Bastrop County Historical Commission met for its 3rd Quarterly Meeting on September 9,  2021 held at the Bastrop County Courthouse and some virtually via Zoom.

At 2:15, Chairman Kesselus called the meeting to order and the following members, constituting  of a quorum, answered the roll call: Sydna Arbuckle, Judy Bergeron, Duncan Charlton, Sandra  Chipley, Judy Davis, Faith Franklin, David Herrington, Rebecca Gleason, Ken Kesselus, Carol  Kysar, Mikki Meyer, Dianne Mills, David Robinson, Audrey Rother, Susan Smith, Carol Snyder and Debbie Wahrmund. Three commissioners attended online with the remainder attending in person. Other attendees were county staff members, Rose Pietsch and Adena Lewis, and visitor, Robbie Sanders. (Commissioners were asked to share biographical information and interests related to their involvement in the commission during roll call.) Chairman Kesselus declared a quorum at 2:15 pm.

**Historical Markers & Research Committee** – Vice Chair Carol Snyder reported that the new marker foundry is having problems keeping up with production of the backlog of markers. She reminded the commission that she is the commission’s contact for our historical marker applications and gave an update on the status of markers currently in the application process and at the foundry. She asked that all commissioners working on markers alert her to their current status.

**Approval of Minutes** – Faith Franklin moved that the Commission accept the minutes of its June meeting as included on the agenda. Dianne Mills seconded the motion which passed with a unanimous vote.

**Cemetery Survey Committee** – Audrey Rother reported that the committee has 3 new members, Faith Franklin, Galynn Fogel, and Bill Seward. The committee met to look at the courthouse records. A grant funded researcher at Texas A&M is doing research on Freedom Colony cemeteries and may be of help in the committee’s research. Debbie Warhmund will work with Dianne Mills, the Bastrop County African American Cultural Center, and Carol Kysar (Bastrop County Historical Society) to check into the program. Cemetery surveys continued over the last quarter with Mikki Meyer working on Friendship and Dixon and Larry Turner working on Sayersville/ Pleasant Hill. More survey work is planned in October. The Siloah Cemetery marker dedication ceremony is this Sunday at 3 p.m. The original Elgin Latin Cemetery deed record has been located.

**Historic Tourism Task Force** – No report.

**Executive Committee** – Chairman Kesselus reported that he has been working with Treasurer Duncan Charlton and Fran Hunter on a redesign of the website and presented some ideas to the commissioners. The committee has inquired of the County Judge whether the county’s ‘IT’ staff is available to maintain the website. There is a need to update it and we will begin to produce regular analytics reports. A quick look showed 296 site sessions with average duration, 89% new visitors and 11% returning visitors, 220 visitors from Google searches. We need to look at what our current ‘keywords’ are for Google searches. There will be an analytics report for next meeting.

**Heritage Awareness (Archives & Records Survey, Historical Photo Survey, Oral History)**

Archival Records Report - The committee went through Adena Lewis’s and Kay Wesson’s files last week. Rose Pietsch will keep one box in the County Clerk’s storage space for county records. The remaining records were distributed as follows: Bastrop County Historical Society  (Carol Kysar), Elgin Historical Association (John Smith), and Smithville Heritage House &  Museum Carol Snyder).

Oral Histories Report – Chairman Kesselus encouraged commissioners to promote doing interviews on cell phones.

**Grants & Finance Committee (Treasurer’s Report) –** Treasurer Duncan Charlton reported that the commission’s current balance in the Roscoe account is $9,354.83, including reimbursement to Debbie Warhmund for cemetery surveying supplies. The committee has a procedural draft for the grant application process and Duncan quickly reviewed them.   Kesselus asked for $500 for a county budget line item for the commission for this year, but most likely it has already been set at last year’s amount of $250.

**Announcements** –

McDade Historical Society will be holding a fundraiser at Sunrise Winery on September 18, 2021 from 11 am – 6 pm with displays, dinner, and an auction.

Dianne Mills reported that the African American Cultural Association is a cultural and historical organization that meets on Saturdays. It has a board and some members. A mailer form to join the association was sent out to Freedom Colony descendants and others. The association’s goal is to create a museum display of the Freedom Colonies at the Kerr Community Center. They are planning an event in December to draw new members and may wish to have a representative on the commission.

Chairman Kesselus shared that he now has a podcast entitled “A Place Called Bastrop” where he discusses both current historical subjects.

Judy Bergeron reported that the Smithville now has a coloring book for 3rd -5th graders entitled “Color Me Smithville.” It was produced through a coalition that included the Smithville Library, the Smithville Heritage House Museum, Texas Commission on the Arts, Bastrop County Character Education, and the Cultural District.

Robbie Sanders, Exhibit Curator, reported that the Bastrop County Historical Society Museum has recently completed its permanent exhibit on the Freedom Colonies. Both Carol Kysar, Archivist, and Dianne Mills, Museum Volunteer, provided historical information for the development of the exhibit.

Robbie Sanders also shared that the Bastrop County Historical Society ($2,000) along with private donors are funding the restoration and preservation work for historical headstones in Fairview Cemetery.

Secretary Sandra Chipley shared that the Bastrop County Historical Society will hold its first Historic Fairview Cemetery Walking Tour on Saturday, October 23, 2021 with a rain date of October 24. Those interested in purchasing tickets should contact the historical society. The society will also be holding its annual Holiday Homes Tour on Saturday, December 11, 2021.

The Bastrop County Historical Commission will continue to hold its Quarterly Meetings in person on the 2nd Thursday.

All commissioners moved, seconded and approved adjournment at 3:19 pm.

* Committee Reports
  + Historical Markers and Research Committee - Vice Chair Snyder
  + Cemetery Survey Committee, Audrey Rother and Debbie Warhmund
  + Historic Tourism Task Force
  + Executive Committee, Ken Kesselus
    - Website
  + Heritage Awareness Committee (Archives and Records Survey, Historical Photo Survey Committee, and Oral History Committee) – Ken Kesselus
  + Oral histories
    - Elgin Area work
    - Bastrop Historical Society
* Elgin Area Committee – Amy Miller
* Grants and Finance Committee, Duncan Charlton
  + Expenditures since last meeting
  + The following Grant Policy Proposal is submitted for action

**Goal of program:** to foster growth of historical programs under the purview of the BCHC by investing in capital equipment, publications or other to purchase resources via one-time grant awards; this is not to fund purchase of consumables

* Rules (interpretation of all rules is by Grants and Finance committee):
* Grants will not be awarded for purchase of consumables
* Grants are limited to one award per committee per year
* A grant request may cover more than one program within a committee
* No award is to be granted to pay for time expended by BCHC members
* Programs may not be awarded BCHC grants in consecutive years
* The usage of grant funds is to be limited to what was requested and approved
* Spending of grant funds must comply with Bastrop County spending guidelines.
* Members of the committee receiving the grant are responsible for proper use of grant funds.
* Funding will be released as follows: 50% of the total grant amount is released to the committee initially, with the remaining 50% to be released after submission of the first progress report.
* Two progress reports, detailing how the money was spent, will be submitted to BCHC Treasurer, the first no later than 6 months after receipt of grant funds and the second no later than 11 months after receipt of grant funds.  These reports are to list all expenses, explain how the expenditures have moved the project forward and include an estimate of completion of the program to date.
* Grantee programs are subject to audit by the BCHC Treasurer.
* Granted funds that have not been spent or otherwise accounted for to the Treasurer within 12 calendar months will be returned to the BCHC bank account.
* Grant requests must detail:
  + Who is being served?
  + How this advances the mission of the BCHC?
  + What the money pays for, in detail?
* Proposal for use of reserves – the chair
  + 3 grants at $1,000 for local enhancement
  + $ 4,000 for combining data county wide
  + remainder – held in reserve for operations
* Consideration of grant - if previous action makes this appropriate
  + Request - $1,000 for Mary Christian Burleson house rehab – Amy Miller, on behalf of the Elgin Committee (see attachment 1 – page 8)
* Office of Treasurer
  + Duncan Charles is moving out of the county and must resign from the commission on December 10, 2021.
  + Election of Treasure to take office on December 11, 2021
    - Nomination of Carol Kysar – nominated by Duncan Charlton
    - Other

The following items are not subject to votes.

* Reports and/or announcements by organizations county and by individual members
* Suggestions for topics for future meetings
* Looking ahead

Responses to what we should do:

* Compile the history of the entire county
  + each community in the county to submit their history and how it fits into the overall county history and kept on website and put in hard copy.
  + develop a general format to use.
  + Possibly publish as a money-making activity
* Create a committee that focuses on cooperative efforts between the various historic entities in the County.
* Tourism
  + Have a committee that creates tours for visitors
  + like a historic places tour or cemetery tour, etc.
  + encourages school district field trips00
  + creates online marketing tools promoting historic sites in the County.
* Have a committee to focus on creating cooperative efforts between the various historic entities in the County.
* Have a committee that creates tours for visitors (like a historic places tour or cemetery tour, etc.) and encouraging school district field trips and creates online marketing tools promoting historic sites in the County.
* Live into our statements of purpose and mission
  + PURPOSE: The purpose of this organization shall be to promote and preserve the history of Bastrop County.
  + MISSION STATEMENT: Encourage knowledge, understanding and an appreciation of Bastrop County’s past through research, documentation, and recognition of its notable historic sites and through other appropriate activities, events, and programs.
* Oral histories
  + Collect list of oral histories and provide access to them.
  + How can we find seniors to interviews?
* Archival artifacts
  + Catalogue donated archival items.
* Website:
  + Do very many people visit the commission website?
  + Improve it
* Pay attention to the State Historical Commission’s goals
  + Site Asset Inventory of Surveyed Properties
  + Education
  + Fiscal and Human Resources
  + Provide grants available for erecting historical markers
  + Review all applications for Texas Historical Markers Planning
  + Leadership and Training
  + Historic Site Tax Exemption
  + Contracts for Lease or Management of Landmarks
* Old Jail
  + work with the Commissioner’s Court to move forward with the restoration of the jail.
* 2026 the 250th anniversary of the establishment of the U.S.
  + Programs will take several years to complete. So - establish a small planning committee to discuss and present ideas to the membership as to a project that we might take on with an eye to complete by 2026. It might connect with the oral interview projects. We could work with other entities to establish a program for children with a historical element. We could research and compile information, photos, interviews, etc.
* Priorities
  + protection of our historic assets through inventorying, adding to our listed designations (designation adds a layer of protection), and finding/providing resources to protect, enhance, and maintain those assets. (for example – moving the Old Jail project forward)
  + historical tourism with existing strong partners across the County to do a better job of promotion at County level, linking the activities of groups in each area of the County.\
* Catalogue donated archival items.
* Run a feed on county and cities homepages.
* Improve the Website.
* Education programs, especially for children
* Publicize our work more.

Responses from members about individual offerings for the commission’s work, and opportunity to fill in blanks

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  | | --- | | **Sydna** | | **Arbuckle** | oral history |
| **Judy** | **Bergeron** | finance committee, looking for funding opportunities |
| **Bruce** | **Blalock** |  |
| **Sandy** | **Chipley** | Secretary |
| **Geoff** | **Connor** |  |
| **April** | **Daniels** | committee (that chairman forget to list) |
| **Judy** | **Davis** | oral history |
| **Galynn** | **Fogel** | cemeteries |
| **Faith** | **Franklin** | Coordinate work with Smithville team and BCHC |
| **Rebecca** | **Gleason** | compliance and statutory and resource interpretation |
|  |  | and help create systems under resource identification |
| **David** | **Herrington** |  |
| **Marilyn** | **Jones** | walking tour of Elgin |
| **Ken** | **Kesselus** | leadership, oral histories |
| **Carol** | Kysar | archival work, treasurer |
| **Adena** | **Lewis** | historic tourism |
| **Theresa** | **McShan** | Walking tour of Elgin |
| **Mikki** | **Meyer** | cemeteries, Paige historical society |
| **Amy** | **Miller** | Walking tour of Elgin , leadership of Elgin committee |
| **Diane** | **Mills** | Cemeteries and liaison with African American cultural effort |
| **Sandy** | **Ott** |  |
| **David** | **Robinson** | representing the Sayersville Historical Assn., focusing on the |
|  |  | northwest end of the county, evaluating results of GPR, Grave witching, identifying prehistoric artifacts (not for profit) |
|  |  | offering advice about oral histories, providing info about BCHC |
|  |  |  |
| **Audrey** | **Rother** | cemeteries, McDade Historical society |
| **R. Sanders** | **See below** |  |
| **John** | **Smith** | oral history, archives |
| **Carol** | **Snyder** | historical markers |

**Debbie Wahrmund Cemeteries**

**Robbie Sanders Historical Markers**

* Final Announcement –
  + Texas Historic Commission Lifetime Achievement Award
* Adjournment

**Attachment 1:**

Graphical user interface, application, website

Description automatically generated Graphical user interface, text, application, email

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Graphical user interface, text, application

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