

Agenda for Bastrop County Historical Commission
Third Quarterly Meeting – September 8, 2022 - 2 p.m.
Large meeting room of the
Bastrop County Courthouse Annex, Bastrop, Texas

- Call to Order
- Introduction of new members
 - Willie Delarosa
 - August Fuchs
 - Ron Ramirez
- 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
- *Because attendance at the June meeting did not reach a quorum, there are no minutes and no reason to vote approval. However, the secretary recorded the following:*
- *Chairman Kesselus introduced Lucien Perkins, a photojournalist that worked for the Washington Post has a deep interest in Bastrop and has created a podcast “A Place Called Bastrop”, 2 Pulitzer Prizes. Lucien will provide some insight on the oral history process that may be helpful for the project.*
 - *John C Smith gave presentation on starting an oral History organization*
 - o *Decide the scope, scale, and themes to form the framework for the organization – establish board, create nonprofit, identify vision, mission, goals, objectives, core values, strategy, process and establish by-laws to conduct the interview in a quiet space of the interviewee’s choice - in the person’s home*
 - o *Amy Miller approached John to work with Elgin on 50 oral histories for the 150-year celebration, so at this time the focus is on Elgin oral histories then will broaden to include oral histories from Bastrop County.*
 - o *Lucien suggested reaching out to the younger generation to help, stating this would be a great teaching moment and opportunity. Utilize an internship (either paid or volunteer),*
 - o *Access to the oral histories via link on website; Suggestion to create a working group to do oral histories around Bastrop County*
 - o *Searchable database*

- *Report from Judy Bergeron and David Robinson*
- *Report from Carol Kysar on the oral history process through the museum's technology – do have the ability from a Word file to create a searchable PDF – need volunteer help; PastPerfect web version goes live*
- *Robbie Sanders – report on Historical Markers*
- *August Fuchs of Paige gave an update (Chair Kesselus will seek to reinstate him as a member of BCHC)*
 - o *Paige has received its historical marker*
 - o *Funds up to \$200 available for marker ceremony*
 - o *2nd Saturday in September – tentative date for ceremony*
- *Amy Miller noted that there is a private DAR marker ceremony to be held on Saturday, August 20th; Grant for completion of the Elgin Courier newspaper archival process*
- *Discussion by Chairman Kesselus on a short History of Bastrop County in brochure format or link on website?*
- *Faith Franklin presentation on Smithville happenings and her book “Aftermath” available*
- *Robbie Sanders book “House Histories” update*
- *Discussion with Fran Hunter on BCHC website*

1. Approval of Minutes of March 10, 2022, meeting, as presented or amended.

Bastrop County Historical Commission
 First Quarterly meeting
 March 10, 2022 @ 2pm

At 2:01 Chairman Kesselus called the meeting to order and Secretary, Sandra Chipley called the roll. The following members, responded by indicating their presence at the courthouse Annex or by Zoon.

Ken Kesselus, Synda Arbuckle, Judy Bergeron, Sandy Chipley, April Daniels, Judy Davis, Galynn Fogle, Faith Franklin, Rebecca Gleason, David Herrington, Robbie Sanders, Marilyn Jones, Carol Kysar, Mikkie Meyer, Amy Miller, Dianne Mills, John Smith, Debbie Warhmund, Angie Smith, Fran Hunter

Chairman Kesselus declared a quorum.

Approval of minutes – Faith Franklin moved that the Commission accept the minutes of its December meeting as indicated on the agenda. Carol Kysar seconded the motions which passed with a unanimous vote.

Elections to fill vacancies

A. **Vice Chair** position to be filled upon retirement by Carol Snyder – nomination of Sandra Chipley presented with bio per agenda. Call made for additional nominations at which time no other nominations were received. Nomination approved unanimously.

B. **Secretary** position now vacant with appointment of Sandra Chipley as Vice Chair. Nomination of Galynn Fogle presented providing bio per agenda. Call made for additional nominations at which time no other nominations were received. Nomination approved unanimously.

Historic Task Force – April Daniels, Smithville Chamber of Commerce, Railroad Museum

- Looking for volunteers to partner together to create a Trail of History in the county for tourists visiting the county. It could be a digital format with maps, etc. Anyone that is interested in being a part of this project and brainstorm ideas, please let April know.

Marker Project Update - Update on the Historical Market program given by Robbie Sanders. Sarah McClesky is the new Texas Historical Commission contact and has been very responsive. Inform commissioners whenever a dedication ceremony is scheduled. BCHC has allocated \$200 to go toward cost of having a ceremony. The Mary Christian Burleson House received their marker last year, had a well-attended ceremony and BCHC provided \$200 toward the marker ceremony which was attended by several BCHC representative.

Cemeteries Survey – Update by Debbie Wahrmond

- Mikki Meyer completed several verifications and typing of cemeteries on map
- Dianne Mills and Allison completed the Alum Creek (black) cemetery and are starting Westbrook Cemetery in Elgin.
- Galynn Fogle completed the Rosanky Family Cemetery with family members and is starting the Rosanky Cemetery.
- Mapping for THC to cross map with BCHC cemetery list has begun thanks to Galynn and Allison helping Debbie W the last couple of weeks. 27 cemeteries in Map 6 were submitted to Jenny McWilliams.
- There have been about 5 questions received through email and phone contact with Carol Kysar which Debbie is trying to close out plus one ongoing discussion with the Gotcher Family for access to their cemetery located on private property.
- The Old Mexican Cemetery in Elgin is supposed to be agreed to by the City of Elgin to finalize a scope with the city engineer to map a metes and bounds diagram for the county to add a property Id. Debbie met with the City Manager and is waiting for their draft. Juan Gonzalez, a local resident is helping.
- Cemetery tours in Elgin: One canceled at Elgin Cemetery due to association concerns. Westbrook, lead Gwen Johnson provided a list of people for the historic Black Cemetery is in process - target date October. Latin Cemetery, lead Juan Gonzalez sent draft script and list to Debbie - target date November. Additional volunteers are welcome to join

Executive Committee, Ken Kesselus

(1) Website – Fran Hunter is limited on amount of time she is approved to update the website. A complete rework of the website would require BCHC to hire someone for this project. Will investigate cost involved to do this. Fran did revamp the website within her allotted time prior to

today's meeting. She can also add links that would allow access to other entities deemed important to the scope of the commission.

- Two focus groups to consider in the design of the website are
 - tourist/visitor to Bastrop County
 - local individual/resident of Bastrop County
- Suggestion made to have a Task Force to review current website to decide
 - what info to add
 - proofing
 - Keep existing website design or hire someone to completely redesign

After discussion, the decision was made for the issue to go back to the Executive Committee to regroup.

(2) Newspapers on Portal to Texas History – The Smithville Times newspapers prior to 1965 have been sent to the Portal to Texas History. Amy Miller reported that the Elgin Courier from 1930 to present are being scanned with the funds received from a grant. It requires the physical newspaper to be relinquished that are stored in a very secure fashion.

(3) How about cemetery tours? (probably refer to Tourism Task Force) – Use model done by Bastrop Museum for Bastrop City's Fairview Cemetery to develop tours by other cemetery organizations within the county. Develop map of trails for bus tours to cemeteries. The cemetery associations choose a character or two with interesting histories to be portrayed with someone in period costume representing the characters.

(4) How to bring various historical-focused entities together – cooperating/meetings/activities/etc. – April Daniels

(5) Foster genealogical research – hold workshop(s) with knowledgeable people from the State or National Level. The City of Round Rock or Georgetown would be a good source of information on how to initiate this since they hold annual workshops on genealogical research topics.

(6) Education – Consider what the Commission could do in the future to incorporate an educational program for school kids.

(7) Past Perfect – Carol Kysar gave an update on the use of the Past Perfect software that the museum installed in 2002. There are now 14 research volunteers that use Past Perfect to transcribe data, images, media records, researching biographies, etc. A visitor to the museum recently commented that the museum has “a very professional archive system”.

Past Perfect allows researchers to query the system for information they are looking for on a particular subject. It does not allow linking of together other museums using it, but that isn't an issue. A website could be created that has links to the various museums that you would just click on the link to access that museums data. Elgin, McDade and Rockne museums have the program. The Smithville Heritage Museum does not have the program. Faith Franklin expressed an interest in getting the program. The use of the desk top version would be an option, since the cost for it is reasonable. This is an expenditure that the Commission could consider as a “Gift”. **Need to market the use of the program more to the public.**

(8) Special Focus for each of the next 3 meetings.

- June – Oral histories process by John Smith

5. Heritage Awareness Committee (Archives & Records, Historical Photos, and Oral Histories) – Ken Kesselus (or someone else)

- Oral Histories Updates by John Smith – 12 oral histories are complete. Website design meeting for the oral histories is scheduled for next week. John agreed to give presentation on the oral history process at the June meeting of BCHC.

4. Reports from local historical entities

- **Elgin Area Committee** – Amy Miller reported on Elgin’s Sesquicentennial Celebrate events taking place this year. Newsletter ETX150 sign up to receive, May 25th event, Aug 20th event, Dec 2022 time capsule and lighted parade. 3 new murals will be dedicated in the downtown area, local historians are writing articles weekly. The City of Elgin is on board with a generous funding support for the 150th Celebration
- **Smithville Heritage Society** – Faith Franklin reported on the reorganization of the Smithville Heritage Society beginning with new officers elected, \$500 donation from the Chamber. Fundraising for painting project for the 2-story house donated in 1976 estimated at \$50,000; Faith has a book being published about the historic home that she renovated and now has a historical marker for it. has a YouTube channel GAAnthony, Uniquely Bastrop
- **Sayersville Historical Association** – David Robinson not present for update
- **Bastrop County Historical Society** – Sandy Chipley
 - Cemetery tours
 - Homes Tour
 - Kings Highway group DAR
 - Robbie Sanders Book of Historic homes of Bastrop titled “House Histories”
 - El Camino Real group
- **Others**
 - Judy Bergeron at the Smithville Library reminded everyone that libraries are great sources of information, specifically noting Smithville Library as a great resource for information on using the Portal of Texas History,
 - Ken Kesselus, chair reported that on April 11, 2022, he would give the annual report at the Commissioners meeting.

Finance Committee and Treasurer’s report – Update by Carol Kysar

- Account balance is \$8,338.98
- \$200 gift given to the Mary Christian Burleson House marker ceremony
- Reimbursement of copy expense for cemetery mapping

The following procedures for certain expenditures of funds beyond normal operations of the Bastrop County Historical Commission were presented for adoption:

1. Any donation under these terms will be considered “gifts.” *
2. The only limitations on types of usage of such funds include the requirement that the funds will “promote and preserve the history of Bastrop County” as defined in Section 3 of the BCHC Bylaws and comply with the good judgment of the commission.
3. In making any such gift, the commission will employ the following standardized process.
 - a. The commission will not accept applications for funding. Instead, the process that might lead to a gift must be initiated by a member of the commission.

Amy Miller made the motion to adopt, Debbie Wahrmund 2nd the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

America 250! – presented by Sandy Chipley

Consideration of developing resources for a 250th anniversary of the establishment of the U.S. (2026) throughout Bastrop County – Sandy Chipley

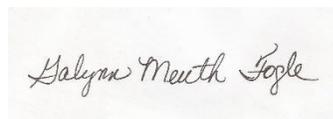
Create a task force to investigate what can BCHC do to assist in event planning for the America 250! celebration.

- Maybe collaborate with or assist Bastrop County DAR chapters
- Possibly we could serve as a catalyst – encourager – resource –

Other announcements

- Synda Arbuckle – While researching Elgin history for the 150th celebration of Elgin Synda discovered Newspapers.com to be a great source of information. Even though Elgin newspapers are not on it, due to the cost, the Austin American Stateman newspaper had a lot of information on Elgin. Prior to 1900, the Galveston newspaper carried a lot of Central Texas stories. The book titled “Milestones of Elgin” is a celebration of Elgin’s milestones for the last 150 years that will be published this year.
- Debbie Wahrmond – suggested for next meeting’s agenda to include Report on Mary C Burleson project funds update. Amy Miller mentioned on May 21st one of the events of the Elgin Sesquicentennial will be hosted at the Mary C Burleson house. One of the exhibitors will be a chainsaw artist giving demonstrations of his work.

Chair adjourned meeting at 3:38pm



Galynn Meuth Fogle, Secretary
Bastrop County Historical Commission

2. Committee Reports

- A. Historical Markers and Research Committee – Robbie Sanders
- B. Cemetery Survey Committee – Debbie Warhmond
- C. Historic Tourism Task Force – April Daniels

To date, participating sites include:

1. Smithville Visitor Center & RR Museum
2. Smithville Heritage Society
3. McDade Museum
4. Elgin Depot Museum
5. Bastrop Museum & Visitor Center
6. Kerr Center/African American Museum
7. Elgin Main Street/Historic District
8. Halloween History Museum at Scream Hollow
9. Smithville Veteran's Memorial Park
10. Elgin Veteran's Memorial Park
11. Bastrop County Tourism

We hope to also receive information from the Paige, Red Rock and Rosanky groups. I think we should also include historic cemeteries on its own page of the site.

We had more than 20 at our August meeting in McDade. We have had four meetings so far in Smithville, Bastrop, Elgin & McDade.

We will also be creating a trifold for sites to print as needed.

We have created a Dropbox account and have had hundreds of photos and other documents uploaded by participants

Recommendation for Website – See item 4 below.

- D. Finance Committee and Treasurer’s report – Carol Kysar
 - E. Executive Committee, Ken Kesselus
 - F. Heritage Awareness Committee (Archives & Records, Historical Photos, and Education – Ken Kesselus (or someone else)
 - Sharing of books on Bastrop County History
 - G. Oral Histories Updates – John Smith and others
3. Reports from local historical entities
- A. Elgin Area Committee – Amy Miller
 - B. Smithville Heritage Society – Faith Franklin
 - C. Sayersville Historical Association – David Robinson
 - D. Bastrop County Historical Society – Sandy Chipley
 - E. African American Cultural Center – Dianne Mills
 - F. America 250! – Sandy Chipley
 - G. Reports and/or announcements by other organizations or individuals

4. Commission Website(s)

A. Brief History of our current website

B. Proposal by Tourism Committee

The excitement among the Tourism Committee is for a County website that highlights the many historic sites throughout the County and is a resource for tourists and visitors interested in a self-guided tour of historic sites or who want to explore the whole county's historic locations. It also provides an online page for the smaller sites who don't currently have a strong online presence. Everyone is very excited and engaged.

The proposed site name is:

www.bastropcountyhistoricsites.com

Proposal to create a website by

EXPRESSIONS MARKETING, LLC PROPOSAL FOR MUSEUM WEBSITE

June 14, 2022

Museum Website for Bastrop County Collaborative

- \$1,500 to create the website includes:
 - o Consultation on design/layout
 - Facilitating the subscription to the website host, registering the domain name – to be reimbursed by the Bastrop County Museum Collaborative (*see options below*)
 - Building of the website
 - Provide information on how to manage the page or,
 - Sundance Expressions Marketing, LLC. can manage the
 - page for an additional cost per month.
 - Bastrop County Museum Collaborative to:
 - o Provide information regarding museums per town/area to be listed.
 - o Reimburse the cost of the web host (annual subscription)
 - Sundance Expressions Marketing, LLC. recommends the use of Wix.com
- Wix.com Plan options:
- Option 1: Pro Plan \$27 per month (\$324 annually)
 - o Includes Free Domain name for a year
 - o 50GB Storage
 - o SSL Certificate
 - Option 2: Business Unlimited Plan \$32 per month (\$384 annually)
 - o Includes Free Domain name for a year
 - o 100 GB Storage
 - o SSL Certificate
 - o Secure online payments

C. Correlated opportunity

Fran Hunter submitted a “Capstone project proposal” to the Texas Travel Alliance which will allow her to complete requirements for a three-year course at the Tourism College for my accreditation as a Certified Tourism Expert (CTE).

Subsequently, she had received approval for this project which she can develop as a part of her position on Adena Lewis’s Bastrop County Office of Tourism and Economic Development.

The basics of the proposal involves: creating a website plan for BCHC including a design which delineates information for residents and for visitors. The purpose of the redesign is to boost interaction with the website as the premiere resource of historical information for locals and for visitors. The project also includes a basic plan and article/posts for announcing the new website in a fill-in-the-blank format. This website plan would include a survey of BCHC members regarding their thoughts on what the website should include, and if needed, reactivation of the Website Subcommittee.

The website already includes incredible information, and Commission members are gathering more every day. I look forward to creating a plan which enhances the history of Bastrop County.

D. Discussion and possible action

5. Suggestions for topics for future meetings

6. Adjournment