

# Ellis County Historical Commission



P.O. Box 175, Waxahachie, Texas 75165-0175

## Meeting Minutes of the Ellis County Historical Commission on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023

### **Call to Order**

Location & Time: Jury Room of the Ellis County Historic Courthouse (101 W Main St, Waxahachie), 3:30 p.m.

Attendees: David Sacha, Sharan Farmer, Bruce Fowler, Michelle Haye, Guests Kendra Blakely and Nancy Boren and Brother

Quorum: As of 3:43 p.m., no quorum is present. Since no quorum is present, Michelle Haye determines that she will reimburse out of the expenses account for the Cotton Industry Marker unveiling event since the expense was pre-approved.

Welcome: Kendra Blakely, a candidate for ECHC, is welcomed. She was recommended to represent the Red Oak area. She loves history, knows Sharan, and has local roots. She was a long-time English teacher in Red Oak ISD and taught Judge Little.

Nancy and John Boren of the Boren/Reagor Springs Cemetery Association are welcomed. They are descendants of the original Borens and Cooks. Nancy explains that her cemetery is a 501(c)3. She announces that October 14<sup>th</sup> will be a cemetery show-day an annual meeting, and there is a historic marker at the cemetery already. She wants to make a map of the cemetery. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, at 10 a.m. at the cemetery, then at 12 p.m. at Bluebonnet BBQ, will be the meeting. They also have a newsletter/website but desire some promotional help (Michelle Haye volunteers). Nancy's goal is to raise awareness of the cemetery and to ask for grant opportunities if we know of any. Nancy gives her email address, which is nancy@nancyboren.com.

### **Chair Reports**

Treasurer's Report: The end balance is \$1,302.<sup>30</sup> for the checking account and \$30,313.<sup>62</sup> in savings.

Chair's Report: David Sacha says he is working with Judge Little and Commissioner Grayson to get funding support work for the County Farm Pauper Cemetery. Sacha has some quotes for the use of ground-penetrating radar by Texas Cemetery Restoration (from Crockett w/ a Dallas satellite). The work has already been done, and David is waiting for reimbursement. Evidence was found for only 13 graves, but the 13 remaining graves could have disappeared due to the use of pine boxes. Stainless steel markers have been laid down to indicate grave locations.

TxDOT submitted modification plans for the UPRR underpass in Ennis, and David looked through their plans and submitted his comments last Friday. There are several THC markers in downtown Ennis, and TxDOT has revised its plans so as to not impact the markers. David made sure that the historic structures, park, and markers would not be impacted. The work will probably be next year.

The state is widening FM 1387 from Midlothian to FM 664. There is a THC marker there for Hawken Springs. David responded to their request for comment by stating that they need to protect the marker during construction.

Next, David mentions his progress on a possible joint session with other county historical commissions. Thanks to Sharan and the dedication ceremony for the cotton ceremony, Johnson County would be interested in doing a group meeting with Ellis County; they have already been focusing on increasing interconnectedness with their surrounding counties. They want to do this in April at the Johnson County Museum. The Navarro County Chair has organized a joint session with the county south of them. They picked October 21<sup>st</sup> as their date and have extended an invite to us (David will forward this information to us; the meeting will be in Teague).

Marker Chair's Report: The Cotton Industry in Ellis County marker is located on the outskirts of Italy. Approximately 120 people showed up to the dedication ceremony!

The Old Bardwell marker is in the final stages of production.

The inscription for the Sweat Family Legacy marker is up for approval at the THC's October quarterly meeting.

The Bluebonnet Trail marker is pending.

The Brooks Family Cemetery marker has been sent in. Sugar Glaspy sent it in a week and a half ago, but not all entities have approved it yet.

Three people have made inquiries for 24 different markers, including the Chapman House and Baron House in Palmer. Markers cost a lot! We have not heard back from the Barons. Gaylord-French from Waxahachie wanted a marker about the Pony League, although he has not yet gotten back to Sharan about this. The deadline for 2024 markers is May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Get started now! The priority themes are civil rights, social/cultural history, and education; these categories get "bonus points" because the State Historic Commission is looking to promote "undertold stories." 170 new markers will be supported for 2024. Marker prices are rising, but "undertold" markers may not require State Historic Commission approval(?) It takes 2 years to get a marker! The Cotton Industry marker was originally submitted in 2021, and approval for each correction can take 2-3 months.

#### Precinct 2 Reports:

Sharan Farmer: The storm that came through 2 weeks ago (wind and hail) caused a lot of damage to Maloney Cemetery. The fence is all twisted down.

Bruce Fowler: The Ennis Heritage Society (he is President) will put together an exhibit from November 1<sup>st</sup> to January 27<sup>th</sup> overviewing the history of Ennis (and Burnham!). This history will also include the predecessors to Ennis, including information and artifacts from T.C. Neel's family.

For Veteran's Day: Remember that one of the pilots of the Doolittle Raid was from Ennis; his name was Edgar McElroy. When McElroy dropped a 2,000-pound bomb on ammo in Tokyo, he reportedly said, "Here is a gift from Ellis County!" McElroy was the pilot for Crew 13. He lived from 1912-2003.

Michelle Haye: Michelle mentions her upcoming Veterans' Interactive Wall at the Museum and other upcoming events featuring patriotic themes. There may be cash prizes and involvement

with the ISD's! The Veterans' Exhibit starts on 11/4 alongside the fashion exhibit, which is a 1940's-themed champagne brunch at the Museum; there will be some war-time tie-in's to honor the history.

The Christmas Tour of Homes hosted by Historic Waxahachie, Inc. will be December 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. There will be 6 homes, and one of them is Midcentury Modern.

Corey Rogan: Bill McNutt and the Alamo Letter Society are trying to place William Travis's Alamo Letter on all courthouses in Texas, and Ellis County is being chosen as one of the first three to do it, alongside Rockwall and Van-Zandt!

### **Concluding Any Other Business**

Corey Rogan: We determined that the Ellis County Museum social media would be enough.

Bruce Fowler: He is in conversation with Sugar Glaspy about potential tombstones underneath the stairwell of a stadium. Research will commence soon.

Nancy Boren: She has one last announcement: she wants to do a Go Fund Me campaign as a last resort.

### **Adjournment**

An informal adjournment occurs due to the lack of a quorum.

*These meeting minutes were prepared by Corey Rogan, Secretary of the Ellis County Historical Commission*