

Aransas County Historical Commission (ACHC)

January 24, 2015 – Workshop Minutes

Meeting convened at 10:00 am and was held in the Aransas County Commissions Courtroom.

2014 Chairman Collin Jackson presided.

Commissioners Present: Kitty Angell, Kathie Gribble, Collin Jackson, Gail Johnston, Letha Kieffer, Sally Reynolds, Betty Stiles, Pam Stranahan, Carol Thompson, Kam Wagert, Veronika Camehl, Geoff Bywater, Gene Harrison.

Commissioners Not Present: Linda Garcia, Dolly Close.

A quorum was declared and the 2015 members were introduced. Chairman Jackson stated the purpose of the workshop was to introduce the CHC and its duties.

Pam Stranahan took the floor and gave an overview of the commission, and its duties to “Protect, preserve, and promote cultural and historical resources.” Introduced the various entities with which the CHC is involved with to preserve the history and culture in Aransas County. She also gave a background on the founding of the Texas Historical Commission, the Aransas County Historical Commission, the Aransas County Historical Society, and the Friends of the History Center.

Pam continued to talk about how the Aransas Pathways Project through the Venue tax funds the Aransas County Historical Center which stands as the home for the CHC. The History Center preserves as the 1880s building and showcases new exhibits every three months.

Kam Wagert discussed the Postcard Book, “Aransas County in Postcards” a joint book showcasing historic postcards from the county, funded through a grant and authored by Kam Wagert and Pam Stranahan, with proceeds going towards the History Center.

Pam reminded the Commission and newly appointed commissioners that the History Center is owned by the County and we should all be more involved with it, the Friends of the History Center manage the programing and exhibits through a MOU with the County.

Geoff Bywater asked if the History Center is subject to property tax, Pam indicated because it is County Owned it is not, and the Friends of the History Center is a separate 501C3 organization that manages the center. Mr. Bywater also asked how the Friends raise money for the Center, Pam indicated the Friends raise money through their Christmas Historic Home Tour, the Postcard Book, Mike Probst’s Book, and two garage sales, they also receive funding through grants.

The CHC acts as ambassadors of history

Pam introduced the committees and current committee chairs:

Collections Committee Chair Letha Kieffer discussed how the County collects a lot of historically significant items, and houses all the records of the firemen, photos, and old maps, shellcrete blocks in the CHC Vault. We also house the oral history collections, which are in the progress of being converted to a digital format. It was recommended that Gene Johnson, retiring manager of the Aransas County Airport be interviewed to add a new volume to the Oral History collection. Kathy Gribble also suggested that we should put the audio collections on display at the History Center.

Kam indicated they also need to be transcribed and keyword indexed. Sally asked about the current progress of vacating the vault, and we are waiting for a secure, preservation rated facility to be constructed at the History Center sometime this year.

Kitty Angell Chair of the Markers Committee introduced the committee as one that people must enjoy writing and doing research. This is the most public arm of the CHC in that it nominates and recommends subjects and landmarks for markers. Prepares and collects all the necessary research, narratives, and photos for the THC Application. She also indicated the THC gives workshops and seminars regarding Markers and the process.

Betty Stiles introduced the Cemeteries Committee and discussed the Lamar Cemetery Rededication, Find a Headstone project, identifying Civil War Veterans in area cemeteries how the CHC is responsible for locating unmarked graves and/or forgotten cemeteries. Kitty suggested another project would be to have QR Codes placed that link people to audio recordings discussing the significance of the grave site and the people or persons buried at the site.

Pam introduced the Preservation and Public Policy Committee which handles the Windstorm Exemption program which protects historically significant buildings from demolition in the event of a catastrophic event in the area, our annual Preservation in History Month Proclamation.

She concluded the discussions with the Public Relations Committee and Kathy discussed the calendars for fourth graders introduces the children to the historical events or people depicted in the calendars. They give a presentation to about 8 classes of fourth grade students to get them interested in history. Pam suggested we should have press releases and other media relations integrated with this committee and talked about branding and logo ideas for the CHC.

This concluded the workshops and a motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Pam and seconded by Letha. The Motion carried unanimously. h

Meeting adjourned at 11:20.