

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

AGENDA
HISTORIC SITES COMMITTEE
Videoconference Meeting
AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center
Grand Salon ABC
1900 University Avenue
Austin TX 78705
April 26, 2021
1:00 p.m.

(or upon the adjournment of the 12:30 p.m. preceding History Programs Committee, whichever occurs later)

Pursuant to the Governor's March 16, 2020 suspension of certain provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19), the April 26, 2021 meeting of the Historic Sites Committee will be held by videoconference as authorized under Texas Government Code section 551.127. The presiding officer and a quorum of the Historic Sites Committee will be present at the above-posted physical location. The public is invited to attend via Zoom using the registration link provided or in person in accordance with the instructions below.

To attend by Zoom, registration is required: <http://bit.ly/april26thcmeeting>

For audio only access via telephone: 1(346) 248-7799 Webinar ID: 914 0970 3244

To attend in person: In accordance with policies of the meeting facility, facemasks are recommended to enter the building and remain on while in the common area. The THC strongly recommends mask use and social distancing throughout the property and during the meeting. The THC encourages any person experiencing symptoms of illness to attend by videoconference instead of in person.

Digital copies of the meeting materials will be available at www.thc.texas.gov/videoconferences after April 20, 2021. To obtain a recording of the meeting please contact Theresa Wenske after April 30, 2021. The members may discuss and/or take action on any of the items listed in the agenda.

1. Call to Order
 - A. Committee member introductions
 - B. Establish quorum
 - C. Recognize and/or excuse absences
2. Consider approval of the February 2, 2021 Historic Sites Committee meeting minutes
3. Consider approval of deaccessions from the Fanthorp Inn, Fulton Mansion, Kreische Brewery, and National Museum of the Pacific War State Historic Sites – (Item 15.2)
4. Historic Sites Facilities Report
5. San Jacinto Battleground and Monument Report
6. Washington-on-the-Brazos Report
7. Deputy Executive Director of Historic Sites Update
8. Adjournment

NOTICE OF ASSISTANCE AT PUBLIC MEETINGS: Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids or services such as interpreters for persons who are deaf or hearing impaired, readers, large print or Braille, are requested to contact Esther Brickley at (512) 463-5768 at least four (4) business days prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

HISTORIC SITES COMMITTEE MINUTES

Teleconference Meeting

February 2, 2021

Note: For the full text of action items, please contact the Texas Historical Commission at P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711 or call 512.463.6100.

Commissioners in attendance: John Crain (Chair), Jim Bruseth, Monica Burdette, David Gravelle, Laurie Limbacher, Catherine McKnight, and Pete Peterson.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner John Crain at 2:20 pm He announced that pursuant to the Governor's March 13, 2020 state of disaster declaration due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and March 16 suspension of certain provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, the February 2, 2021 meeting of the THC Historic Sites Committee would be held by video conference call, as authorized under Texas Government Code section 551.125. The meeting had been posted to the *Texas Register*, was being held in conformance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 551 and that notice had been properly posted with the Secretary of State's Office as required.

A. Committee member introductions

Commissioner Crain welcomed all present and conducted roll call.

B. Establish quorum

Commissioner Crain reported that a quorum was present and declared the meeting open.

C. Recognize and/or excuse absences

Absences: Commissioner Crain noted that there were no absences.

2. Consider approval of the October 27, 2020 Historic Sites Committee meeting minutes

Commissioner Crain asked if anyone had any comments regarding the minutes. There being none, he called for a motion. Motion to approve the October 27, 2020 minutes was made by Commissioner Pete Peterson and seconded by Commissioner Jim Bruseth. Commissioner Crain called for a vote. Vote to approve was unanimous.

3. Consider staff recommendation regarding the Phase I Evaluation of the Hoch House – (Item 13.2)

Executive Director Mark Wolfe gave a preliminary explanation of why we evaluated this site and what the recommendation of staff was regarding the acceptance of the Hoch House as a State Historic Site. The report that was provided for Commission review noted that while the Hoch House was architecturally important and had a high degree of historical significance to the local community in Hochheim and DeWitt County, the story it tells is one we have covered at one or more of our current THC Historic Sites. Mr. Wolfe noted that the agency periodically receives letters from organizations requesting that the THC accept their site into the network of historic sites. He noted that he reviews each request with THC Chairman John Nau and if it is determined that a Phase I evaluation should take place, staff goes to the site and evaluates it against pre-determined criteria that has been approved by the Commission. After some discussion about options for those properties not authorized for a Phase I evaluation, Commissioner Crain moved to send forward to the full commission recommending acceptance of the Phase I recommendation that the Hoch House Phase II study should not be authorized at this time. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Peterson. Commissioner Crain called for a vote. Vote to approve was unanimous.

4. Consider approval of the Collections Management Plan – (Item 13.3)

Deputy Executive Director Joseph Bell noted that Historic Site curatorial staff had reviewed and edited the existing THC Collection Management Plan. He said that the document had last been updated in March 2020 in response to legislative and administrative rule changes. The changes highlighted in the pages that were included in the packet are to clarify some collection categories; define statutory and administrative rule authority; process changes to accession and deaccession actions for donations that do not fall under IRS requirements; and to incorporate language with the amended rule 16.13. Bell said that staff was recommending approval of the updated Collection Management Plan. Commissioner Laurie Limbacher moved to send forward to the full commission and recommend approval of the revised Collections Management Plan. Commissioner Bruseth seconded the motion. Commissioner Crain called for a vote. Vote to approve was unanimous.

5. Consider approval of Donor Recognition for the French Legation State Historic Site – (Item 13.4)

Bell stated that several donors had assisted with the visitor center renovation and expansion. He said that, based on the design guidelines included in the state historic sites donor recognition policy, approved in 2017, the donors contributing to the French Legation Visitor Center would be recognized with a designed element following the guidelines as adopted. Bell noted that the current donors are the City of Austin Heritage Grant Program and Visit Austin, as well as any other donors currently being approached by the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission. Bell said that staff was requesting authorization to proceed with the design and installation of a donor element. Commissioner Crain called for a motion. Commissioner Limbacher moved to send forward to the full commission and recommend approval of donor recognition element for the French Legation State Historic Site. The motion was seconded by Commissioner David Gravelle. After some discussion about consistency across all sites for donor recognition, it was decided to amend the motion. Executive Director of the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission Anjali Zutshi noted that the donor recognition design guidelines included provisions for levels of donation. The motion was amended by Commissioner Bruseth to add that the proposed design would be presented to the Commission for approval before implementation. The amended motion was seconded by Commissioner Peterson. Commissioner Crain called for a vote. Vote to approve was unanimous.

6. Consider approval of the designation of Palmito Ranch Battlefield and Old Socorro Mission as State Historic Sites – (Item 13.5)

Bell gave a brief description of the two properties that are currently owned by the Commission that we are seeking to designate as state historic sites. The Old Socorro Mission site is a Franciscan mission founded in 1682 to serve Spanish families and Native American communities displaced from New Mexico during the Pueblo Revolt. Bell said that the mission had been rebuilt at least twice, noting that the mission was last destroyed in 1829 by the flooding of the Rio Grande river and was ultimately relocated to higher ground. He further noted that the site had a direct link to the present-day mission as a Catholic church and the Pueblo community. Bell continued, saying that although the structures were no longer visible on the surface, the site was rich in archeology, describing it as an invaluable resource in interpreting a critical period in development of the Spanish mission system and early European settlement from the US border region in El Paso north into New Mexico and east into Texas. He said that archeological excavations conducted in the 1980s had revealed that the foundation of the chapel was still present below the surface, with rich cultural material deposits.

Bell said that the second property being considered was the Palmito Ranch Battlefield, site of the Battle of Palmito Ranch, which was the final land battle of the American Civil War. It was fought on May 12 and 13, 1865, 13 miles east of Brownsville, and 10 miles from the Union held seaport of Los Brazos de Santiago, at the southern tip of Texas. He noted that the battle had taken place more than a month after General Lee's surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia to Union forces and 13 days before the Army of the Trans-Mississippi under General Smith had surrendered in Galveston on May 26. The site is the only publicly

accessible land on the slopes of Palmito Hill where Union forces were located at the onset of the battle. Bell said that there are plans to build a platform with interpretation and open the site to the public.

Bell stated that Historic Site staff was recommending the designation of each as a state historic site. There was a question as to whether the amount of land currently owned by THC was enough to designate it as a historic site. Chairman Nau stated that the rest of the land is not for sale and will likely never be. Bell noted that there would be the opportunity to enter into a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service for interpretation. Executive Director Wolfe noted that at Old Socorro Mission there was an opportunity to acquire the remaining half of the land but for now the site will remain unstaffed. Commissioner Crain made the motion to send forward to the full commission and recommend approval of the designation of Palmito Ranch Battlefield and Old Socorro Mission as State Historic Sites. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gravelle. Commissioner Crain then called for a vote. Vote to approve was unanimous.

7. San Jacinto Battleground and Monument Report

Bell stated that the San Jacinto Museum of History Association board had authorized a name change to reflect the merger of the museum and battleground into a combined public/private business operation. The new non-profit association name is the San Jacinto Museum and Battlefield Association. He continued, noting that the new entity had approved a new mission statement:

The San Jacinto Museum and Battlefield Association is dedicated to the revisualization, interpretation, and commemoration of the Battle of San Jacinto, its participants, and the site's significant role in the creation of Texas as a new Republic. It also strives to engage and educate the public and encourage historical inquiry; to collect and preserve materials of history and historical information of the region; to illustrate and tell the chronological story through exhibitions; to promote the archaeology and to preserve the history of the battlefield and monument; and to become a world class destination for those interested in learning more about Texas and American history.

Bell stated that the San Jacinto operating agreement had been drafted and would be finalized once the executive manager for the site's business operations was hired and the operation structure further refined. He noted that the statutory authority language had been crafted, incorporating the new name and other items previously authorized in legislative resolutions and an established trust agreement in place with the state.

Bell noted that the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Land and Water conservation grant was being reviewed by Parks and Wildlife staff and would go before their Commission at its spring meeting in April or May.

Bell said that the NRG Almonte surrender site had been secured by the Chairman. Staff is working to secure and program the site and incorporate it into the San Jacinto site's operations. Bell offered the floor to Chairman Nau for an update. Chairman Nau stated that swift action needed to be taken in order to secure the land. Using his personal resources, he helped to make the acquisition possible. Executive Director Wolfe wanted to publicly thank Chairman Nau for his integral part in securing this property for the site and THC.

8. Retail Development Report

Bell stated that the Retail Development goals were to integrate the store more deeply into the Historic Sites' operations, improve operational efficiencies, align with retail best practices, build brand identity across all platforms (store design, labeling, merchandizing, products selection, promotion, marketing, and customer service), provide a more enriched visitor experience, and strengthen the Texas Historical Commission's brand identity as operator of Historic Sites statewide. He said that a Request for Information had been posted for an e-commerce service provider, and that six companies had responded with a range of costs

from \$71,000 to \$1M and implementation timeframes provided from 6 weeks to 1 year. He noted that these proposals were all under review and that they were assessing what in-house support may be available. Bell described the slides containing pictures of various product lines that could be featured at the sites. He said that establishing a brand image in the store retail design was a major goal. Bell continued, saying that San Felipe de Austin was the newest store and was the model for stores in contemporary visitor centers to help create a THC store brand palette. He noted that stores in historic properties would be addressed differently based on each site's unique historic design qualities. He said that staff had identified several images for items that could be produced for specific sites: quilts from Eisenhower Birthplace and Washington-on-the-Brazos; ceramics from San Felipe de Austin; cast iron figurines from Varner Hogg Plantation and jewelry from: Fulton Mansion, Levi Jordon Plantation, and Starr Family Home. Bell noted that there was an opportunity to contract with local artisans to create some of these items. Other items included the Sam Rayburn House car that could be sold as a model; the Kreische Brewery brewery flag; and the domino set from San Felipe de Austin. Bell concluded, noting that iconic images from the historic sites such as the State Longhorn herd, angel sculptures at Magoffin Home and Monument Hill, as well as sculptures at San Felipe and Goodnight Ranch could also be developed into retail items. Commissioner Renee Dutia noted that defining the opportunities to expand the vision and communicate with the site managers and obtain engagement is step one. She said the group is still looking at some financial models learning lessons along the way.

9. Historic Sites Facilities Report

Bell introduced Glenn Reed, Chief Architect, to provide the Historic Sites Facilities Report. Reed said that French Legation project had been completed, and that the staff was very happy with the results. He briefly described the slides showing the restoration. He noted that the east entrance, which faces the adjacent historic neighborhood, would become the primary entrance to our café once we had that operation up and running.

Reed stated that Phase 1 of the Villa de Austin project at San Felipe de Austin was complete. The project included six reconstructed historic buildings, using historically authentic building methods, along with a network of interpretive walking trails. He noted that there was one more building recently added to the project scope, and that that work would be completed by the end of April.

Reed reported that at Levi Jordan Plantation, we had broken ground on the Learning Center Complex project in late December. Reed described the slides, noting that there were three buildings included in this project. The future museum and visitor center would be located to the right of these buildings, below the existing parking lot. Visitors would enter the site from FM 524, at the far right. He also noted that the slides showed the ground preparation for the Learning Center Complex. He noted that we were carefully preserving as much of the native vegetation as possible. The Contractor was moving the project forward quickly, and substantial completion for all three buildings is expected in October.

Reed noted that Richter Architects had completed the drawings for Phase 1 of Caddo Mounds Caddo Cultural Center, which would include the exhibit gallery, museum store, restrooms, and staff offices. The design had remained very similar to the one that he had presented to the Commission last June, which had received enthusiastic support from both local stakeholders and members of the Caddo tribe. He noted that the next slide showed both phases viewed from the trail that leads out to the mounds, with Phase I on the right, and added that construction was scheduled to begin on February 18 and be completed at the end of this year.

Reed stated that the project to stabilize and preserve some of the standing ruins at Fort Lancaster and Fort Griffin had been posted for bids. He described the slide noting that the images showed the types of structures that the project would address, some of which are significant in size. Reed said that at these more remote sites, it is sometimes challenging to get bids that we could afford from contractors who were

qualified to do the work, and that he would have an update on the outcome of the bidding at the next meeting.

Reed described a project at Varner-Hogg Plantation that would address both structural and preservation issues at the Plantation House. He noted that the slide showed the view of the house from Varner Creek, which was only 40 yards from the house under normal circumstances. Past flooding events had brought the water much closer to the building, and this project was intended to help the building weather such events.

At Sabine Pass, Reed said that staff is now proceeding with the limited scope of repair work that FEMA has approved for reimbursement. He said that staff are simultaneously strategizing about how best to utilize the \$249,000 National Park Service grant that the agency had received, and that they had also applied for a \$9.8 million grant from the General Land Office that would be announced in early summer. The ultimate goal is to replace the seawall entirely.

Reed continued with the projects at the Magoffin Home, noting that the architects were preparing construction documents for structural repairs to the visitor center and the adobe and stucco on the historic home. He said that the project should be ready to post for bids early this summer.

Reed stated that staff are continuing to meet periodically with the Levi Jordan Plantation African American Advisory Group to develop the stories to be told at the site. He said that this cooperative process among the THC staff, the advisory group, and the architect and exhibit consultants has been quite productive with the project slowly beginning to take shape.

Reed concluded that at the Landmark Inn an experienced engineering firm had been hired to assess the structural stability of the historic dam and make recommendations for repairs and reinforcement.

10. Deputy Executive Director of Historic Sites update

Bell stated that the Texas Living History Associations had given awards to THC staff and Fort McKavett in the following areas:

- The Founders Award was presented to Hal Simon-Hassell for demonstrating outstanding contributions to the field of living history in Texas.
- The Texas Star Award was presented to Fort McKavett State Historic Site for outstanding overall contributions to living history in Texas.
- The Exemplary Event Award also went to Fort McKavett for its living history event “50 Miles by Wire, 1875”. Fort McKavett was one of the first telegraph stations in West Texas. The event included the installation of a working period-styled telegraph system between the post headquarters and other structures on the site.

Bell said that the National Museum of the Pacific War had been designated as a Smithsonian Affiliate.

The General Land Office scheduled a tour of the Historic Sites collections storage facility in Austin, seeking assistance in the planning and design of a collections storage facility for the Alamo. Bell noted that the meeting had focused on design issues, operational and storage needs including system requirements for types of collections and creative storage solutions. The topics of environmental controls, microclimates, pest management and how to anticipate collections growth were all addressed by Historic Sites.

The Levi Jordan Advisory work groups met and worked through the topics of exhibits, programming, community outreach and architectural design needs. The information received will be assessed and pulled together for a meeting with the full Committee later this month.

The Washington-on-the-Brazos and Star of the Republic Museum work groups are meeting this week to review the exhibit development, programming, community outreach and architectural needs with Gallagher and Associates. This data will be crafted into a report to the full Committee later in the month.

French Legation exhibits have been installed. Bell said that the site would have a soft opening with reservations starting on February 12. He noted that there was programming scheduled that was coordinated with the Real Places Conference. A formal ribbon cutting was to be scheduled in conjunction with the April Commission meeting.

The site pumps have failed at San Jacinto. Staff are working to get them replaced and, in a few cases, repaired. Heavy rains have flooded areas of the site and need to be drained.

Historic Sites has been awarded an IMLS (Institution of Museums and Library Services) grant. Work is underway to provide virtual connection from historic sites to school districts statewide.

Bell noted that the Mission Dolores exhibit work was moving into the fabrication stage. Staff is also working to get the retail store design completed.

Historic Site staff members are working on several grant applications with the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission. They are with:

- FEMA for Caddo Mounds tornado structural hardening and weather alert system
- National Trust for Levi Jordan archeology and slave quarter reconstruction
- NPS Battlefield planning grants for Fort Lancaster and San Felipe de Austin
- Save America's Treasure for Mission Dolores to address collection storage needs

Bell stated that the county jail adjacent to Casa Navarro was being demolished. The work was being monitored by staff. The stone wall between Casa Navarro and the jail had been damaged by falling debris. Staff was working with the county and contractor on its repair.

There had been a few instances of trespassing on the Battleship Texas. Bell noted that security would be enhanced to curb this activity.

Lastly, Bell reported that Jose Contreras, educator at the Star Family Home, had died unexpectedly. Bell said that his family had requested that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission for the Preservation Scholarship Program for an internship position in Jose's honor.

11. Adjournment

At 3:40, Commissioner Crain asked for any other business to be brought before the committee. There being none, he stated without objection that the Historic Sites Committee meeting was adjourned.

Quarterly Report

Historic Sites Division
January–March 2021

OPERATIONS

Visitation and outreach at the sites during this quarter was 103,736. We are 46.2 percent lower compared to last year at the same time. Earned revenue is tracking well.

All sites are open at 100 percent capacity as directed by the governor. Mask use is recommended. Staff is taking steps to protect themselves by double masking and maintaining physical barriers at service counters.

The San Jacinto Day event will occur April 17. The museum association is renewing the annual outdoor event. It will be scaled back based on parking limitations that are within walking distance to the monument.

The executive manager of the San Jacinto Museum of History has been hired. Amy Rogers will be starting April 15. She previously was executive director of the 1940 Air Terminal Museum in Houston.

An agreement has been finalized with Live Oak Brewing Company to use the Kreische Brewery SHS name in its marketing of a new craft beer.

A period-appropriate printing press has been donated for use in the Villa de Austin townsite. It will be used in programming and demonstrations.

To celebrate the 185th anniversary of Texas independence, two films have been produced at Washington-on-the Brazos and San Jacinto.

The IMLS grant project to assist in the development of virtual field trip resources for schools and home educators has begun. The resources will be available this fall on the agency's Learning Resources webpage.

Retail e-commerce development is moving forward. An updated retail plan is under staff review.

An RFP response for a vendor to provide food, retail, and catering services at the French Legation is under review. A contract award is pending.

FRIENDS GROUPS

The Community Partnerships Coordinator continues to assist Friends Groups with board development via Zoom meetings. In addition, the monthly e-newsletter, "First Friday News for Friends," has continued the first Friday of each month, delivering nonprofit training opportunities, Friends events at historic sites, THC and Friends of the THC news, and MOA reminders.

Coordination continues with the Friends of the THC's Liaison Committee at monthly meetings. They review the Friends Alliance Award winners, monitor agreements for the fiscally sponsored Friends Groups, and report quarterly at board meetings.

The first Friends Group Virtual Happy Hour networking event occurred in March. We again partnered with the Friends to present their quarterly Development Seminar. Site Managers have been contacted, along with their corresponding Friends Group leadership, to review governance and fundraising topics.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Caddo Mounds: Construction began in mid-March. Substantial completion is scheduled for December.

French Legation: The site had a soft opening on February 12. Finish of the staff offices is continuing.

Levi Jordan Plantation: The Learning Center Complex project broke ground in December and is now 30 percent complete. The architectural and exhibit design work for the Visitor's Center project is moving forward. The design team is actively collaborating with the African American Advisory Group.

Landmark Inn: The assessment of the dam is underway.

Magoffin Home and Visitors Center: The assessment phase for the structural and adobe repairs to these two buildings has been completed. A visitors center repair project will be posted for bids this spring.

Palmito Ranch Battlefield: An RFQ to hire an engineer to design an elevated viewing platform for the site will be posted this spring.

Ruins Stabilization: Construction documents for work at both Fort Griffin and Fort Lancaster are nearing completion. The combined project will be put out for bid in early April.

Sabine Pass Battleground: Construction documents for repairs to the seawall are in development.

San Felipe de Austin: Phase 1 of the interpretive evocations project, known as Villa de Austin, has been completed. Phase 2 will be completed this summer.

Varner-Hogg Plantation: Construction documents for repairs to the foundation of the plantation house and exterior preservation work are in development.

INTERPRETATION

The Mission Dolores permanent exhibit has moved into the 50 percent fabrication phase and will be on time for complete installation and punch list prior to the contract's end on April 23.

All required workshops and stakeholder meetings for the new interpretive master plan for Fulton Mansion have been concluded, and the first draft of plan sections are being written. There will be three review periods before the final product in November.

The Caddo Mounds exhibit fabrication and installation contract has reached its 50 percent fabrication documents and is proceeding on schedule. Caddo artisans are being engaged to create the replacement items for the site-specific replicas lost in the tornado.

The Washington-on-the-Brazos major exhibit and interpretative redesign project has proceeded, and several meetings have been held, one particularly focusing on community engagement. The contract

team is examining the overall site concepts in their creation of a 50 percent interpretive plan submission.

Meetings with the Levi Jordan Advisory Committee continue, defining the visitor experience based on the history of African Americans in Texas. Sub-groups from the committee have been formed and have met to consider and provide input on various aspects of the project, including architecture and landscape, interpretation and exhibits, visitor experience, and community engagement.

The French Legation outdoor orientation and interpretative panels have been completed and installed. The opening exhibit designed in-house with fabrication by outside vendors has been completed. The installation of site-related artifacts and items loaned by the Catholic Diocese awaits the arrival of two glass vitrines.

COLLECTIONS

On February 17, a flood occurred in a basement collections storage at the San Jacinto Museum of History. THC staff worked closely with the museum and TPWD staff for 10 days. The group achieved complete recovery of 1,494 flood-damaged collections (10 percent of the object collection). A report with recommendations was drafted.

Collections staff continue to implement legacy collection processing projects with Rice University. Students are working with Levi Jordan Plantation and Caddo Mounds SHS collections.

Collections staff continue to work with the University of Texas implementing an internship opportunity specifically designed for UT's iSchool IMLS students. This spring, interns are working on projects for Kreische Brewery SHS and several other sites.

Collections staff worked with THC purchasers to post an RFP for reproduction of five wall-to-wall rugs woven in Wilton technique for Fulton Mansion. These rugs will replace those damaged during Hurricane Harvey.

Collections staff submitted a Save America's Treasures Grant for \$996,832.80 for the inventory and processing of legacy collections at Mission Dolores SHS.