

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Minutes 5-20-2014
Greater Conroe Chamber of Commerce

1. **The May 5, 2014 meeting of the Montgomery County Historical Commission was called to order at the Greater Conroe Chamber of Commerce Building at 5:30 p.m.** by Larry Foerster, Chairman.
2. **Members in attendance:** Larry Foerster, Gertie Spencer, Brenda Beaven, David Frame, Martha Gandy, Jay Hrivnatz, Nancy Jackson, Betsy Powers, Sharon Russell, Heather Montgomery, Barbara Holland and Sue Ann Powell.
3. **The following guests were recognized:** Harris County Historical Commission Chairperson, Janet Wagner and husband, Henry; Walker Co. Historical Commission Members, James and Lois Blake, James Patton and Donna Coffen; Covenant Christian H.S. Youth Advisory Board member, Ross Ohendalski, and mother, Paula Ohendalski; Ron Saikowski, Mark Canada, Sarah Bess Crow and Luther Powell.
4. **Larry Foerster passed around a sample** of Montgomery County Script of 1862, which was issued to destitute families of Confederate soldiers. Montgomery County's first welfare program began May, 1862. Each was numbered by hand and was for various amounts—50 cents, \$1, \$2, \$3, \$5, etc.—and printed on the back of old bank notes. Larry also called attention to the coloring book put together by Ron Saikowski and the Conroe Art League that gives a brief history of Montgomery County.
5. **The motion to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2014 meeting was made by Sharon Russell and seconded by Nancy Jackson. Motion carried.**
6. **Sarah Bess Gray Crow** made a presentation of an Oilfield House that she has donated to the Heritage Museum. Her father, Dolly Gray, worked for George Strake and played baseball for the Strake Wildcat Team. Following the "Gusher of '31", he became the Superintendent of Strake Oilfield Camps. This pre-fab house was used as a bunk house in back of the Camp for men from Houston who came and had to stay overnight. The building will be moved behind the Heritage Museum and will be used for additional displays and artifacts.
7. **Janet Wagner, Chairperson, Harris County Historical Commission,** made a presentation on Harris County's Historical Marker Program. Highlights of her presentation included: Established a subcommittee to develop own marker program—doesn't have state certification. Recommends Southwell from San Antonio who does State markers. Best price. Had checked with three out of state companies. Developed good PR—involved Judge Emmett. On back of marker, put name of Judge and Commissioners. Can do pictures, maps, etc. At each dedication, get members together and take pictures. On the application, have commissioner whose precinct it will be in to sign when have owner sign and have abstract. Then it goes to Commissioners Court. If on county property, get the county to install. If State kicks something back, can use your own criteria. Southwell has smaller marker, too. They are looking at these to put in cemeteries—taking a long time to get cemeteries registered. Register cemetery first and then record landmark status. Harris County is cleaning and restoring 550 markers. Can have thematic markers, such as music history. Property owner has to agree to have marker. Anyone can pay for it. Harris County has a four-member subcommittee working on their own marker program. It is a one year process. **Larry proposed we create a local committee, comprised of Sharon Russell, Barbara Holland and Anna Sheppard, that will report back to the Commission by the fall.**
8. **Update on book sales of "Montgomery County Historical Timeline":** Larry reported he has ordered another 100 books. The money from the sale of these can build up---it does not have to be spent by the end of the fiscal year.
9. **Committee Reports:**
 - **MCHC Website and Facebook – David Frame:** Still need help with the website. Hoping to bring on members who can take on the Calendar.
 - **Youth Advisory Board – Brenda Beaven:** Willis and Montgomery schools have responded with new members. There will be a going away party for the ones graduating from the program and those coming in on the third Monday in May. Big challenge – need juniors to provide continuity from one year to the next. Have gotten no response from schools in The Woodlands.
 - **State Historical 1837 Courthouse marker -** Larry announced the ceremony would be held Monday, December 8th.
 - **Conroe KIDZFEST History Village recap -** Larry explained the Conroe Live organization sponsors this event to promote the county's history.
10. **The 2014-2015 Historical Commission Budget** was presented by Larry Foerster who discussed some of the uses of the funds, such as restoring old historical markers; sponsoring regional training sessions; helping other historical commissions sponsor Texas tourism; volunteer recognition, etc. **The Budget Request for \$30,000 was approved by consensus.**
11. **There were no requests for reimbursements submitted.**
12. **The following nominations were made:** Gertie Spencer made the motion to nominate Ron Saikowski to the Historical Commission and Brenda Beaven seconded the motion. Motion carried. Ron is active in Downtown Conroe preservation and is an active member of the Conroe Art League. Sharon Russell made the motion to nominate Mark Canada to the Historical Commission and Jay Hrivnatz seconded the motion. Motion carried. Mark is a professional photographer, a native of Conroe and is involved in historical preservation. Their names will be submitted to the Commissioners Court for approval.
13. **The next meeting of the Historical Commission will be Monday, July 7, 2014.**
14. **The meeting was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.**

Submitted by:

Sue Ann Powell, Secretary