

**WEBB COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
**Minutes**

The Webb County Historical Commission met Thursday, February 26, 2009 at 12:00 noon at the Webb County Records Administration Building, 7117 E. Saunders Avenue.

Attending were:

Jose Roberto Juarez, Joe Moreno, Elizabeth Gill, Nelda Rodriguez, Rebecca C. Sepulveda, Odie Arambula, Stan Green, Elisa Gutierrez and Bibi Garza-Gongora.

Guests were:

Carlos Ordonez and Ronnie Acosta of the City of Laredo.

- I. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Moreno.
- II. Chairman's Communications – Mr. Moreno reminded members of the state requirement for undertaking the Open Meetings/Open Records Act training and advised that 2 copies of the training program on DVD had been ordered. He further reported on the submission (online) of the commission's annual report to the Texas Historical Commission.
- III. Approval of minutes – Minutes of the January meeting were approved on a motion by Dr. Juarez and a second by Mrs. Gill.
- IV. Reports
  - a. A report on city owned property in the local Historic Districts was presented by Ronnie Acosta, Community Development Director. She said the city owns several significant buildings, including the former Plaza Theater, the Southern Hotel, the Benavides-Herrera Home and three residential properties in La Azteca neighborhood. She explained the Community Development Block Grant program and the availability of home rehabilitation grants that may support the preservation of residential properties. She indicated these grants must serve a national objective, serve low income (slum or blighted) areas and demonstrate an urgent need.
  - b. Endangered properties – The commission's interest in hosting a workshop by the Texas Historical Commission for a local ad-hoc Preservation Coalition was discussed. However there was no update in the absence of Margarita Araiza who is coordinating this project.
  - c. Finance and Budget – Mr. Moreno reported receiving an allocation of \$4,200 from Webb County. Members inquired on the source of funds, and whether the commission was still considered a "third party" agency. Ms. Rodriguez offered to research this.
  - d. History Appreciation – Mr. Moreno received information about the upcoming 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Webb County courthouse and asked members of their interest in celebrating the event. Mrs. Gutierrez

volunteered to contact the Webb County Judge to learn of the county's plans.

A committee was formed to assist Dr. Green with the 2009 Founder's Day Essay Contest. Members include Mrs. Gutierrez, Mrs. Sepulveda and Mrs. Garza-Gongora.

- e. Research and Markers – Dr. Juarez noted that the dedication of the airport marker is still pending. He reported contacting Dr. Norma Cantu and her willingness to provide research for a marker on the Matachines and a lecture/presentation.

V. a. The commission voted to support a moratorium on demolition of properties in Laredo with a letter to the mayor and the city council. The successful motion by Dr. Green was seconded by Mr. Arambula.

- b. Dr. Juarez reminded the commission of a pending project, the publication of an updated marker booklet. It was noted that at the last meeting, Ms. Araiza had offered to scan the current booklet as a starting point.

VI. Announcements – Mr. Moreno reported receiving information about a community education grant opportunity – Save Our History – that was available for partnership with schools. The deadline is June 5. Ms. Rodriguez offered to review the grant material.

VII. The meeting adjourned on a motion by Dr. Juarez and a second by Dr. Green.

Rebecca C. Sepulveda, Secretary