

**El Camino Real de los Tejas  
National Historic Trail Association  
Board of Directors Quarterly Meeting  
January 16, 2016  
3710 Cedar St., Suite 161, Austin, TX**

A board orientation preceded the meeting.

Meeting called to order by Chris Talbot at 11:06am. A quorum was present.

Board Members in Attendance: Irene Ramos (online), Lucille Estell, Chris Talbot, Duke Lyons, Henry Mayo, Carl Mica, Sarah Gould, Jeff Wright, John Pruett, Chief Davis (on phone), John Kisalus, Tom Byrd, Maureen Winn

Others in Attendance: Steven Gonzales, Evangelina Oviedo (Assn. Staff), Brad Patterson (THC), Aaron Mahr (NPS, online)

Board Members Absent: Jose Emilio Vela

Minutes from October 16, 2015 Board meeting were unanimously approved without changes by motion (Lucille<sup>1</sup>, Carl<sup>2</sup>).

Chris Talbot called for reports from the committees.

**Finance Committee Report** presented by Lucille Estell.

The finance committee did not meet in the last quarter. Lucille explained that our basic funding is from the NPS and we receive some other income such as membership dues. She asked if membership has grown and Steven reported that while membership *levels* have increased, membership *numbers* have not. Lucille does not want to overwhelm the board with financial information, so she asked which financial reports are most helpful to the Board members. Steven cited the balance sheet and budget vs. actual as the most critical financial reports, but is open to continuing to circulate all the financial reports to the Board (this includes the monthly ledger, balance sheet, profit & loss by grant, and budget v. actual).

Duke noted that we need more members since our membership numbers have been flat and others agreed. Carl noted that an increase in membership would increase funding. Steven added that we've seen an increase in "likes" on social media and asked how do we convert that into new memberships. Steven also noted that nearly all the trail associations struggle with membership numbers. Brad pointed out that ECRT has been successful in raising money for specific campaigns (like Lobanillo). Duke noted that he gave presentations around St. Augustine and raised \$6,000 for signage. The Development committee is working on new promotional materials, which they hope will help boost membership.

Chris presented a revision to the NPS budget: money that was earmarked for publications was not being used so it was proposed to reduce that line (from \$1,500 to \$150) and reallocate it to office supplies (\$850) and travel (\$500).

The revised NPS budget was unanimously approved by motion (Carl<sup>1</sup>, Jeff<sup>2</sup>).

The financial report was unanimously approved by motion (John<sup>1</sup>, Duke<sup>2</sup>).

**Executive Director's Report** presented by Steven Gonzales (written report in Board meeting notebooks).

Steven reported that the Lobanillo Swales site was added to the National Register in late November and is on its way to being named a State Antiquities Landmark. Duke noted that the site does not have an El Camino sign, but Chris added that El Camino signage is part of the Lobanillo site development plan.

THC is considering acquisition of the Mission Dolores site and is expected to make a decision at either their January or April meeting. Steven served on a panel of experts that found the site meets the criteria for designation as a state historic site.

El Camino will be featured in NPS' Centennial celebration this summer at McKinney Falls State Park, which will host National Trails Day on June 4<sup>th</sup>. Steven added that additional Centennial/National Trails Day events are possible if any Board Members would like to organize something near their portion of the trail.

Steven and Chris continue to work on planning the Dos Caminos workshop in Laredo, a collaboration with NPS, THC, and others. The workshop will be in late June.

---[end of reports]---

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Selection of site development plan for Lobanillo**

Steven walked the Board through the principle differences between site proposals A & B (in Board meeting notebooks). Option A starts at a parking area, follows the trail that goes above largest swale, continues to the SE corner of the site where you can safely descend into the swale, and then walk over a preexisting crossover to another swale, and finally back to the parking area. This option allows you to see a good deal of the property. The cairns or gravestones along the path would be buried. Option B also starts at a parking area and follows the trail that goes above the largest swale and continues to the SE corner of the site, but then it swings back and follows a parallel path back to the parking area.

Option A was unanimously approved by motion (Henry<sup>1</sup>, Lucille<sup>2</sup>).

### **Association Board meeting schedule**

Chris thanked the board for moving this month's meeting to Saturday. He mentioned that several other board members responded that Saturday works better for them and suggested a vote to move the board meetings to Saturdays. Steven added that it was

difficult this last year to recruit potential new members because of our meeting schedule and that we'll have more members rolling off this October who will need to be replaced. Brad reported that Saturday meetings would not be a hardship for him and Chris reported that Aaron stated the same. Additionally, NPS has asked us to apply a 5-7% budget cut in 2017 (this would be an approximately \$3,800/3,900 reduction), which could mean having fewer meetings per year – for example 2. Lucille is opposed to reducing the meeting frequency, and would also like to see longer meetings so that we have more time for lunch and visiting. She worries about losing our connections and momentum and suggested having the meetings at different locations along the trail instead of 3 per year in Austin. Steven reported that it is difficult for the staff to prepare for out of town meetings, thus his preference for 3 Austin meetings. Duke suggested asking members to pay for their lunch, but still have the lunch delivered so that we can continue to hold quarterly meetings, but at a lower cost.

A quarterly Board meeting schedule with meetings held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month was unanimously approved by motion (Jeff<sup>1</sup>, John K.<sup>2</sup>).

### **Committee Structure**

Chris will contact Board members individually to restructure the committees. Steven asked new members to let Chris know what committee(s) they are interested in joining.

### **Signage in St. Augustine**

Duke made a point of order, announcing February 12<sup>th</sup> as the tentative date for the unveiling of El Camino signage in St. Augustine.

### **Resignation**

George Altgelt tendered his resignation from the Board. He expressed that he still may be able to help with any Laredo events.

### **OTHER REPORTS**

#### **National Park Service Report** presented by Aaron Mahr.

Aaron reiterated that NPS is asking ECRT to revise its FY17 budget amount.

NPS will be working with ECRT to develop wayside signage and a brochure to assist with the interpretation plan at Lobanillo Swales.

The NPS Centennial event at McKinney Falls State Park will be an opportunity to promote ECRT.

Signage - Mission San Antonio de Valero and Paso de Dolores in San Antonio are newly certified sites and will receive signage. Saturday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at 10am there will be a dedication in San Antonio. A signage plan for Nacogdoches County is in development. Signage has been sent to Brazos County.

Aaron and Mike Taylor went to Mexico City to discuss possible trail partnerships. They were enthusiastically received and the Mexican representatives expressed interest in attending the Laredo workshop.

Finally, Aaron reminded Board members that NPS is available for training opportunities on topics such as trail protection and media relations.

**Texas Historical Commission Report** presented by Brad Patterson.

Brad reported that THC did not receive funding for the trail program this year. However, 9-10 trail programs are still running and should survive until funds can be requested in the next cycle.

There will be a heritage tourism symposium in Austin June 14-16<sup>th</sup>.

ECRT is featured in THC's new Hispanic guide.

There will be a Youth Summit at the LBJ National Park for 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders June 7-10<sup>th</sup>.

Finally, a new German Texans guide is in the works.

Meeting adjournment at 1:19pm was unanimously approved by motion (Duke<sup>1</sup>, Carl<sup>2</sup>).

Respectfully submitted by Secretary Sarah Gould.