

El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail Association

Minutes January 16, 2021

The quarterly meeting of the El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail Association was called to order via Go To Meeting by President Cindy Freeman at 10:02 AM on January 16, 2021. Participating were Executive Director Steven Gonzales, Board members Cindy Freeman, Dave Regan, Lynn Young, Tom Byrd, John Kusalus, Chip Briscoe, Judge Bob Perkins, Rebecca Blankenbaker, Adam Adams, and Jesse Treviño. A quorum was established. Also participating were Aaron Mahr and Carole Wendler from the National Park Service and Brad Patterson of the Texas Historical Commission. Cindy welcomed new Board members Adam Adams, Bob Perkins, and Jesse Treviño. Each Board member provided a brief introduction.

Ton Byrd made a motion to accept the minutes of the October 17, 2020 meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by John Kusalus and adopted.

Committee Reports:

Financials – Dave provided the Finance Committee report and said the collection of membership dues is on track. The 2021 budget includes a carry forward of \$30,734, grants received after the budget was approved in the amount of \$17,500, and a \$5,000 grant from the Texas Historical Foundation. Dave advised he saw nothing of concern in the Financial Report; that there were a few income and expense line items with notable variances between budgeted and actual YTD, but that there were acceptable reasons for those variances as noted in the comments at the bottom of the assessment report.

Judge Perkins inquired about the cost of dues for Board members and Steven responded Board members are encouraged to join the Association at the Pioneer Level of \$100 per year. Lynn moved to accept the Financial report as presented. The motion was seconded by Rebecca and adopted.

Executive Committee Report - Bylaws – Steven explained the need to adjust the current terms for some Board members in order to have the same number of members up for re-election in even and odd numbered years.

- New board members Adam Adams, Bob Perkins, and Jesús Treviño will have first terms ending in 2023, rather than 2022 and they will term out 2027, rather than 2026
- Chip Briscoe will end his current and last term 2023, rather than 2022.
- John Kusalus will end his first term 2022 and term out 2026, rather than 2021 and 2025.

Steven also explained that Dave Regan needs to serve as an At-Large Representative rather than the San Antonio – Goliad Region representative because he agreed to serve on the Executive Committee. Dave's October 2020 nomination filled Sarah Gould's recently vacated At-Large position. John Kusalus is the only At-Large Representative who currently lives in the SA – Goliad Region and with Regan switching to At-Large, it is necessary for a current At-Large member to take over the SA – Goliad Region position. The Governance Committee approved the scenario prior to October 2020 nominations and the Executive Committee concurs with allowing the change to happen. By switching to SA – Goliad Representative, which is Position No. 2 on the Board, Kusalus' term would also need to be changed to even-numbered years. Regan's cycle of election would not be affected. John Kusalus moved to accept the

recommendation from the Executive Committee. The motion was seconded by Tom Byrd and adopted.

Administrative Reports

Executive Director – Steven

1. The joint trail report in Mid-December was well received. Tom is interested in sending copies to selected people to generate support for the Association.
2. Onion Creek Metro Park visit – The official NPS designated trail does not include a water crossing at Onion Creek McKinney Falls State Park. Colin Corgan, who may be interested in funding the historic and archaeological research at the location, will be visiting the area with Steven, John and Tom on January 21. Board members are welcome to join if available.
3. A \$10,000 grant application has been submitted to the Partnership for the National Trails System to provide funding for an intern to help with Model Trail Community outreach events in Central Texas. The effort will focus on the San Antonio to Austin trail corridor and seek to establish a chapter in each community, as well as New Braunfels and San Marcos.
4. Steven met with Garry Merritt and Ron Tipton, formerly of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and current PNTS Board member, about a potential partnership with the Great Springs Trail Project along the San Antonio to Austin Retracement Trail.
5. The Arroyo San Francisco Overlook project at the Rio Grande in Zapata County is moving forward.
6. Steven was elected to Board for PNTS as the National Historic Trails representative of the Trail Leaders Council.

The meeting recessed briefly from 11:30 – 11:38.

New Business

Committee Assignments – Cindy reminded the group of the mission statement to “protect, educate, engage and promote”. The strategic plan has expired and needs to be updated. Steven hopes to have the committee appointed by the April meeting and presentation of a proposed five-year strategic plan at the annual meeting in October.

Steven – anyone interested in serving on a particular committee should be noted now; for others, he will resend info to Board members by Tuesday so Board members can commit to specific committees. He would appreciate responses by January 20th.

Community Relations – Steven mentioned members may be from general membership and MTCs.

- Tom is interested in Community Relations, Governance and Resource protection.
- Jesse expressed an interest in the Development Committee.
- Dave would prefer the Resource protection and Finance Committees. Alternatively, he is interested in the Community Relations Committee.
- Rebecca – prefers the Community Relations, Development or Resource Protection Committees.
- Lynn is interested in working on the strategic plan as part of the Governance Committee.

Steven plans to schedule a Board Orientation in February for the new members.

Regional and At Large reports

- Brazos Region -submitted by John Pruett who was unable to attend. Tom added to the report on the Estancia/Garrapatas project that the Developer is eager to transfer pocket parks to City of Austin, but City is not ready to receive them. We need consistent interpretive stories regarding crossings on the Congressionally recognized trail. Steven hopes to add new graphic design intern soon to finalize the Rancheria Grande MTC logo.
- Trail de Flores Chapter Report – Dave Regan has been working with Steven and Carole on the interpretive panels. He continues to pursue designation of trails within the SARA's John William Helton San Antonio River Nature Park. The MTC received a donation from Wilson County Road Runners to be used towards trail projects for recreational users. The MTC elected new officers and Dave will again serve as chair. He displayed the Trail de Flores' chapter logo which represents two major destinate points along the trail, the Rancho de las Cabras and Mission Espada.
- At Large – Caddo Region - Rebecca reported that Hurricane Laura caused catastrophic damage to the area, particularly in the timber region. Many sites suffered tree and wind damage. During recovery excavations due to downed trees, artifacts are being examined and a report should be completed by Fall. NPS had recovery funds for standing structures for the damage due to Hurricane Harvey. Sabine and Natchitoches parishes received funds to help update inventory and catalog sites not included in the last survey. Replacement signage has been received and should be installed in a month or two. With so many trees lost due to the storm, Steven observed many potential swales and Rebecca responded they would be included in a future survey.

NPS Update: Superintendent Aaron Mahr– Aaron explained that he and Carole are with National Trails office of NPS and are our partners and that they have a cooperative agreement with the Association for funding. Their office is currently under Covid conditions, travel is restricted, and all are teleworking. John Cannella was promoted, and they are still recruiting for a new Deputy Superintendent. The Dos Caminos initiative (collaboration with Mexico) is working on data sharing protocols to identify common platforms for resource and visitor information. A follow up meeting is scheduled in March. The projects on which he is working include:

- The San Antonio River Authority which is an excellent partner. He will submit a funding proposal later this year to develop a hiking area near the Bexar and Wilson County lines. He is working on a proposal to develop bilingual web page in Texas and Louisiana.
- Professor Alonzo at Texas A & M is developing a research report focusing on Coahuiltecan communities in central and southwest Texas.
- Resource information Management (RIM) developed an asset inventory map and fact sheet which is now on their webpage along with the trail map.
- A Feasibility study is underway for Pike National HT which overlays the Camino Real in many places in Texas. ELCAT members are invited to participate and provide insight on the trail at public hearings.

Aaron mentioned to Dave that the new Trail de Flores logo includes federally protected elements so it may be problematic. He suggested modifying the Association logo to avoid legal issues.

Carole Wendler reported that eleven exhibit projects across the trail are with the contractor, including Apache Pass and Los Adaes. The exhibits for Floresville are in the final review stage. They are working on consistency in images, style, and information. A proposal has been submitted for funding to assist Caddo Mounds State Historic site to help with trail work and the connection to the historic route. They are developing a considerable amount of interpretation

about the Caddo and the Spanish. The new NPS app is to be released soon and will be populated by information on the website. Cindy inquired about adding a QR code to the rack cards. Carole mentioned NPS also using AD tags for accessibility issues in which the QR code will read text out loud.

Tom added that Chisholm Trail also shares some routes with ELCAT and Pike trails. Aaron replied the survey has been completed and the legislation introduced for the Chisholm Trail at Congress. Legislation should be reintroduced to the new Congress if not already done so.

Texas Historical Commission – Brad Patterson. Mallory Laurel will be joining the staff and replacing Sue Shore who retired. Construction on the buildings is complete at Mission Dolores and exhibits are being installed. The new Museum is designed to replace the one destroyed by tornado. Brad encouraged participation in the virtual Real Places conference the first week of February. The French Legation is scheduled to open in February.

Cindy expressed appreciation to all attending. As there was no more business, Lynn moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:06 and Jesse seconded the motion which was adopted.

Lynn Young

Secretary