

**El Camino Real de los Tejas
National Historic Trail Association
Board of Directors Quarterly Meeting
October 28, 2023**

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am by President Dave Regan. In attendance were Tom Byrd, Joyce Conner, Cindy Freeman, John Kisalus, Ambassador Miguel Angel Fernandez de Mazarambroz (via zoom), Judge Bob Perkins, Dave Regan, and Executive Director Steven Gonzales. Also participating via zoom was NPS staff Jill Jensen. Absent were William Doolittle, Bob Ward, Jesse Treviño, and Brad Patterson. As all Board members were not present at the call to order, the agenda was modified so that items not requiring a vote were taken first and items requiring a vote were postponed until a quorum was present.

Update on EICaT Endowment: See submitted report. Cindy Freeman presented the report showing our strategic allocations to be 65% equities and 35% bonds. She explained that the Board had not taken funds from the endowment last year (when we could have taken up to 5%). She asked whether we wanted to take more or none at all, and if any, should we wait until early next year to decide. This question was postponed until a quorum would be present.

Executive Committee Report: Dave Regan reported that an Executive Director Evaluation had been performed by the Executive Committee members and that the results would be shared with Steven. He then discussed team building. It had been planned for the current meeting had it been in the Sugarloaf area but as the meeting was moved to Austin due to lack of board attendance in Milam County, the training was shelved until January 2024. It is hoped that William Doolittle can lead his Lost Missions exercise that he has taught at UT for many years as the board team building exercise. Steven said that he would see whether Doolittle would be available for a leadership exercise during the January meeting. He suggested that Joyce work with Elaine Sullivan to get merch for the members, such as polo shirts and name tags.

Consideration of Minutes: Joyce asked to accept the July 15, 2023, minutes and was asked to remove several sentences from the minutes, as they were questionable. With these changes, Judge Perkins seconded the motion, and they were accepted. Judge Perkins recommended to Joyce that it would simplify the work of reporting the minutes to refer to submitted reports and not summarize each.

Resource Protection Committee Report: See submitted report. Steven Gonzales reported for Chair Bill Doolittle that the Historia Hispanica interactive map was still in progress. Some areas were still needing completion, but in general, it was useful and impressive. He suggested that El Camino Real de los Tejas needs additions. In addition to his research of the Historia Hispanica, he also checked out El Camino de Terra Adentro Interactive Map covering Sante Fe to Mexico City. He recommended that it be linked to our website.

Dave Regan commented that the report, while appreciated, was not really in the purview of the Resource Protection Committee. Steven Gonzales noted that once Sugarloaf is added, the Research Protection Committee will be busier. Steven added that Jim Neal has asked if someone could check out some of his property in November for remnants of the Trail, and if feasible, Neal is considering giving it to EICaT with the hope that it can be certified.

Finance Committee Report: See submitted logs. John Kisalus presented the report. Steven stated that memberships would likely increase after Sugarloaf opens. In addition, he would be asking for \$30K from Tonkawa in a lease agreement. John asked for approval of the FY24 yearly budget, Judge Perkins seconded, and the yearly budget was approved.

Steven explained that the bookkeeper had a procedure that zeroed out columns (however, Trail de Flores was not zeroed out) at the end of the year. John Kisalus would like to get more details from the bookkeeper. Dave Regan would like to see the report before the zeroing out as well as in the current form. He asked to hold off on approval of the fourth quarter financial report until all questions were answered. In addition, Steven explained that fewer memberships come in the final quarter, but we have a cushion to cover an approximate \$10K shortfall. He suggested that we focus this next year on grants (instead of focusing on the legislature as we did in 2023).

Community Relations Committee: See submitted report. For Bob Ward, Steven explained how each of the items were linked to the Strategic Plan in parentheses. A question came up about the lack of some road signage and interpretive

signs along Onion Creek. Steven said signs are installed on TxDOT ROW within Travis County and work is being done with Travis County and the City of Austin to install signs on County and City ROW. It was suggested that the Onion Creek HOA might be willing to pay for some interpretive signs since they are now annexed into the City of Austin. It was suggested that Senator Nichols and Representative Raymond might help with funding.

Governance Committee: See submitted report. Judge Perkins brought to the Board a vote to declare Representative Richard Raymond an Honorary Member of the Association. As it came from a committee, it did not need a second. The Board approved the nomination.

The Committee also requested an amendment to the bylaws which will be put to a vote by the general membership in April 2024. Please see the submitted report for further detail.

EICaT Endowment: Dave Regan, the President, approved a motion out of order due to lack of quorum earlier. At 11:38 am, the Board approved to remove \$1250 in January from the endowment. Tom Byrd made the motion and John Kisalus seconded it.

Development Committee: See submitted report. For Jesse Treviño, Steven explained how each of the items were linked to the Strategic Plan, as shown in parentheses. Regarding “Efforts for State funding”, a suggestion was made to include the Judge from Cherokee County. Regarding “Board donations and fundraising”, a suggestion was made to encourage people to remember the Trail Association in their wills (for example, Dr. Lucile Estell).

Ambassador Miguel Angel Fernandez de Mazarambroz mentioned that he might know of others who might contribute. He also suggested that the Spanish teachers coming to the US be incorporated in El Camino Real Day events.

(After a pause for lunch, the meeting resumed at 12:28 pm.)

Executive Director’s Report: See submitted report. See extra notes below.

- **Sugarloaf Mountain Update:** Steven added that he believed the public opening would be at least 4-5 years in the future. There was a question about insurance liability.
- **El Camino Real Day:** Board asked to get a copy of the recipients and addresses of the 100 letters sent, perhaps in a spreadsheet.
- **EICaT Landowner Resource Protection Guide:** This is expected to be finalized just after Dec. 31, 2023. Dave suggested a potential source – Rails to Trails Conservancy. They have a Rail toolbox. They also relate success stories.

EICaT Community Chapter Reports:

Trail de Flores Chapter: See submitted report. In addition, Dave reported that a 22-mile rail right-of-way in Karnes County that had been purchased by Kenedy and was about a year from starting. Steven commented that if a path broke too much away from the designated Trail, it might not qualify for inclusion. Dave felt that it might only veer away for a section.

Rancheria Grande Chapter: See submitted report. Joyce reported that most of their chapter was concentrating on education and promotion of the Milam County Trail segments.

NPS Report: Jill Jensen reported that there were several new hires: Nick Myers (Historian), Cassidy Renninger (GIS Fellow), Thomas Kleinert (Signing and Partnership Fellow), and Erica Chavez (Administrative Technician). The Interpretive Team has been making YouTube videos. The RIM (Resource Information Management) Team is working on places to go of interest along the Trail. She asked us to submit places for them to add. The Interpretative Team was working on getting a site placed on the map in the Bryan area. They are also working on the Wayside Inventory, currently Texas 130 signs.

At 1:45 pm John Kisalus made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Joyce Conner seconded. The meeting adjourned.

Joyce Conner, Secretary