

**El Camino Real de los Tejas
National Historic Trail Association
Board of Directors Quarterly Meeting
October 17, 2020
Virtual Board Meeting Minutes**

The online meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Vice President Sarah Gould. Participating were Dave Regan, Sarah Gould, John Kusalus, Cindy Freeman, Lynn Young and Executive Director Steven Gonzales. Also participating were NPS Superintendent Aaron Mahr, NPS staff Lillis Urban, Ashley Wheeler, Jill Jensen, Emily Kessler, Meg Frisbie, Carol Clark, Angelica Sanchez-Clark and Brad Patterson, Community Heritage Development Director of the Texas Historical Commission. Sarah announced a quorum was present. Joining shortly after 10:00 was Tom Byrd.

Steven Gonzales advised that John Pruett was unable to attend the meeting and that Lynn Young would take minutes. Steve mentioned that October 18th is the 16th anniversary of the designation as a historic trail.

Lynn Young moved to accept the minutes from the July 18, 2020 meeting. The motion was seconded by Sarah Gould and adopted.

The Treasurer's report was presented by Cindy Freeman. Lynn moved to accept the report as presented. The motion was seconded by John Kusalus and adopted. Dave Regan asked that the minutes be amended to include the following:

Dave Regan mentioned that during the July meeting, he expressed concern about the timing of the production of the interpretive panel for Floresville. He relayed that he has expressed the same concern at previous meetings and understood that the outcomes from those previous meetings was that the panels would be produced in 2020. He did not consider the 2021 date presented by NPS at this meeting to be acceptable. It was agreed that the NPS would reach out to Dave Regan and other relevant ELCAT board members after the meeting to try to find a resolution.

Lynn moved to accept the minutes as amended. John Kusalus seconded the motion which was adopted.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee Report – Cindy Freeman presented the quarterly report and the 2021 budget. Following discussion, she asked to add an itemization of GTI fees to the Administrative Fees. Sarah Gould suggested budgeting for equipment replacement (computer). Steven will consult with the accountant. Cindy offered to donate towards equipment replacement and encouraged other board members to consider donations. Cindy moved to approve the financial records, including the year end financials for FY 2020. The motion was seconded by John Kusalus and adopted.

Budget – Cindy advised the FY 2021 Oct 2020-Sept 2021 budget includes a salary increase for Steven Gonzales to \$65,000 annually. Steven recently applied for NPS Foundation grant for \$25,000 which was denied. He will continue to seek grants. A discussion followed regarding increasing the administrative fee on GTI projects from the current 5%. Tom inquired about the overhead expenses and Steven replied it is about \$130,000-150,000 annually from grants. Steven recommended an administrative fee of at least 8%. Lynn moved to increase the administrative fee not to exceed 10%. The motion was seconded by Sarah and approved. Lynn moved to adopt the 2021 budget which includes a pay raise for the Executive Director. The motion was seconded by Sarah and adopted. Tom expressed appreciation to Cindy and Steven. Steven expressed appreciation for the salary increase. John thanked NPS for their continued support and Aaron remarked the salary increase was overdue and well deserved.

Governance Committee Report - Cindy Freeman) presented the proposed slate of Officers for 2020-2021.

Officers: President – Cindy Freeman

Vice President - John Pruett

Secretary – Lynn Young

Treasurer – Dave Regan

Immediate Past President – Tom Byrd

Steven advised that as this was an online meeting, electronic voting would close on Tuesday. Sarah expressed appreciation to the Governance Committee for the excellent slate. John Kusalus moved to accept the slate as presented. The motion was seconded by Tom and adopted. Tom expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to serve as President for two terms. All expressed appreciation to Tom for his service. Steven advised the new terms begin at the conclusion

of today's meeting. Tom mentioned that Sarah is terming out and thanked her for service.

Steven – nominated for re-election/or to board: Cindy, Lynn, Dave, Chip Briscoe and Rebecca Blankenbaker. The three new Board members are Judge Bob Perkins, Jesse Trevino and Adam Adams.

Administrative Reports

Executive Director's Report (Steven Gonzales)

Steven displayed a draft of the annual report which will be mailed to the general membership in lieu of the annual meeting. It will be reviewed by a few Board members as well as NPS and THC. The final version should be available by November 15th. Steve has a quote to print 200 11 x 17 copies including postage for \$800. After applying the credit balance at the printers, the actual cost will be about \$350. One hundred copies will be mailed to members and the others will be provided to donors and other interested parties. An electronic version will be shared on social media. No NPS funding will be used.

Steven shared images of the damage by Hurricane Laura at Lobanillo Swales. He returned later and cleared the trees which were down on the trail. He does not think the swales were significantly impacted by erosion although he did discover a large animal den burrowed into the swale. Cindy thanked him for clearing the path. Steven reported a large crown from a pine tree needs to be removed and the entire site needs to be cataloged. Lynn moved to authorize the Executive Director to seek volunteers to catalog the site and clean up storm damage. The motion was seconded by John Kusalus and adopted. Linda Jo Conn, a Master Naturalist in Milam County, visited the swales in the spring documenting and photographing the plants.

Model Trail Communities - Steven applied for an MTC grant to pay an intern for organizing MTCs but it was not approved. He wants to continue to work on MTC outreach in central Texas and hopes to have four meetings in each area: San Antonio, New Braunfels, San Marcos and Austin. Tom added that the upcoming signage in Travis County will raise awareness of the trail.

Steven shared an article on an underground railroad along the trail to Mexico on social media and may include it in the trail report.

Old San Antonio Road (Onion Creek) project – ELCaT was approached by a developer about interpretive panels; Tom is working with the developer and other partners and his daughter, Lilly, is working as a volunteer to create draft a conceptual plan. ELCaT will make recommendations and serve as a liaison between the city, developer and Travis County Historical Commission. Tom advised this is not part of the National Historic trail but is one of the first federally funding national highways.

Onion Creek Metro Park Update – It involves 555 acres, and we will partner with GTI. A letter of interest has been submitted to the Moody Foundation and Tom is hopeful we will be invited to submit a grant application. The City of Austin approved the park without funding. We hope to determine if there was an alternate route to the Camino as it was likely a high-water crossing. This may add another route to trail, subject to NPS approval. There are large tracts of land that are parklands between crossing sites and worth exploring to show natural environment. Aaron has visited the site but needs historical documentation to evaluate it.

Tom reported on the large Estancia Project, a development along the Austin San Antonio Post Road including single family homes, apartments, commercial and dedicated parklands near Manchaca Springs. Tom mentioned that Brian Beatie, artist and producer, and his wife Valerie, a visual artist, are interested in raising awareness of the trail.

Sarah was excused to attend another meeting and all expressed appreciation to her for her years of service.

New Business

Model Trail Community Task Force Update – Steven is in discussions with the MTC task force regarding a method to align MTC memberships with the Trail membership renewals.

Regional and At-Large Reports

- San Antonio/Goliad region – Dave's report is included in the annual report. The current trail in Floresville backs up

to a golf course and he is hoping to extend the trail by a mile with a walkway. The project should be complete within two years. Development at the John William Helton San Antonio River Nature Park may be possible to connect to the missions. La Bahia Road runs through park area. Dave met with Aaron and others and historic documentation is needed to justify extending the trail. Steven added the park was envisioned as a rail to trail park.

- **National Park Service Update** – Aaron Mahr advised he is back in Santa Fe and interacted with several ELCaT partners while at the Missions in San Antonio. He worked on efforts to connect Bexar and Wilson Counties. A new visitor use and education engagement team will be added to help with signage and exhibit. Aaron will be recruiting for new deputy superintendent as John Panella was promoted. The other NPS staff members on the call provided updates.
- **Texas Historical Commission Update** – Brad Patterson provided updates on Mission Dolores and Caddo Mounds. Funding requests have been submitted for the next two years. THC received a \$200,000 grant from AMLS for digital content for historic sites. THC sites are generally open, but some sites cannot be visited because of social distancing precautions. The French Legation is scheduled to open in 2021.

Next meeting: **January 16, 2021**

Future meeting dates: **January 16, April 17, July 17, and October 15-16**

Cindy moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:06 pm. Lynn seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Young, Acting Secretary