

EiCaT Board Meeting Notes
Via Zoom
January 15, 2022

A quorum was established, and the meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m. by President Cindy Freeman. In attendance were Board members Cindy Freeman, Tom Byrd, Chip Briscoe, John Kisalus, Judge Bob Perkins, Dave Regan, Jesse Treviño, and Lynn Young; Executive Director Steven Gonzales, and Agency partners Aaron Mahr from NPS and Brad Patterson from THC.

Minutes from the October 22, 2021, board meeting were considered. A motion to approve the minutes was made by John Kisalus and seconded by Dave Regan. Motion adopted.

Treasurer Dave Regan presented the financials and proposed 2023 NPS budget. Following discussion, a motion to approve the financials and proposed NPS budget was made by Dave Regan and seconded by Judge Bob Perkins. The motion was adopted, and Cindy expressed appreciation to Dave.

Steven Gonzales presented the report of the Executive Director:

- The association's second annual report will be distributed in late January. Steven is currently working to incorporate the feedback received from the first draft. The report will be available electronically and distributed via social media.
- The new Association brochure has been finalized with the help of Elaine Sullivan. Following discussion, Judge Perkins moved to contract with Paragon Printing for 15,000 copies. The motion was seconded by John Kisalus and adopted. While the bid was for \$4,947.30, the Association received a donation of \$1,000. With other funds available, the cost will be even less. Cindy mentioned that this is an unbudgeted expense and that donations are welcome. Jesse stressed that all the Spanish names and words should be properly accented.
- Steven requested a grant for \$10,000 to provide a PNTS intern to help organize Model Trail Communities. Awards are to be announced January 14th.
- The Association has partnered with the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) towards the creation of an interpretive panel for the Matthew Brown House in Travis County. The home is on the Old San Antonio Road at its junction with Slaughter Creek. PARC will pay EiCaT \$500 for the creation of the content for the panel and it will be housed at one of the many soon-to-be venues for the public to learn about the trail.
- Lobanillo Erosion Control work - On December 9, Steven met with the professional trail builders from S&S Trails at the Lobanillo Swales to survey the property for erosion controls on the hiking trail. As the site is a State Antiquities Landmark, Texas Historical Commission approval was required prior to the work commencing. GTI Environmental, LLC, prepared the letter and approval was received on January 3, 2022. The work will take place from January 24 – 27.
- MTC Outreach – The Association is tentatively working with NPS Trail Trails Office to hold MTC meetings in San Antonio, New Braunfels, San Marcos, Austin, Nacogdoches and possibly Bastrop in May. Chip suggested also reaching out to Cotulla and the Laredo area. Cindy suggested a list be compiled of potential locations for brochures.

- The Estancia-OSR Bridge was dedicated December 4, 2021. The dedication was well attended and all elected officials expressed their support for trail developments in the Austin/Travis County area.

Cindy - will poll the Executive Committee for availability to discuss Steven's Executive Director evaluation which will become an annual event as per the strategic plan.

Governance Committee update – Lynn Young provided a brief recap of the recommendations adopted at the Annual Meeting and invited Judge Perkins to comment regarding concerns over the officer terms as a result of the change of the Annual Meeting date from October to March/April. Judge Perkins explained that Board members were elected for a one-year term in October. His understanding is that the elected members are entitled to serve for one year which would mean a six-month delay for new officers to take office. A discussion followed. Lynn inquired about the possibility of office holders who are terming out resigning prior to the annual meeting so that newly elected officers could serve until the following annual meeting. The Governance Committee will also have to resolve the issue of other elected Board members. Judge Perkins will work with the committee to draft a proposal for consideration prior to the annual meeting. After discussion, Judge Perkins moved to adopt a resolution that new officers should be elected at the Annual meeting in the spring, but not take office until October 2022. The office holders could be re-elected at the Spring 2023 meeting. Lynn seconded the motion which was adopted.

Judge Perkins reminded the Board that the resolution regarding quorum (adopted by board 10.22.21) must be sent to the membership prior to the Annual meeting. Steven responded that it will be sent as a Bylaws modification.

Community Relations Committee Update – Cindy advised that John Pruett, who recently termed out, provided a summary of goals based on the strategic plan.

Development Committee – Jesse Treviño initiated a discussion with Aaron Mahr regarding the procedure for requesting additional funds from the NPS budget. Aaron explained the process for allocating funds. Jesse and John Kisalus met and discussed drafting a template letter to Congressmen. Aaron expressed appreciation to Jesse for efforts to increase Congressional funding for trails and stated that it is important for EICaT to seek other funding, such as corporate funding. Jesse is working to develop additional initiatives in the private sector. Aaron suggested detailed justifications for funding be provided with the request. Tom Byrd commented on the Board's responsibility to identify additional sites and/or places for signage as well as fundraising. Cindy suggested the Development Committee research past donations by individuals/businesses. Steven added that EICaT is also looking at state and private funding as well as corporate sponsors/foundations, such as Texas companies.

The meeting was recessed at noon for a ten-minute break.

As the meeting resumed, Jesse added additional items:

- Planning has not begun on the planned fundraising event during the 2023 Session. We should consider the many corporations which have headquarters and extensive property on the trail.
- The idea of hiking the hill will be done online again this year. It is important for board members to commit in terms of time/interactions with elected officials at state and national levels.
- Jesse will draft a template for board members to adapt as they address their own members of Congress.

Cindy expressed appreciation to Jesse for his efforts.

Research Protection Committee – Tom Byrd, Chair, will invite committee members Dave, Cindy and Steven to a February meeting via Zoom to prioritize activities and map current efforts and identify focus areas. Cindy expressed appreciation to Tom.

MTC Reports

Floresville - Dave Regan advised that the Trail de Flores MTC is focusing on two activities: creating a retracement trail which would add 8.5 miles to the trail, if successful, and erecting the interpretive panels on each end of the existing trail. The Annual Meeting will be in Floresville and coincides with Celebrate Trails Day.

Rancheria Grande - Steven advised that at a recent meeting, Joyce Conner, one of the Rancheria Grande landowners, was elected Chair. The chapter voted to work towards the purchase of approximately 60 acres of Sugarloaf Mountain at a cost around \$500,000. They are exploring grants through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation. Another resource protection idea is to create a hiking trail which would be publicly accessible through the Conner and Baumann properties, including the swales and Native American village sites.

South Texas area - Chip mentioned a privately funded border fence on the south side of San Ignacio and expressed concern that other private landowners may erect similar fences in archaeological sensitive areas. Steven recalled Mrs. Meacham was interested in a historic resources study on her property. If the landowners are willing and funding is available, GTI would be interested in surveying the property.

Regional and At-Law Board Reports – No written reports were received, but Steven gave updates on activities.

- In South Texas, Chip is working on several projects. They worked with Aaron's office and Zapata County for a \$30,000 grant application to the Southwest Border Resource Protection Office to refurbish the TXDOT overlook south of San Ignacio. Interpretive panels have been installed at the site.
- Steven talked to Jesse about interpretive panels in Laredo.
- San Antonio/Goliad Region – Steven has an upcoming presentation to San Antonio Conservation Society.
- Brazos Region – no report.
- East Texas Caddo – signing efforts continue in Houston and Cherokee County. Steven has meetings scheduled with the Historical Commissions in those counties in coming days. Sabine County is working on new signage.

Cindy encouraged Steven to be aware of potential board members while visiting the areas.

National Park Service Update

- Aaron Mahr reported they are working on signing plans in Bastrop and Bexar County. The NPS is still operating under a Continuing Resolution, and he anticipates a stable

budget and hopes for an increase in 2023.

- Zapata County overlook – NPS is working with counterparts in Mexico to develop a bilingual travel itinerary across the entire Camino to incorporate sites in Mexico, Texas and Louisiana.
- New Hire Chad Ennis will work with GIS and resource information management team. Steven said it hopes the NPS staff could visit the Ft. Colorado site and the Floresville area during the Annual meeting.
- The Pike NHT study is almost complete, and Aaron expressed appreciation for the participation of the Association and the comments received. The report will be distributed with all public comments. The NPS is also reviewing the significance of a potential Emancipation Trail in the Galveston/Houston/College Station area.

Chip inquired why funding has not increased to national parks with large visitation due to Covid and Aaron explained that staffing is limited and many parks are facing serious challenges.

Texas Historical Commission update – Brad Patterson

- The Real Places conference February 2-4 has almost 600 registered.
- The Caddo Mounds webinar in which he, Steven and colleagues from Mission Delores and Caddo Mounds participated had more than 300 people attending.
- Texas Time Travel website will be updated soon
- Digital, Spanish language versions of the state historic sites, Chisholm Trail and World War I travel guides are available in addition to the *Texas Hispano* guide.
- New Texas Treasure Business Award (TTBA) procedures debuted January 1.
- THC is currently evaluating the La Bahia Mission regarding a potential operating agreement with the Diocese.

Other – Brad suggested conversations regarding funding should involve the Association and NPS. THC will submit budget requests this summer for the upcoming session. Cindy commented that we need to seek Federal, state, and private funding.

Brad – THC is in a statewide planning process with public, web and online forums and encouraged participation. <https://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/texas-statewide-preservation-plan>

Cindy expressed appreciation to all for attending. The meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Young, Secretary