



MINUTES

North Little Rock History Commission meeting August 11, 2020

Commission Members Present:

Suzanne Jackson, Chairman
Ann Clements
Kristal Clark
Deeana Montgomery
Debra Wood
Belinda Burney

Others Present:

Sandra Taylor Smith, Director
Cary Bradburn, Historian
Robert Birch, NLR Economic Dev.
& Zoom Host

Commission Members Absent:

none

Commission Chairman Suzanne Jackson called the August 11, 2020 meeting of the North Little Rock History Commission meeting to order at 5:30 P.M. and quorum was established. (Note: All Commission members, guests, and staff participated in the meeting electronically)

Ms. Jackson asked Commissioners if they had read the minutes of the last History Commission meeting which was held on March 10, 2020. Ann Clements moved to approve the March 2020 minutes as written and it was seconded by Debra Wood. The motion was approved by all in voice vote.

Staff Report

Donations since the March 2020 meeting:

1. Six photographs of the Old Mill in 1935, scanned- Donated by Pat Studer
2. Four negatives purchased on EBay of Dionicio Rodriguez bridge at the entrance to Lakewood Park, Lakewood Park Palapa Tree, Lakewood Park Tree trunk- Donated by Stan Whittlesey
3. Three 1950s newspaper photographs with captions of the Pike Avenue Civic Club- Donated by Carolyn Eanes
4. Original photographs, newspaper articles, and other documents associated with the work of Virgil C. Johnson, Engineer in early 20th Century Arkansas- Donated by Jackie Taylor and Sandra Taylor Smith
5. Two 1940s North Little Rock High School Diplomas- John Howard Reeves, Virginia Frances Walker; two 8X10 color photographs of backyard at 314 Skyline Dr. c.1965- Donated by Pat Reeves Herlocker
6. Pamphlet- "Your Fallout Shelter Plan" 1968; NLR Council of Garden Clubs 1960 "Tales of Mother Nature"; Set of four "Arkansas and Its People" books, 1936- Donated by Ashely Robbins from the estate of her grandmother, Naomi Nivens Slatton
7. Bicentennial Poster- Freedom Train- Donated by Jeff Watson

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Sandra Smith reported on the North Little Rock High School Task Force, saying the group has not been meeting in person due to Covid-19, but possible uses and talks with the architects are progressing. She told Commissioners that historians from the AR Historic Preservation Program met with some of the task force at the High School building and toured it. They said it would be acceptable to remove the seats in the auditorium and level out the floor. Ms. Smith reported that in the plans for the building, there will be a dedicated space for North Little Rock School history and the History Commission will work with students to set that up and maintain.

Ms. Smith said that she is working with the NLR Visitors Bureau and Parks Department on setting up QR codes for the Trail of Tears along the Riverfront. Ann Clements asked if the existing signs can be cleaned. Ms. Smith said they have tried to clean them, but nothing has worked. The signs were installed in 2002 from a grant from the National Park Service and Ms. Smith said they are talking with NPS offices in Santa Fe, New Mexico about getting the pdf for the signs so new ones could be made. Robert Birch said he met with Chris Kent with the Argenta Downtown Council and they plan to do QR codes on buildings downtown. Sandra Smith said the History Commission office should be contacted for information on the buildings.

Deeana Montgomery reported that she has not been able to find out if North Little Rock will have a Christmas parade this year. The annual Christmas tree decorating contest the History Commission sponsors is centered on the parade theme. Ms. Montgomery said Neighborhood Services does not know anything about the parade and most neighborhood organizations have not been meeting for the past few months.

Suzanne Jackson asked if there was any word on Art Walk. Sandra Smith said there has been no discussion of having the third Friday Art Walk yet.

Sandra Smith reported on the Black History Coloring book. She said she and Belinda Burney are working to apply for a grant from the Curtis H. Sykes grants from the Arkansas Archives. She said the next grant deadline is October 2.

In updating Commissioners on the permanent exhibit plan, Suzanne Jackson said a \$50,000 grant from the Sturgis Foundation has been awarded and just recently Union Pacific awarded a \$25,000 grant to the project. Ms. Jackson said she hopes to start contacting people for informational and fundraising purposes next week.

After determining there was no further business or discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Taylor Smith, Director