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MINUTES

North Little Rock History Commission April 14, 2026

Commission Members Present:

Suzanne Jackson, Chairman
Robert Coates
Deeana Montgomery
Belinda Sykes-Burney

Others Present:

Kelli Peters, Director
Cary Bradburn, Historian

Commission Members Absent:

Ann Clements
Sonny Rhodes

History Commission Chairman Suzanne Jackson called the April 14, 2026 meeting of the North Little Rock History Commission to order at 5:46 P.M. and quorum was established.

Chairman Jackson asked Commissioners if they had read the minutes of the March 10, 2026 meeting. Deeana Montgomery moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Belinda Sykes-Burney seconded the motion and it was approved by all in a voice vote.

Staff Report

Kelli Peters reported that the following items had been donated since the March meeting:

1. Several items from past reunions of North Little Rock High School's Class of 1964 including 81 color slides, programs, booklets, directories, VHS tapes, an invitation, & a t-shirt. Donated by Suzanne Jackson.
2. Several school-related items from North Little Rock High School including 27 individual school pictures of classmates, a Vespers Services program, football program, yearbook supplements, a Class Day Assembly script, & 3 sheets of B/W photos of classmates from Fourth Street JHS. Donated by Suzanne Jackson.
3. Progress report from Gardner Memorial Methodist Church. Donated by Suzanne Jackson.
4. 2 photos of Beth McAnally (Clements) & a friend at the Old Mill. Donated by Suzanne Jackson.

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5. 21" x 26" framed collage of William S. Clements' career (1995 Citizen of the Year). Donated by Suzanne Clements Jackson.
6. Large collection of family photos and a 1941 NLR High School Wildcat yearbook which belonged to Janice Loebner (Thurrow). Donated by Ricky Thurrow.
7. Porter's hat worn by Curtis Sykes. Donated by Belinda Sykes-Burney.
8. 2 photos of the actual horse whisperer, Dan M. "Buck" Brannaman, found inside a used paperback copy of "The Horse Whisperer." Donated by Nerissa Carrie Holmes.
9. "A Tribute to Gold Star Mothers" written by Ruby Wood. Donated by Debra Wood.
10. "Why We Have Thanksgiving Day" by Mrs. Conley (Ruby) Wood. Donated by Debra Wood.
11. Syracuse china plate commemorating Missouri Pacific's "Route of the Eagles" (1948-1961). Donated by Deeana Montgomery.
12. Minnie Lou Roll Bradford's collection of yearbooks, photos, report cards, church promotion certificates, & various other miscellaneous items. Donated by Shara Hutchcraft.

Kelli Peters reported that she did her first presentation as director on Tuesday, March 17, for the Disciples Men at Park Hill Christian Church, and it went very well. She was nervous but Gary Clements was there and made her feel much more at ease. He added some commentary about various subjects which added some much-needed historic context. She was very grateful for his help.

Cary Bradburn reported that he did an interview with Leroy Shumate earlier that day. Mr. Shumate grew up in Argenta and Rose City. He had initially called to share his memories so Cary decided to interview him.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Jackson told the commissioners that we have set a tentative date to open the exhibit on June 25. We plan to hold several "soft" openings for various groups such as the mayor & city officials, donors, contributors & those featured in the exhibit, and a group of travel writers who will be in town for a conference May 12-13. We won't be finished by then but they can see what it looks like at that time. We think this will be good publicity because they write for national publications.

She reported that the carpet will be replaced, due to it being in two dye lots. We also have our banner displayed across the front of the building to announce the upcoming exhibit.

Deeana Montgomery gave an update on our efforts to recruit volunteers. She has printed several copies of the online application. We have flyers to hand out and we have the cards to pass around. She encouraged everyone to take a pad of cards to hand out to people. Belinda Burney said that Ornett Grind would be happy to be a volunteer.

Ms. Montgomery then reminded the commissioners about the upcoming celebration of the Old Mill's 50th anniversary of being a city park. It will be called "Party like it's 1976!" The Mayor's Youth Council will provide young people to greet people at the gates and do whatever is needed. There will be a few speakers including the mayor and Kelli Peters.

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We would like to hand out a scavenger hunt for kids, and need to provide prizes for those who complete the hunt. We are considering slap wrist bands and stickers. Ms. Montgomery showed the group a garden scavenger hunt that we would like to tweak for our purposes. Kelli Peters offered to tweak it for them.

Chairman Jackson stressed the importance of getting the word out about our exhibit and suggested advertising it on our Facebook page, and asking various Facebook groups to share the information to their followers.

Robert Coates said that we could contact Dr. Richard Moss, Dean of Fine Arts at Pulaski Technical College, at (501) 812-2869. He could help get the word out to his students about volunteer opportunities.

Chairman Jackson asked Kelli Peters to start pushing the exhibit on our Facebook page.

She asked if Emilee Hagewood could link the QR code to our email. Robert Coates said that we would need a dynamic code for data analytics. He said that Emilee would know what that is.

Chairman Jackson said that we need to set up a meeting with Belinda Burney & Emilee Hagewood.

Belinda Sykes-Burney reported that the S. A. Jones High School reunion will be July 15-19 at the Holiday Inn-Airport. Some of the school's artifacts are in a case at the Jones Alumni Association building but she isn't comfortable transporting & returning them to the reunion.

After Chairman Jackson determined that there was no further business or discussion, she asked for a motion to adjourn. Robert Coates moved to adjourn the meeting; it was seconded by Belinda Sykes-Burney, and approved by all. The meeting adjourned at 6:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Kelli Peters", written in a cursive style.

Kelli Peters, Director