

Sugar Hill Historic Preservation Society Meeting
Wednesday, April 17, 2019, 7:00 P.M.
City of Sugar Hill City Hall – Council Chambers
Meeting Minutes

I. Approval of the Agenda

Chris Walker, Sugar Hill Historic Preservation Society (SHHPS) Chairman, convened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. He asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Kathryn Baskin, Secretary, made the motion to approve the agenda. Darrell Pruitt, Vice-chairman, seconded it. The agenda was approved unanimously.

The following individuals were in attendance:

NAME

Kathryn Baskin	Secretary/Board Member
Ryan Butts	Guest Member
Varessa Butts	Guest Member
Ryckie Fernandez	Board Member
Bill Harting	Guest Member
Brandon Hembree*	Board Member/City Liaison
Stephanie Isaacs*	Board Member
Kim Landers	City Staff
Margaret Neal*	Board Member
Darrell Pruitt	Vice-chairman/Board Member
Sherry Smith	Guest Member
Holli Stouffer*	Board Member
Marlena Trant	Guest
Chris Walker	Chairman/Board Member

*Indicates committee chair

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chris Walker asked for approval of the March 20, 2019, meeting minutes. Darrell Pruitt moved for the meeting minutes to be approved and Stephanie Isaacs, Board Member, seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted without objection.

III. Treasurer's Report

Chris Walker announced that Joann Burel, SHHPS Treasurer, was unable to attend the meeting. He reported that there is a balance of \$10,000 as of April 17, 2019. Ms. Baskin asked if the markers for the unknown graves in the Kile-Benson cemetery were expensed yet. Chris Walker responded that the markers had been accounted for in the 2018 funds. He added that the marker for the old school that had been located in the same vicinity of the Sugar Hill Historic Cemetery would be a new expense for 2019 and that the \$1000 scholarship would come from the 2019 funding. Members approved the treasurer's report as given by Chris Walker.

IV. Committee Chair Reports

Mr. Walker commented that the next item on the agenda was for the committee chairs to report their progress thus far. He announced that Tiffany Hale Carter, Chair of the Museum Committee, was unable to attend the meeting. He called on Brandon Hembree to give an update in her stead.

Museum Committee – Councilman Hembree reported that there were no new activities to report. He added that the next step would be for Ms. Carter to meet with city staff to discuss SHHPS ideas.

Research Committee –At this time Chairman Walker called on Stephanie Isaacs, Chair of the Research Committee, to provide her report. Ms. Isaacs reported that the committee meeting on April 10, 2019, at 7:00 p.m., at the Collins Hill library was informative and she thanked everyone who attended. She said she thought the library staff did a nice job and gave some great ideas on how to focus research. Ms. Isaacs told members that the library staff had provided her with the article from the Atlanta Constitution on the 1908 train wreck and that it will be enlarged and included in the museum collection.

Ms. Isaacs continued and reported that she had received responses from some members on the topics they wanted to research. She advised that she believed that the best way to approach the research would be to focus on a specific artifact and build the research for the topic around a particular item. Ms. Isaacs used an example of a “jug” and how it related to the topic of “Moonshining.” She reported that she had created a guide for members of the research committee as well as others who were interested. Ms. Isaacs described a chart for keeping track of sources. She added that the chart would help in organizing the information. Ms. Isaacs also suggested that the information be presented in a bullet format and noted that the ending focus on the guide was to describe the impact of a topic on Sugar Hill.

Chris Walker asked if there was a tally for those who had chosen a topic. Ms. Isaacs told members that she would develop a letter that included assignments and distribute it to the committee. She proceeded to announce the assignments as noted below:

Native Americans	Ryan Butts, Chris Walker
Gold Mines	Brandon Hembree, Bill Harting, Chris Walker
Moonshining	Varessa, Ryan, and Charlie Butts, Bill Harting
Schools, Churches, Cemeteries, Community	Kathryn Baskin, Brandon Hembree, Kim Landers
Cultural Diversity	Tiffany Hale Carter, Ryckie Fernandez
1900-1940	Varessa, Ryan, and Charlie Butts, Bill Harting, Kim Landers
Then and Now	Kathryn Baskin, Sherry Smith
Military (wars)	Bill Harting

During the naming of the research groups, Ms. Isaacs gave examples of areas/items to research as topics such as the First Avenue sign for the “Then and Now” research. Mr. Walker mentioned that there were photos on the SHHPS Facebook page like Mangum’s grocery store that could serve as topics. Ms. Baskin pointed out that the scrapbook in the museum would be a good source for selecting items as well. Ms. Isaacs requested that she be kept in the loop on the selection of items and any group collaboration that may occur.

While discussing various items to consider for research, Ms. Isaacs told the group that she and Councilman Hembree had gone to the crossing where the 1908 train wreck occurred. She said she had taken some pictures of where she and Councilman Hembree believed the wreck had occurred and also had collected some of the spikes from the track which will be added to the museum collection.

Scholarship Committee – Next, Mr. Walker told the group that the press release on the scholarship had gone out and he called on Holli Stouffer, Chair of the Scholarship Committee, to give an update. Ms. Stouffer thanked Varessa Butts, Guest Member, for her work on the press release. She noted

that Brandon Hembree had posted the press release on Facebook and that the committee members had continued communicating through their dedicated Facebook page. Ms. Stouffer added that she had been reaching out to others such as through on-line academies to promote the scholarship. She said the next phase is to receive the essays. Kim Landers asked if there was a deadline and Ms. Stouffer responded that July 1st was the deadline. Varessa Butts announced that the Sugar Hill Youth Council had indicated that they had two members who were submitting applications and that possibly a third member would also participate. Ms. Stouffer reported that she had contacted all the high schools and that North Gwinnett High School had posted the scholarship information on their web page. She also advised members that she and Ms. Baskin had met and they had developed a process for managing SHHPS emails for the scholarship and other matters.

Mr. Walker proceeded in announcing that Ms. Stouffer was to receive the “Golden Wagon” volunteer award. He thanked her for her leadership and work on the scholarship committee.

Digital Archives Committee – Chairman Walker advised the group that city staff had saved all the images on a flash drive and that the committee was developing a process with the staff to disseminate the images to the public. Darrell Pruitt announced that he had met with Mercy Montgomery and other city staff about the digital and audio interviews. He said that they were making sure all the necessary equipment is available and that he would be conducting a practice interview soon. He told members that he hoped to interview Wayne Hill first.

Cemetery Committee - At this time, Chairman Walker asked City Councilman and Committee Chair, Brandon Hembree, to give an update. Councilman Hembree began with a discussion about a Memorial Day event on May 27th. He said that he had discussed city involvement with Mercy Montgomery and added that the Suwanee Creek Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the American Legion also would be involved. Councilman Hembree said that he had talked with DAR chapter representatives and that they wanted to do something different this year. He noted that SHHPS only involvement would be helping with the pre-flagging and that it should be easier this year since there is a list for reference. Darrell Pruitt asked if the SHHPS placement of flags should be scheduled the day before and the councilman agreed. Mr. Hembree added that he thought the Veteran’s Day memorial would still be a work in progress on Veteran’s Day but there was time to plan for an event.

Chairman Walker reported that he had been talking with the DAR representatives about the Kile-Benson cemetery and the possibility of collaborating with them on their event in October to place the unknown markers then or have a separate event. He states that he would like to place the markers as soon as possible. He said that there two of the unmarked graves were actually covered with plants.

Councilman Hembree commented that he had forgotten to mention that there was an issue in the Sugar Hill cemetery with the blue stakes that were used to identify the sites of the unmarked graves. He said some had been damaged and others removed for various reasons. Mr. Hembree advised that all the sites were identified through GPS so that it shouldn’t be an issue for finding the sites in the future.

Mr. Walker continued and told members that he will notify everyone when a date for placing the markers had been agreed upon with the DAR. In addition, he reported that there had been an issue regarding the location of Enoch Benson’s grave and whether it was actually in the cemetery. Mr. Walker said that the DAR believes that Mr. Benson is buried in that location and therefore, only two

graves would be considered unmarked. He advised that the DAR would be making that determination and that SHHPS would work with them.

Ryckie Fernandez, board member, inquired if anyone had followed through on retrieving the information that comprised approximately 27 pages on Enoch Benson. Stephanie Isaacs responded that she had not gone through the information yet and that what was shown at library meeting was via Fold3.com which is a resource for military records. Chris Walker commented that he had received a time-sensitive link for Enoch Benson's military records from one of Benson's relatives. Mr. Walker noted that he had all that information and would share it with the group.

Stephanie Isaacs informed the members that she was still compiling location information on the sections and rows for gravesites in the Sugar Hill cemetery. She reported that she had finished correlating all the information with the 1985 data. Ms. Isaacs explained that she had conducted a walk through audit and noted that some graves had been missed. She also expressed that she would like to get more detailed information on the new burials. Ms. Isaacs added that she would like a method of keeping track of information she had gathered on unknown/unmarked graves. She proposed the idea of using stakes or metal markers for people she has identified so that she doesn't need to duplicate her research. Councilman Hembree responded that Tim Schick, city staff, would need to determine if that was a possibility. He said that Mr. Schick has a certain process that needs following because of liability issues.

Kim Landers, Guest Member, offered to connect Ms. Isaacs with Tim Schick so that they could discuss the issue. She added that Mr. Schick keeps track of all the new burial information, deeds, and other data related to the cemetery. Councilman Hembree advised members that he had asked that Mr. Schick begin including information from families about veterans.

As an aside, Ms. Isaacs said that she had met a family recently while working in the cemetery to collect data. She told the members that she had taken the family on a short tour and told them stories about some of the people buried there. Ms. Isaacs suggested that SHHPS may want to consider conducting tours again in the future. Chairman Walker suggested doing something to mark the grave of the woman killed in 1924 cyclone. Ms. Isaacs said there is a stone randomly placed in the location of the woman's grave and that there was some indication that the family intended to mark the grave because there was a footstone. Mr. Walker inquired if SHHPS would need to notify the family of placing a marker for the woman. Members weren't aware of what was required but noted that other grave markers indicated the gravesite was for the Powell Family.

V. Old Business

Chairman Walker announced that he met with the Sugar Hill Art Commission the previous day and had discussed Katharine Alsobrook's Girl Scout Gold Project with them. He reported that they talked about other ideas for her GPS guided scavenger hunt and specifically about using a sculpture theme like Greenville's mice. Mr. Walker said that Nicki Klein of the Art Commission had asked him if SHHPS had any new plans for Sugar Rush and the possibility of collaborating on the sculpture. He noted that he had suggested using "George, the duck" as Sugar Hill's icon. Chairman Walker explained that Art Commission members had suggested engaging the public in identifying an icon and that "Eddie the Eagle" had also been proposed as a possibility. Members had an expanded discussion about the methodologies used to conduct a public opinion poll.

Chairman Walker continued with calling on Councilman Hembree to talk about Sugar Rush. Mr. Hembree advised the members that city staff had asked if SHHPS could add more history related activities for the event. He proposed the idea of conducting an activity similar to "Antique

Roadshow” where citizens could bring in items to donate and/or document as part of the digital archives. Members endorsed the idea. Mr. Fernandez emphasized the need to advertise the activity to get a meaningful response. Mr. Hembree suggested SHHPS could open the museum room and that people could bring these items there throughout the day of Sugar Rush and could share their stories.

Mr. Walker added that city staff also suggested inviting local artisans related to history to demonstrate their crafts. He added that one person he thought of was Charlie Dingler, a blacksmith. He indicated that the city already had a blacksmith identified but that Charlie Dingler also was a folk artist and a moonshiner. Mr. Walker continued with a suggestion to invite Andy Sudderth to provide a moonshining demo.

Ryckie Fernandez asked if there was an update regarding “the tree.” Mr. Walker said that following the meeting he would show the members a photo of the certificate but everything was completed. Darrell Pruitt announced that there would be an event on Arbor Day. Councilman Hembree said that the event would begin at 10:00 am on April 26th at City Hall. He added that participants would walk down to the tree for a dedication. Mr. Walker advised members that eventually there would be a granite marker for the tree.

Stephanie Isaacs announced that she had spoken at the Suwanee Creek Chapter DAR meeting on April 8th. She noted that DAR members indicated they wanted to stay involved with SHHPS and particularly with cemetery activities.

Mr. Walker brought up the Georgia Senate Resolution honoring Maron Buice. Councilman Hembree said that the Georgia Department of Transportation and Senator Renee Unterman were in the process of organizing a commemorative ceremony in Mr. Buice’s honor. He noted that the resolution was awaiting the Governor’s signature.

VI. New Business

Mr. Walker introduced a special guest, Marlina Trant, a local rock and artifact hunter. Ms. Trant said that she began collecting rocks and artifacts in the area as a hobby. She told the group that she had collected numerous rocks and some were granite that she believed had veins of gold running through them. In addition, she showed some items that she believed might be Native American artifacts. Ms. Trant passed around some items from her collection for members to observe. She suggested that some items may be suitable for the museum.

Mr. Walker continued with announcing that he had an idea for a new SHHPS event. He described a soapbox derby race that was held in Macon. Chairman Walker noted that it was a huge event with a large attendance, concerts, food trucks, etc. He proposed that SHHPS consider organizing a soapbox derby event with a historical theme for various ages. Mr. Walker stated that he had discussed the idea with Varessa and Ryan Butts because they had participated in a pinewood derby, a less expensive version of a soapbox derby. Members discussed various approaches and themes that might work well as a Sugar Hill history event such as a 1930’s theme.

Mr. Walker asked if there was any further discussion. There being none, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

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