

**Sugar Hill Historic Preservation Society Meeting
Wednesday, December 5, 2018, 7:00 P.M.
City of Sugar Hill City Hall – History Room
Meeting Minutes**

I. Approval of the Agenda

Chris Walker, Sugar Hill Historic Preservation Society (SHHPS) chairman, convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Prior to calling for approval of the agenda, Mr. Walker discussed the need for new SHHPS t-shirts and introduced Steve Wilkes who described various options affecting the cost of t-shirts. He explained that one-color printing would be the cheapest option. Mr. Wilkes told the members that other factors affecting price included the blend of fabric, embroidered logos, screen printing, and various styles such as a polo. Chris Walker also suggested that including the tag line of “gold mines and moonshine” could also be an option.

When Mr. Wilkes finished, Chris Walker called for approval of the meeting agenda. Darrell Pruitt, SHHPS vice-chairman, made a motion to approve the agenda and Ed Lanfear, board member, seconded it. The agenda was approved unanimously.

The following individuals were in attendance:

NAME	
Kathryn Baskin	Secretary/Board Member
Charlie Butts	Guest Member
Ryan Butts	Guest Member
Varessa Butts	Guest Member
Tiffany Hale Carter	Board Member
Ryckie Fernandez	Board Member
Stephanie Isaacs	Guest Member
Kim Landers	City Staff
Ed Lanfear	Board Member
Margaret Neal	Board Member
Darrell Pruitt	Vice-chairman/Board Member
Holli Stouffer	Board Member
Chris Walker	Chairman/Board Member

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chris Walker asked for approval of the October 5, 2018, meeting minutes. Ed Lanfear moved for the meeting minutes to be approved and Tiffany Hale Carter, board member, seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted without objection. (NOTE: SHHPS did not meet in November 2018.)

III. Treasurer’s Report

Joann Burel, SHHPS Treasurer, was unable to attend the meeting and there was no formal Treasurer’s report. However, Mr. Walker met with city finance staff and he reported that as of December 5 there had been approximately \$4102.98 in expenditures leaving a balance of about \$5898.08.

IV. Financial & Budget Update

Chairman Walker reported that more 2018 expenditures would be discussed as the meeting proceeded. He told the group that the Sugar Hill City Council had approved \$10,000 in the 2019

budget for SHHPS. Mr. Walker reported that \$750,000 had been budgeted for the redesign of the Veterans Memorial, and \$800,000 for the Gold Mine Park on Level Creek Road. He reported that in addition to these budget items, \$150,000 was allocated for miscellaneous projects including the historic Sugar Hill cemetery.

Chairman Walker stated that the city closed with the developer of the Broadstone project that will be located across the street from city hall where Buice School is located. He told members that the Broadstone project included spaces that will be for the history museum and a future art gallery. Mr. Walker added that the developer's project includes \$100,000 that will be split equally between SHHPS and the Sugar Hill Art Commission. He suggested that SHHPS members may want to ask to consult with the developer and provide input on the layout and the choice of a build out/design firm.

V. Unknown Graves Markers Partial Purchase

Chairman Walker told the members that Tim Schick with the City of Sugar Hill had not released a final report on the results of the ground penetrating radar project to identify unmarked graves in the historic city cemetery. He added that it was confirmed that there are three unmarked graves located at the Kile-Benson cemetery site, one inside the fence and two outside. Mr. Walker said that there had been discussions with a company out of Savannah to provide an appropriate marker and he called on Darrell Pruitt to circulate a picture of the proposed markers among the group. Mr. Walker called for a motion to approve the expenditure for three markers at the cost of \$70 each for the unmarked graves in the Kile-Simpson cemetery. *Holli Stouffer, board member, moved for the board to approve \$210 for the markers. Ryckie Fernandez seconded the motion. The board approved the motion without objection.*

Mr. Walker advised the members that 130 to 150 graves were found with ground penetrating radar in the Sugar Hill historic cemetery. He stated that it was suspected that the graves were for paupers. Former commissioner Wayne Hill confirmed that a paupers section had existed in the cemetery. Chairman Walker added that some of the detected sites could be tree stumps or buried grave markers. He added that the ground penetrating radar revealed a mass grave near the Sugar Hill Community Center that may be the burial site of infants. Mr. Walker suggested that a marker for these grave sites may be something to consider for the future.

VI. Marker for Original Sugar Hill School

Chairman Walker reminded members that SHHPS had agreed to place a marker near the location of the Sugar Hill School that was once located in the Sugar Hill historic cemetery. Mr. Walker stated that City Councilman Brandon Hembree had written an article about the Sugar Hill School that was recently published in the *North Gwinnett Voice*. He told the members that he had asked Stephanie Isaacs, guest member, to develop the verbiage for the marker based on the article and other available information. Mr. Walker reminded the group that the marker will include an etched image of the school dating from about 1915. He then called on Ms. Isaacs to read the draft inscription wording to the members.

Ms. Isaacs noted that she had not included verbiage that indicated the location of the school because she wasn't sure where the actual marker would be located. Mr. Walker responded that hopefully it would be located near the actual location of the school but that the decision would be made by the city. Ms. Isaacs proceeded to read the draft verbiage to the SHHPS members.

Darrell Pruitt commented that now that Lanier High School existed that the verbiage should include Lanier as well as North Gwinnett. Margaret Neal, board member, asked if the verbiage stated what year the school was founded or built. Ms. Isaacs responded that the article did not state the year but she would get the information. Ms. Neal stressed that it would be good to include that information. Mr. Pruitt said that he thought the school may have been founded in 1915 but that the date needs to be confirmed. Ms. Neal also suggested that the length of time the school existed also would be good to add. Ms. Isaacs said in conclusion that she would do some more research and offer another draft for consideration.

Mr. Walker announced that the historical marker for the Sugar Hill School would cost \$2345.00. He called for a motion to approve the expenditure. *Kathryn Baskin made a motion to approve the expenditure of \$2345.00 for the historic marker and Ed Lanfear seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously.*

VII. Century Tree aka Champion Tree

Chairman Walker provided an update on the Century/Champion Tree project. He reported that he and Dale Higdon have been trying to coordinate a time for the final measurement of the tree. Mr. Walker said once that was accomplished that the application for designation as a Champion Tree will be submitted. Charlie Butts, guest member, asked about the kudzu on the private property adjacent to the location of the tree. Chairman Walker responded that would be something that falls under the purview of the city and that SHHPS's role was to try and protect the tree through the Champion Tree program and building public awareness.

VIII. Sugar Hill Saddle

Mr. Walker pointed out that he brought the saddle made at the Bona Allen leather factory in Sugar Hill for members to view. He also told members that the bicycle was now prominently displayed in the E-Center.

IX. Christmas Dinner

Mr. Walker introduced the idea of a Christmas dinner for members and indicated that the budget would allow for such an event. Tiffany Hale Carter proposed that SHHPS may want to consider using the remaining budget for activities supporting the community particularly for those in need. She elaborated on several ideas that would demonstrate that SHHPS supports the community in all aspects including the city's history. Mr. Walker remarked that while there are available funds in the budget that there is a very short time frame for planning this type of activity. Darrell Pruitt also questioned if there was enough time for planning and outreach. Ed Lanfear suggested that we might work through the North Gwinnett Coop. Charlie Butts told the group that the Boy Scouts collected canned goods and that SHHPS could do something similar. Tiffany Hale Carter added that the Girl Scouts also had an effort underway and were in need of donations. Holli Stouffer remarked that the scholarship program that SHHPS is developing is also a direct link to supporting the community. Members discussed if this type of expense would be allowable with city funding and follow up with city staff was needed.

Varessa Butts, guest member and former City of Sugar Hill staff, commented that the remaining funding may be a good opportunity to get some of the communications materials about SHHPS printed. Ryckie Fernandez added that the Duluth Historical Society's materials distributed at their presentation on the Duluth cemetery were very informative and something that SHHPS should consider doing. Margaret Neal confirmed that SHHPS needed to distribute similar information in a

printed form. Mr. Walker pointed out that it is late in the year to plan and execute some of the ideas and suggested that they be addressed again in 2019.

Members resumed the discussion about various ways to provide services to the needy in the community. Chris Walker told the group that similar efforts had taken place in the past. He said that SHHPS had purchased poinsettias for the Benton House in Sugar Hill a couple of years ago. Members responded that they supported this type of activity vs. a dinner and proposed several other ideas such as a “winter coat campaign” and donation of “appreciation baskets” but agreed that the topic needed further research and discussion. It was agreed that this item should be deferred until 2019. ***He asked the members to send an email with their ideas for 2019 so that they are included in the agenda.***

Chairman Walker returned to the topic of a SHHPS Christmas Dinner. He suggested several venues. He called on Darrell Pruitt to propose several dates to schedule the event. Further discussion ensued among members regarding a time. Members agreed that the dinner should be at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 12, 2018.

X. Further Discussion/Questions

At this point, Chairman Walker stated that he would like to add an item for discussion although it was not on the agenda. Mr. Walker told the group that since there was enough money in the budget that he would order “pay dirt bags” for the sluice box that SHHPS provides for the Sugar Hill Sugar Rush event in the fall of 2019. He added that we may use the sluice box for other events and we need to have the “pay dirt bags” on hand. Chairman Walker called for a motion to approve the expenditure of \$1200 for the “pay dirt bags.” *Ed Lanfear made a motion to approve the \$1200 expenditure and Ryckie Fernandez seconded the motion. The board adopted the motion unanimously.*

Mr. Walker reported that Tom Sheldon had initiated an effort to recover bricks from the demolition of Buice School. He added that Darrell Pruitt had assisted in the effort. Mr. Pruitt said that approximately 50 to 60 bricks had been recovered. Mr. Walker said that Mr. Sheldon had identified a source to etch the bricks and that Mr. Sheldon would be leading this initiative. He noted that people in the community had expressed interest in the bricks. Chairman Walker added that this would be a good project for SHHPS to support. Chairman Walker said that the etching would have the following inscription: *Sugar Hill Elementary, 1957-1995*. Margaret Neal asked what SHHPS would do with the bricks. Mr. Walker said that the appropriate action was to be determined but SHHPS may be able to sell them as a limited edition so the proceeds could be used to benefit some group. Varessa Butts suggested the possibility of auctioning the bricks to provide support to another group. Chairman Walker suggested that the topic could be further discussed in 2019 and should include the possibility of raising funds to offset the cost of the etching.

Chairman Walker proceeded to call on Holli Stouffer to discuss the scholarship initiative. She told the members that she had developed an action plan for a decision-making process including the budget, a process for assessing projects, the requirements and eligibility, Ms. Stouffer expressed that she thought the scholarship project should be simple and clear so that students will become engaged and won't view it as overwhelming. She explained that she proposed 10 ideas that she thought the Society might entertain. Ms. Stouffer said that she didn't email it to everyone but would resend it so everyone could review it before the January meeting. She also posed the idea that the society may want to form a subcommittee to work through the process. Ms. Stouffer said she would resend the document to all interested parties.

Tiffany Hale Carter reported that she and Darrell Pruitt had a discussion related to the videos of long-time residents in Sugar Hill area. She reported that she had contacted a firm that provides an all-inclusive service. Ms. Carter added that a representative of the firm would come out and record the interviews, edit them, and provide a package for SHHPS to use as deemed appropriate. The representative estimated the cost would be \$1200 for five interviews. She said that she had received samples of the company's video projects. Ms. Carter told everyone that she had mentioned that some residents may be in nursing homes or unable to travel to a central point at a specific time and that the representative replied that they would go wherever the interviewee needed. She remarked that the representative was very willing to work with SHHPS however was best determined.

Darrell Pruitt asked if we still had access to previous interviews. Varessa Butts responded that Mercy Montgomery, city staff, had access to all the previous videos and files. She commented that the videos were never edited but they were on the city's server. Darrell Pruitt asked how many interviews were completed and she responded that there was only one. Chris Walker commented that there was a list of potential interviewees but there was no structure. He went on to discuss the possibility of a subcommittee to plan the process so it could be implemented. Ms. Carter continued with telling the members that she had discussed further details with the company representative regarding the length and use of the videos. Chris Walker stated that SHHPS needed to decide the purpose of the videoed interviews. Ryckie Fernandez commented on the possibility of having two versions of the videos: a five-minute version for presentations and a longer version to archive.

Kim Landers asked if it would be more frugal for SHHPS to buy their own equipment for this purpose. Chris Walker responded that SHHPS had considered that as an option but it would require an intense effort and dedicated effort to complete the task. Varessa Butts commented that another option is to engage Lanier High School because they had all the equipment and a tv/recording studio. Ms. Butts added that they also had students who could edit video as a project. Kim Landers added that North Gwinnett High School also had similar resources. Chris Walker and Darrell Pruitt suggested that SHHPS form a subcommittee to review all the options and develop a process. They designated Tiffany Hale Carter to spearhead the effort.

Ryckie Fernandez stated that he was hearing that SHHPS should form several subcommittees. He asked if this was something SHHPS does each year in January and Chris Walker replied that it was an unofficial effort last year. Darrell Pruitt commented that it needed to be more formalized this coming year. Mr. Walker added that there was only one subcommittee last year to plan and support activities for the historical cemetery. He commended the cemetery subcommittee for great work but noted that the city had taken responsibility for many of the tasks.

Kathryn Baskin brought up the need to update the SHHPS web site because it does not name the current board members. She mentioned that she and other new board members had provided their bio sketches some time ago. Mr. Walker said he would follow up on it.

Ms. Baskin added that she thought that one purpose for the videos of Sugar Hill area residents was to build awareness about the community's history and to generate interest in the Sugar Hill Historic Preservation Society. Mr. Walker responded that some people wanted assurance of their privacy. Discussion regarding how to protect individual privacy occurred among the members. Ms. Baskin remarked that there should be some type of release form regardless. Varessa Butts recommended that there needs to be some form of outreach and that perhaps a subcommittee on marketing and communication is needed. Several members voiced agreement.

Ms. Baskin made a motion to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Darrell Pruitt. Chairman Walker adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

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