

**Sugar Hill Historic Preservation Society Meeting  
Wednesday, February 20, 2019, 7:00 P.M.  
City of Sugar Hill City Hall – History Room  
Meeting Minutes**

**I. Approval of the Agenda**

Darrell Pruitt, Sugar Hill Historic Preservation Society (SHHPS) vice-chairman, convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. He asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Kathryn Baskin, secretary, made the motion to approve the agenda. Brandon Hembree, Sugar Hill city councilman, seconded it. The agenda was approved unanimously.

The following individuals were in attendance:

| <b>NAME</b>         |                            |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Kathryn Baskin      | Secretary/Board Member     |
| Charlie Butts       | Guest Member               |
| Ryan Butts          | Guest Member               |
| Varessa Butts       | Guest Member               |
| Tiffany Hale Carter | 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               |

**II. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Darrell Pruitt asked for approval of the January 16, 2019, meeting minutes. Stephanie Isaacs, board member, moved for the meeting minutes to be approved and Margaret Neal, board member, seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted without objection.

**III. Treasurer's Report**

Darrell Pruitt announced that Joann Burel, SHHPS treasurer, was unable to attend the meeting but had submitted a written report. He said the report indicated that there is a balance of \$10,000 as of January 31, 2019. Ms. Baskin made a motion to approve the treasurer's report and the motion was seconded by Tiffany Hale Carter, board member.

**IV. Committee Chair Reports**

Mr. Pruitt commented that the next items on the agenda was for the committee chairs to report their progress thus far. He called on Tiffany Hale Carter, chair of the museum committee, to give her report.

**Museum Committee** – Ms. Carter reported that the SHHPS retreat and tour of the Buford Museum had been successful in achieving a productive brainstorming session to capture the ideas of all the members regarding the design and function of the future Sugar Hill history museum. She thanked Councilman Hembree for organizing and moderating the event. Ms. Carter stated that the next step would be to receive information regarding the lease term, floor plan, and detailed dimensions from assistant city manager, Troy Besseche. She also advised the group that discussions were underway

on scheduling a meeting with Mr. Besseche and the museum expert consultant to provide SHHPS input on the design and function of the Sugar Hill History Museum.

Ms. Carter proceeded to report on some of the research efforts that she and Kim Landers, city staff, had conducted regarding potential audio guide technologies for touring the museum. She reported that Ms. Landers had spoken with a company that provides phone sets for information related to each exhibit. Ms. Carter mentioned that this technology did present some hygiene issues. She commented that she had researched some apps that were available and that could be customized for touring the museum. She passed around some articles about the Auto Museum Guide app and the Tour Met on Smartphone. She explained that there were different pricing options available for the apps. Ms. Carter explained that refurbished smartphones could be made available to people who didn't have smartphones so that they could access the app to tour the museum. Charlie Butts questioned how you would be able ensure that users did not take the phones. Ms. Carter responded that it was a consideration that would need further discussion.

Kim Landers mentioned that she recently toured the Biltmore and that they used Tour Mate to guide visitors through the museum. She added that she found that the technology was convenient because individuals were able to access information on their own. Ms. Landers commented that the using the this technology prevented interference from other tourists. She added that the Gwinnett Environmental Heritage Center used a technology where you pushed a button to hear a recording about an exhibit but noise interference from other tourists could be a concern.

Bill Harting, guest member, inquired if another museum committee meeting would be scheduled. Ms. Carter indicated there would be but it had not been scheduled yet.

**Research Committee** - At this time, vice-chairman Pruitt called on Stephanie Isaacs, chair of the research committee to provide her report. Ms. Isaacs explained that she needed to know what the committee should focus on in order to determine where to go with the research. She proposed that one approach would be to take the issues from the brainstorming session held on February 9, 2019. She mentioned that some of topics included Native Americans, moonshine, the gold mines and cemeteries. Ms. Isaacs added that she had spoken with Dan Rozier, Georgia Backroads Magazine, about articles specific to Sugar Hill. She said there were none and that there was a lot of overlap with the city of Buford. Ms. Isaacs explained that SHHPS members needed to decided how to distinguish information and research between the two cities.

As part of this discussion, Mr. Pruitt commented that following up on the planned interviews could possibly be the next step for the research committee. Ms. Isaacs asked if the initial list of names was noted in the meeting minutes. Ms. Baskin responded that those names were listed in the August 15, 2018, meeting minutes. Ms. Isaacs asked if Ms. Baskin would send the names to her and Ms. Baskin responded she would. Kim Landers commented that a list of questions to guide the interviews had been developed last year and that they might be helpful for future interviews. Ms. Baskin reminded the members that Joann Burel had reported that she was working on a list of families and that her list would be a good resource.

Ms. Isaacs talked about developing a walking tour guide for the city. Members discussed various approaches to organizing the guide. The group agreed that one approach could be using the historical markers as points of interest. Brandon Hembree commented that he had discussed with Mercy Montgomery the possibility of partnering with RaceTrac in locating a marker commemorating the "train wreck" at the corner of Highway 20. Councilman Hembree also stated

that another point of interest would be at the site of the “champion tree” once that designation is officially made.

As a follow on, Stephanie Isaacs inquired about the design and information for the exhibits. She asked who would be writing up the information and managing the exhibit. Ms. Isaacs said she needed clarification on what was expected from the research committee as it related to the museum exhibits. Ms. Isaacs stated that she needs to know what is expected as a deliverable from the research committee. Councilman Hembree commented that the museum design consultant would be working closely with the city and the SHHPS suggestions would be considered in the design.

**Scholarship Committee** – Next, Mr. Pruitt called on Holli Stouffer, chair of the scholarship committee to give her update. Ms. Stouffer reported that activities were on schedule and that the committee had approved the calendar. She told the group that June 30, 2019, would be the deadline for applications and that judging would begin in July. Ms. Stouffer announced that the committee had agreed that the scholarship would be based on an annual essay contest and that the theme for 2019 would be “Then and Now.” She told the group that the committee had agreed upon a \$1000 award and was requesting another \$100 for marketing. Mr. Pruitt called for a motion to approve \$1100 in the 2019 budget for the scholarship. Ms. Stouffer made the motion and Ms. Baskin seconded it. Ms. Stouffer said the next steps would be to address eligibility and marketing. Ms. Baskin asked if the city council had to approve the scholarship. Mr. Hembree indicated that no further action was required.

**Digital Archives Committee** – Vice-chairman Pruitt continued the meeting and asked if there were any updates from the Digital Archives Committee. Ed Lanfear, committee chair and board member, was not present so Ms. Baskin told the group about the UGA-DLG subgrant. She stated that the subgrant would provide \$7500 in services for digitalization of historical records and that the award of a subgrant would be based on specific criteria. Ms. Baskin told members that she had passed the information along to Councilman Hembree and Kim Landers for their review since they serve on the committee and that they had passed it along to Robyn Adams who handles grant applications for the city. Councilman Hembree stated that he had been in discussions with Ms. Adams and that they had some ideas for a possible project with information related to the Charlotte Howerton files given to the Gwinnett Historical Society. Ms. Baskin said the applications were due on April 12, 2019, and that there was a webinar on February 14, 2019, to explain the application process and project eligibility.

**Cemetery Committee** - At this time, vice-chairman Pruitt asked Brandon Hembree, Sugar Hill city councilman and committee chair to give an update. Councilman Hembree began with an update on the GPR project of the Sugar Hill historic cemetery. He noted that he had sent the final report out to the SHHPS cemetery committee and that the report indicated the possibility of 130 unmarked graves and that 130 was considered a good number based on the size of the cemetery. Mr. Hembree commented that the 130 graves included 14 small burial sites near the fence of the community center, possibly infants, and 20 other burial sites at the back of the cemetery which may have been for paupers. He said he had asked about the accuracy of the number of unmarked graves and was told that usually the numbers were 85 percent accurate. Mr. Hembree told members that the city had received several suggestions among which were developing satellite links (GPS) to the cemetery markers; mapping more parts of the cemetery; and perhaps writing an article related to the study.

Next, Mr. Hembree began a discussion about the Calaway cemetery and the planned Suwanee Creek Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) clean-up days on March 2 and March 9. He said that there were two markers for graves inside the previously fenced-in area and that he believed that a descendent of one of the chapter's DAR members was buried outside the area. Mr. Hembree said that it was believed that there were more burials outside the once fenced in area. He noted that the city had partnered with the Suwanee Creek Chapter to arrange for parking at Lanier Middle School and that the city would be responsible for moving the brush and debris from the site. Mr. Pruitt inquired about the type of work that was involved in the clean-up. Councilman Hembree commented that there would be mostly clearing of yard debris, plants, and other vegetation. He also told members that the wrought iron fence had been stolen and that the DAR was replacing the fence and providing signage to designate the location of the cemetery. He noted that the DAR had limited the clean-up participation to DAR and SHHPS members only to protect the location of the cemetery site.

Mr. Pruitt asked if the app for the cemetery was developed. Councilman Hembree said it was and that the app included a GPSA function. He added that Stephanie Isaac's research on the cemetery and notes about the section and row need to be added manually. Ms. Isaacs informed members that there were some discrepancies on the numbering of the rows but that the issue could be easily resolved. Kim Landers asked if information on the new deeds would be added. Councilman Hembree said yes and that the funeral homes had been given forms that would provide the necessary information.

## **V. Further Discussion/Questions**

Vice-chairman Pruitt asked if there was any old business, new business or questions. Mr. Pruitt inquired about the status of the application for the "champion tree" designation and the group determined that follow-up was needed to complete the process. Margaret Neal explained the process she went through to have the pecan tree located at the Shelley-Howerton house designated as a "champion tree." She said that a specific approach to measuring the tree was required. Ms. Neal commented that it took about an hour for the pecan tree measurements. She said that she followed up with a phone call to the Georgia Forestry Division to confirm her tree's designation. Brandon Hembree said that he had been having discussions with Mercy Montgomery and knew that she wanted to tie the Champion Tree designation to an Arbor Day celebration in April. Mr. Pruitt said that he would follow up with Chris Walker, SHHPS chairman, to discuss the status of the designation.

Ms. Baskin asked if a projected budget for 2019 had been developed. She noted that there were some carryover expenses that would impact the 2019 budget but that other known and expected expenses should be listed so that there wouldn't be a large amount leftover in the city's allocation to SHHPS at the end of the year. The group discussed some of the various items that would be coming up. Varessa Butts suggested that each committee could develop an informal proposal and budget for the board to consider as part of the budget. The group confirmed that supplies for Sugar Rush had been purchased and expensed out of the 2018 budget but there was a possibility that more supplies would be needed by the time of Sugar Rush if the sluice box was used for other activities. Ryan Butts noted that middle schools study gold mines and that they may want to use the SHHPS sluice box so that students can have a hands-on experience. Holli Stouffer commented that this was usually part of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. Mr. Pruitt asked what was needed to pursue this idea and Varessa Butts commented that further details were needed.

Councilman Hembree advised the group that Troy Besseche had reported that bidding had gone out for development of the Gold Mine Park on Level Creek Road. He told the group that the plans included informational kiosks along the greenway and the city may want some help from SHHPS with the narrative. Holli Stouffer volunteered to help with the development of the narrative for the kiosks. Kim Landers reported that the first plan for the park had been submitted to engineers.

Ms. Baskin told the SHHPS members that the Sugar Hill Area Women's Club (SHAWC) had asked her to set up a table about her interests in history at their Member Showcase. She asked if SHHPS members would agree to her informing SHAWC members about the Sugar Hill Historic Preservation Society. SHHPS members said that they supported the request and suggested that Ms. Baskin use some of the artifacts from the museum collection for her display along with the Sugar Hill history book and items related to the Shelley-Howerton home.

In closing, Ryan and Charlie Butts as well as Holli Stouffer and Kathryn Baskin asked to be added to the cemetery committee. Councilman Hembree requested that he be added to the research committee.

There being no further business, vice-chairman Pruitt adjourned the meeting at 8:07p.m.

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