

**Sugar Hill Historic Preservation Society Meeting**  
**Wednesday, January 16, 2019, 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. He asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Kathryn Baskin, secretary, made the motion to approve the agenda. Ed Lanfear, board member, seconded the motion. The agenda was approved unanimously.

The following individuals were in attendance:

**NAME**

Kathryn Baskin	Secretary/Board Member
Joann Burel	Treasurer/Board Member
Charlie Butts	Guest Member
Ryan Butts	Guest Member
Varessa Butts	Guest Member
Tiffany Hale Carter	Board Member
Ryckie Fernandez	Board Member
Bill Harting	Guest Member
Brandon Hembree	Board Member/City Liaison
Stephanie Isaacs	Board Member
Kim Landers	City Staff
Ed Lanfear	Board Member
Margaret Neal	Board Member
Darrell Pruitt	Vice-chairman/Board Member
Sherry Smith	Guest Member
Holli Stouffer	Board Member
Chris Walker	Chairman/Board Member

**II. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Chris Walker asked for approval of the December 5, 2018, meeting minutes. Darrell Pruitt, vice-chairman, moved for the meeting minutes to be approved and Ed Lanfear, seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted without objection.

**III. Treasurer's Report**

Joann Burel, SHHPS treasurer, reported that the 2018 year-end balance was \$4252.26. She added that there had been no expenditures for 2019 to date. Chris Walker commented that the old cemetery marker was paid for last year as well as the "pay dirt" bags for the sluice box. He noted that the cost of the three markers for the unmarked graves in the Kile-Benson cemetery were not deducted and that the markers were \$75 each, totaling \$225. Ed Lanfear commented that we had estimated more expenditures than were included in the report. Joann Burel commented that she would check on the items in question. Since there was a balance leftover in 2018 funds, Kathryn Baskin asked if SHHPS would lose these funds. Brandon Hembree, city councilman, affirmed that the funds would not be carried over to 2019. Chris Walker asked for a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Tiffany Hale Carter, board member, made the motion and Brandon Hembree seconded it. The Treasurer's Report was adopted unanimously.

**IV. New Board Member**

Chairman Walker offered congratulations to the newest board member of the historic preservation society, Stephanie Isaacs. He thanked her for all the hard work she had done over the past year particularly with the research on the Sugar Hill historic cemetery.

## V. Update on Previous Agenda Items

**Kile-Benson grave markers** – Chris Walker reiterated that the markers for the unmarked graves in the Kile-Benson cemetery had been ordered and paid for in 2018. He reported that there were three granite markers that were purchased through the Athens Granite Marble Company. He described the markers in detail and noted that they were about 4x8 inches, a little smaller than a shoebox. Mr. Walker said that the markers should be delivered soon.

**Sugar Hill School Marker** – Chairman Walker reported that the company designing and making the Sugar Hill School marker asked that 40 characters be removed in order to allow room for the image of the school. He told the members that there was one sentence he recommended omitting. Mr. Walker showed the group the text and said that it told a little about the building, its water supply, and condition of the structure. He suggested reworking the sentence and replacing it with a shorter description so that there was enough room for the image. Chairman Walker said that the marker should be in production soon.

**Saddle** – Mr. Walker reported that there were no updates regarding the museum saddle. He reported that he did receive a donation of a work bench from one of the saddle makers in Sugar Hill. He mentioned that there was a weather vane too and that SHHPS might consider that as an item for the museum. He described the bench and showed the members a photo of one that is on display in the Buford museum. Chairman Walker said it was donated by Carey and Jason Murphy. The work table is currently being kept at his residence.

**Commemorative Bricks** - Mr. Walker reported that Tom Shelton had a copy of one of the bricks from Buice Elementary School at the Christmas dinner. He told the members that he had asked if the text giving the dates when the Buice Elementary School was active could be enhanced. Mr. Walker said that the lettering was laser print and it may need to be screen printed instead. He said he had no new developments on that suggestion as of yet.

**T-shirts** - Chairman Walker reported that he had nothing new to report on the t-shirts.

**Champion Tree** – Chairman Walker advised the members that the paperwork had been submitted for the Sugar Hill champion tree.

**Updating Bios** – Mr. Walker reported that Councilman Hembree had received three bios from board members when he last requested them. He asked that the board members submit a short bio to him and he would forward them to Mercy Montgomery on the Sugar Hill city staff so that the website can be updated. Ryckie Fernandez, board member, asked what the chairman wanted included in the bio. Chris Walker responded that the bios should be about a paragraph and that the ones currently posted are good examples to reference.

## VI. New Committees

Chairman Walker commented that next year was going to be a busy year with the opening of the new historic museum that is scheduled for a potential opening in early 2020. He told the group that to better prepare for our responsibilities this year that we would be forming four new committees in addition to the existing cemetery committee that was formed in 2018. Mr. Walker thanked

Darrell Pruitt and Margaret Neal for spearheading that effort. He added that Tim Schick, city of Sugar Hill, had contributed a lot to the effort as well and taken on many of the responsibilities. .

Chairman Walker stated that the committees were for the members and anyone that can help. He added that people can serve on multiple committees. Mr. Walker announced that the committees that would be formed are: *Research, Museum, Digital Archive, and Scholarship*. He said that the committees should be able to help with accomplishing some of the tasks that weren't completed last year, such as the interviews of longtime Sugar Hill residents.

**Research Committee** -Chairman Walker said that the interviews would fall within the purview of the research committee which also would work with the museum committee. Mr. Walker said that the most interest from SHHPS members was in the research committee and he asked for someone to volunteer to chair the committee. Stephanie Isaacs volunteered to chair the research committee. Mr. Walker added that he would like for the chairs of all the committees to report their committee's progress and activities to the board each month at the SHHPS monthly meeting. The Research Committee members are: Stephanie Isaacs, chair; Kathryn Baskin; Charlie, Varessa, and Ryan Butts; Tiffany Hale Carter; Ryckie Fernandez; Kim Landers, Sherry Smith; and Chris Walker.

**Museum Committee** - Mr. Walker stated that the SHHPS museum committee would be responsible for the layout and design of the space. He asked Tiffany Hale Carter to chair the museum committee because of her expertise with interior design. Mr. Walker commented that he felt that one thing that sets Sugar Hill apart from other historic organizations is the "sense of community" not only today but as it was in the past. He said he would like for the museum to show what 1939 Sugar Hill was like and link that to how it is today. He added that one idea he had was to highlight excerpts of the interviews so that visitors could hear a clip of the interview of those who had knowledge of the history of Sugar Hill. At this point, Kathryn Baskin asked if the committee's activities would include developing some marketing and education materials related to the Sugar Hill Historic Preservation Committee. Ed Lanfear commented that it would be good to have those materials for the public when they visited the museum. Chris Walker suggested that the research committee could develop those materials. The Museum Committee members include: Tiffany Hale Carter, chair; Kathryn Baskin; Varessa, Ryan and Charlie Butts; Ryckie Fernandez; Bill Harting; Brandon Hembree; Kim Landers; Holli Stouffer; and Chris Walker.

**Digital Archives Committee** - Chairman Walker reported that the city wanted to archive all the photos that have been saved and collected through the years so that they can be included on the SHHPS Facebook page and also on a public website. He commented that the website would allow the general public to scroll through the pictures that would also include descriptions. Mr. Walker said he anticipated that the effort would require a good deal of work. He requested that Ed Lanfear chair the committee and Mr. Lanfear agreed. Digital Archive committee members are: Ed Lanfear, chair; Brandon Hembree; Kim Landers; and Margaret Neal.

**Scholarship Committee** - Next, Mr. Walker noted that Holli Stouffer, board member, had devoted a lot of time to developing ideas for potential history projects related to Sugar Hill for a scholarship. He asked her to chair the committee and she accepted. Scholarship Committee members include: Holli Stouffer, chair; Kathryn Baskin; Varessa and Ryan Butts; Brandon Hembree; and Darrell Pruitt.

**Existing Cemetery Committee** - At this time, Chairman Walker asked Brandon Hembree, Sugar Hill city councilman to chair the cemetery committee and he agreed. Mr. Walker then called on Mr. Hembree to give an update on the historic Sugar Hill cemetery. Councilman Hembree stated that he had received a preliminary report on the GPR grave identification project. He reported that he and

Tim Schick had some questions about some items that needed clarification. He said that some of the clarifications included what criteria determined that a site was an unmarked grave and how did they determine that there were infant graves that were unmarked near the community center. Councilman Hembree said that responses are being developed so that the city can answer any questions that may arise. Mr. Hembree said that the only other issue at the moment is the need to contact the condominium owners of the property adjacent to the back of the cemetery so that the city can grade the property in order to install a fence. He said that the city is in the process of working with the homeowners' association so work can proceed.

At this point, Darrell Pruitt commented that his understanding is that Tim Schick and the city were conducting the bulk of the activities related to the cemetery. He asked Councilman Hembree if that was a correct assumption. The councilman responded that he thought anything operations related fell under the purview of the city and that Mr. Schick is doing many things such as selling cemetery plots. He noted that the historical research was still the historic preservation society's responsibility. Councilman Hembree added that Mr. Schick needs assistance on various things such as marker repair and that there is still a lot of work needed where SHHPS can provide assistance.

Ed Lanfear asked if the preliminary GPR preliminary report was available. Councilman Hembree responded that he would be glad to share it at the appropriate time and it hadn't been made public yet. Mr. Lanfear inquired if there were estimates on the number of unmarked graves found. The councilman responded that there were potentially 120 unmarked graves.

Stephanie Isaacs commented that Councilman Hembree had provided her with a 1985 report on the Sugar Hill historic cemetery. She said she was currently correlating what information is available on "Find A Grave" with the 1985 report. She added that you could find death certificates on "Ancestry" up to a certain point in time. Ms. Isaacs said that she is downloading those that are available to find out the cause of death for the people buried in the historic cemetery. She said that as she correlates the data of the 1985 report and information on "Find A Grave," she is discovering the identities of some of the people who are in the "unmarked" graves. Ms. Isaacs said that if she had the data from the GPR report she could try to correlate that data with what she has discovered on "Find A Grave." She added that the death certificates are providing some interesting stories about the people buried there which provides a perspective on the community as well. Varessa Butts, guest member, added that in the future possibly an app could be developed that would provide the background and related stories on the individuals buried in the cemetery.

Stephanie Isaacs then stated that she also had found information in the 1985 report about where the old Sugar Hill school house was located. Darrell Pruitt noted that there were two schoolhouses. Ms. Isaacs responded that there was an unmarked stone located between sections B and C, the nearest sections to the roundabout and between graves 1 and 2 on row 14. Ed Lanfear commented that there also was another stone in section A that supposedly is where the schoolhouse was located. Ms. Isaacs said the report noted that the stone marked where the back of the schoolhouse would have been. Mr. Lanfear remarked that it was possible those markers indicated the location of the corners of the school.

Mr. Walker called on Councilman Hembree to discuss a plan to hold a Town Hall meeting. Mr. Hembree reported that he and Tim Schick had attended a Municipal Association of Cemeteries meeting a year ago and that a presenter had talked about how their city had developed a "master plan" for their cemetery. The councilman added that the speaker said that before they developed the plan, the city held a "town hall" meeting for the families and any interested parties. In addition, Councilman Hembree said that the speaker noted that at the Town Hall meeting they talked about

the takeover and what it meant, the projects that had occurred in the first year, some of the needs, and then requested help from the families. He said that the speaker explained that it was instrumental in engaging the families so that they would take on some of their responsibilities for the cemetery. Council Hembree said that after the conference that he and Mr. Schick had talked about doing something similar with the Sugar Hill historic cemetery. He mentioned that Duluth does something similar and that they use it as a fundraising activity and a way to get families involved in funding some of the work to maintain the cemetery. Councilman Hembree said he thought it was a good idea and something that we should consider in Sugar Hill. Darrell Pruitt asked if there was a timeframe set and Councilman Hembree responded that more discussion and planning were needed.

Chairman Walker reminded the participants that SHHPS had discussed identifying the GPS coordinates for the burial sites in the Sugar Hill historic cemetery. He explained that he envisioned this as something similar to "Find A Grave." He said he wasn't sure if there were any new developments on the initiative.

In regard to how the committees would operate, Darrell Pruitt commented that it was his understanding that the committee chairs would communicate with committee members to plan how to proceed. Tiffany Hale Carter added that each committee needed to know what direction the chairman wanted the committees to take and identify the priorities. She asked about developing a goal statement. Councilman Hembree commented that we could have further discussion at the "retreat." Holli Stouffer indicated that the scholarship committee needed to start working as soon as possible because the scholarship award is time sensitive. She commented that she would start contacting the committee members immediately.

## **VII. Retreat Meeting**

Chairman Walker announced that he wanted to have a SHHPS retreat primarily to plan for the Sugar Hill history museum. Because it is nearby, he said that we would tour the Buford history museum to gain perspective and discuss ideas for planning the Sugar Hill history museum. He told the group that the Buford museum was only open on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Mr. Walker suggested that Saturday would probably be the best choice for most of the members and including Mercy Montgomery with the city of Sugar Hill and Lynn Bowman with the Buford historic museum. In addition to touring the museum, SHHPS members would convene following the tour to discuss various aspects of the Sugar Hill history museum. He suggested that the group may want to identify the types of items to be displayed in the museum and when we should start collecting those items. The councilman said that he thought it would be a good idea to focus on the museum and start planning for the design soon. He added that he had asked Ms. Montgomery to be the moderator. Councilman Hembree advised the members that he would send out an email with some possible dates and poll the group for availability. Chairman Walker said that once a date was selected he would proceed to plan the retreat.

Stephanie Isaacs commented that she recently had visited the Buford history museum and that it contained a large collection. She suggested that SHHPS may want to consider a small collection with a timeline context to create a flow for visitors to observe the collection. Other members concurred that the Buford history museum had a large number of items in their collection. Members exchanged a number of ideas and recommended various media for the public to access interviews and other information.

Ed Lanfear asked how much space would be allotted for the Sugar Hill history museum. Councilman Hembree replied that the space would be between 700 and 800 square feet. Mr. Walker added that the history museum would be sharing space with the art gallery. Mr. Hembree responded that the city is talking about ways to separate the two spaces but that they would be separate spaces. The councilman added that the museum would be located at the end of the development that is closest to where the Suite Spot is currently located. He added that the Sugar Hill Art Commission would like to have a gift shop to sell various items such as post cards and Mr. Walker's painting of the Shelley-Howerton house. Councilman Hembree said that all these ideas are being discussed. Charlie Butts suggested that if the history museum and the art gallery were combined that more people might visit both and that a gift shop could generate some revenue for both organizations.

### **VIII. Further Discussion/Questions**

Chairman Walker asked if there was any additional discussion or questions. Kathryn Baskin asked if there was a detailed budget for the \$10,000 allocated in 2019 to the Sugar Hill Historic Preservation Society. She added that it might be helpful to estimate the planned and expected expenditures so that there wasn't a large balance at the end of the year. Mr. Lanfear proposed that some of the budget could be used for the committees' work. Ms. Baskin remarked that the budget would be an estimate and it could be adjusted to include actuals and other items that might arise throughout the year.

Chairman Walker commented that we needed to look at other items that would require resources besides historic markers. He said that he thought a marker would be appropriate for the Champion Tree and possibly for the location of the train accident. Bill Harting inquired if anyone had explored funding for the markers through the state. Mr. Walker responded that they had explored the possibility with Gwinnett County but decided to fund it themselves so they could control the expense. Councilman Hembree said that the County did have a program but that there was a significant fee. He added that they had researched other cities such as Norcross which has its own program. He said that Sugar Hill had modeled their program. In addition, he noted that the county had strict requirements for the background research and that SHHPS and the city decided they wanted more flexibility in recognizing the flavor of the community.

There being no further discussion or questions, Chairman Walker adjourned the meeting at 8:04 p.m.

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