

# MINUTES of the ANNUAL MEETING of the LINDEN HERITAGE FOUNDATION

January 23, 2016

The First Annual Meeting of the Linden Heritage Foundation was called to order by President Sam Higdon at 2:01 pm at the Linden Garden Club building. Mr. Higdon asked Ms. Bounds, Treasurer, to confirm that a quorum was present. Ms. Bounds reported in the affirmative, and that 37 members were present as of the call to order. (Bounds explained that with 188 total members on the rolls the 10% requirement for a quorum, or 19 members, was exceeded by a large margin.)

The list of members present was recorded by sign-in sheet, and a copy of that attendance record will be appended to these minutes. Three additional members attended via Skype, Jim Jacob, Joyce Henderson, and Barbara Teachey.

The agenda was taken up and the following proceedings ensued:

**REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE:** Representing the Nominating Committee of three, comprising Jeanie Stevens, Wanda Burns, and Sandra Skoog, Mrs. Skoog took the podium to present the proposed slate of Directors selected by the Nominating Committee. Named on the proposed slate were Anna Barber, Jana Clinkscales Bounds, Ron Calhoun, Gail Dorgan, Sam L. Higdon, James S. (Jim) Jacob, John Knapp, Sue Morris Lazara, Joe B. Lovelace, Kay Temple Stephens, Barbara Teachey, Kerry Wells, and Susan Brown Whatley. The President thanked the Nominating Committee and asked if there were additional nominations from the floor. Hearing none, the President proceeded to a voice vote which resulted in all ayes and no nays – thus electing the full slate of 13 Directors proposed by the Nominating Committee.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Ms. Bounds reported on the Foundation accounts as follows: The Total Revenue in dues and donations since the formation of the nonprofit on September 1, 2015 is \$24,210.01 plus \$1.85 interest. Total Expenditures to date are \$5,047.99, including formation fees, Information Technologies platforms, liability insurance, financial fees and commissions, and Firehouse project fees as per the printed financial report. The Balance remaining in the account as of January 22, 2016 is \$19,163.87. Motion to approve the Financial Report was made (Ruth Halleck) and Seconded (Janet Wells). The voice vote was all ayes and the report was duly accepted.

**PRESERVATION REPORT:** Mr. Higdon called upon Sue Lazara to deliver the preservation update. Ms. Lazara reported the following progress:

- The joint **Request for Proposals** (RFP) on the Water Tower and Firehouse has been drafted, in accordance with the November 2015 Resolution of intent by Linden City Council and the Linden Heritage Foundation. On January 11, 2016 that RFP draft was approved by Linden City Council, the people of Linden being legal owner of the 1934 Water Tower and partner to the Linden Heritage Foundation in seeking appropriate

development and preservation projects around the historic Water Tower and Firehouse. Lazara explained how most of the Foundation's recent efforts are designed to provide material support for that RFP process.

- Lazara introduced Gail Dorgan and Kay Stephens and acknowledged their timely contributions to the work of the Research Committee chaired by Lazara, along with those of Catherine Knapp (not present). Since last October, these four members have read and/or transcribed City records, County records, and historic press archives of the 1930s to fill out the story of that era in the City of Linden and in particular with respect to the PWA-related improvements in downtown Linden. The research effort documented some surprising and important historical and architectural credentials for the Old Linden Firehouse, which Lazara presented in an official request of January 4, 2016 for **Determination of Eligibility (DOE)** for the Firehouse and Water Tower to be listed on the **National Register of Historic Places**. She was pleased to report at the Annual Meeting that this DOE request was answered as follows:

“January 8, 2016

Hello Sue

I've read the documentation that you provided, and I must first commend you on its thoroughness! Well-done.

The 1934 Horton Tank and the 1939 firehouse are New Deal Era civic improvements, and could be listed in the National Register of Historic Places within a single nomination that would cover both properties. They are eligible under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development, at the local level of significance. I recommend, however, that these properties be included in a larger downtown historic district, centered on the courthouse square.

Let me know which direction you'd like to take, and I'll be happy to assist you with the nomination.

Greg

**Gregory Smith**

National Register Coordinator  
History Programs Division  
Texas Historical Commission”

- Lazara explained that the surprising history of the Old Linden Firehouse, as presented in the submittal for **Determination of Eligibility (DOE)** to the THC, will shortly be made available on the Foundation website. She invited all to read the documented Firehouse “story” that qualified the site to be ruled eligible, alongside the 1934 Horton Tank, as one National Register site. Lazara then explained that the favorable DOE means more than special prestige – it means that the Firehouse and Water Tower preservation projects are now eligible for both 20% Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits and 25% Texas Franchise Tax Credits. These major tax advantages will significantly incentivize the RFP process, and indeed, if and when a **National Register Historic District** as recommended

by Mr. Smith is formally listed, those same tax credits could be more widely available to building rehabilitation projects in other parts of our downtown commercial district.

- Lazara reported that on the same day the above DOE notice was received, the Firehouse deed of conveyance from the City of Linden to the Linden Heritage Foundation was executed and duly recorded. That same week, the Foundation arranged for the Firehouse to be further secured and the window openings and exposed wood protected from water infiltration – so as to slow down the rate of deterioration and avoid unauthorized entrance while a proper preservation plan can be developed and funding partners identified.
- Finally, Lazara reported that she nominated the Old Linden Firehouse to be listed on the **2016 Texas Most Endangered Places List** announced annually by the statewide preservation nonprofit, **Preservation Texas**. While no actual announcement will be made until February 18, we have good reason to believe that this nomination was successful. Accordingly, we have been invited to attend the **Preservation Texas Summit** in Austin on February 18, which invitation includes all interested members of the Foundation. The Preservation Texas Summit is viewed by the Foundation Board as an important opportunity to network with historic preservation professionals and others in a position to further our RFP on the Firehouse and Water Tower, so attendance is very much encouraged.
- Lazara's final report was on a grant application to the **Texas Preservation Trust Fund (TPTF)**, which she is writing in time for submittal no later than January 29. This will be a funding request for professional Plans and Specifications for the Firehouse and the TPTF grant program carries a 1:1 match requirement. If Plans and Specifications are funded under this grant, they would give yet another major financial incentive to qualified developer/investors to come forth with Firehouse restoration project proposals.

Ms. Lazara yielded the floor to Mr. Lovelace who covered several items of business:

- Lovelace explained the purpose and timing of the RFP, which he reported is expected to be issued by spring of 2016 (after final details of the site survey and parcel size are determined).
- Lovelace introduced Mr. Robert Swisher, Linden City Administrator, and thanked him for the close interface that has been made possible between the Foundation and the City over recent months. Mr. Swisher was invited to take the floor, and he thanked the Foundation for its contributions to community life and complimented our work to date as good stewards and advocates of the local heritage in which we all share. Mr. Swisher reported on the formation of the City of Linden's 2025 Committee, on which several members of the Linden Heritage Foundation will serve. Charter Members who have been appointed that eight-person committee were Kay Stephens, Ruth Halleck, Jeanie Stevens, Catherine Knapp, and Carla Surratt. (Marlon Sullivan, Clarence Burns, and Joe

Pat Early are other appointees to the 2025 Committee who are not presently members of the Linden Heritage Foundation.)

- Lovelace then introduced Emily Henderson, Executive Director of the LEDC. Ms. Henderson is facilitating the 2025 Committee and she made brief remarks in support of that effort.
- Lovelace then introduced Mary Dowd, who explained the previous effort of the City of Linden to be designated as a Texas Main Street City, and reported that Linden did in fact qualify for the program. At that time, however, neither an approximate \$30,000 budget allocation nor the assignment of present city staff to serve as local Main Street Manager was provided for at the time. The present hope and expectation is, however, that Linden can formalize a Texas Main Street Designation in July of 2016, and that the Texas Main Street program and resources available will be a topic of study and discussion in the proceedings of the newly formed 2025 Committee.

Members of the new Board were requested to attend a short organizing meeting of the new Board of Directors following the Annual Meeting, but allowing for a 15 minute reception interval for refreshments and visitation before the Board Meeting would be called to order.

A motion to adjourn was made (Jana Bounds) and seconded (Kay Stephens) and the meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm by President Sam Higdon.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Lazara, Secretary