



Smith County Historical Commission Meeting Agenda

Date: October 14, 2025
Time: 1:30pm

Location: Commissioner Courtroom, Smith County Annex Building: 200 E Ferguson St, Tyler, TX

1. Call to Order
2. Consider Approval of Minutes
3. Reports from Officers
4. Reports from Committee Chairs
5. Old Business
 - 5.1. Camp Ford
 - 5.1.1. Organization Meeting (Sabota)
 - 5.1.2. Fence Repair Project/Workshop (Thacker)
 6. New Business
 - 6.1. Appointment of new Commissioners
 - 6.1.1. Need a member from Precinct 2 (John Moore)
 - 6.2. County Historical Markers.
 - 6.2.1. Garden Valley Marker (installation)
 - 6.2.2. Other Markers that need purchase & installation (request for county funds)
 - 6.3. Cemetery Preservation Workshops (October 16-17th & 18th)
 - 6.4. Regional County Historical Commission Conference (2026)
 - 6.4.1. Discuss dates, location, topics, budget.
 7. Adjourn

Date: 10-10-2025

Time: 2pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Conor Herterich".

Conor Herterich, Chair



Smith County Historical Commission

Established in Commissioners Court 1/21/2025

Conor Herterich (Chair)

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Dorothy Franks

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Commissioner by Precinct

Precinct 1

Commissioner: Christina Drewry

- Zach Sabota
- Kevin McCall
- Vickie Betts

Precinct 2

Commissioner: John Moore

- OPEN
- OPEN
- OPEN

Precinct 3

Commissioner: J. Scott Herod

- Todd McMakin
- Mark Thacker
- Jud Bailiff

Precinct 4

Commissioner: Ralph Caraway Sr.

- Conor Herterich
- Larry Wade
- Dorothy Franks



Smith County Historical Commission Officers & Committees

As of 10/7/2025

OFFICERS

Chair (Conor Herterich)

Vice Chair (Todd McMakin)

Secretary (Dorothy Franks)

Treasurer (Jud Bailiff)

COMMITTEES

Executive

Members: Conor Herterich, Todd McMakin, Charles Dorothy Franks, Jud Bailiff

Historic Resources

Todd McMakin (chair) Conor Herterich

Subject Marker

Vickie Betts (chair); Mark Thacker

Finance

Jud Bailiff (chair)

Cemetery

(Larry Wade (chair) Todd McMakin

Outreach & Coordination

Mark Thacker (chair) Todd McMakin

Camp Ford

Zach Sabota (chair); Kevin McCall

Smith County Historical Commission

Meeting Minutes

Date: 12 August 2025

Time: 1:30 pm

Location: Commissioner Courtroom, Smith County Annex Building: 200 E. Ferguson St, Tyler, TX

Commissioners Present: Conor Herterich, Todd McMakin, Charles Turner, Jud Bailiff, Larry Wade, Kevin McCall, Dorothy Franks, Vicki Betts, Zach Sabota.

Commissioner Absent: Mark Thacker

**Motion by Mr. Sabota to approve the minutes of the previous meeting, Seconded by Ms. Franks.
Motion carried.**

Officer Reports:

Mr. Turner, secretary, reported that he would submit his resignation effective 18 August 2025.

Mr. Bailiff, treasurer, had no report.

Mr. Herterich made the observation that Commissioner Precinct 2 has no representative on the Historical Commission and there was discussion of possible candidates. He also pointed out the need for a new secretary.

Mr. Bailiff, treasurer, had no report. Mr. Herterich reported that in conversation with Judge Franklin he was assured that the County Commissioners' Court would provide funds as needed when requested.

Committee Reports:

Historic Resources:

Mr. McMakin reported that more data has been provided for the Smith County Historic Sites Atlas.

Subject Marker Committee:

Ms. Betts reported that she has visited every existing marker in the county with the exception of one that is on private land marking a Republic of Texas army camp during the war with the Cherokee, the objective being to collect data for the Smith County Historic Atlas. She reported that she has been unable to locate 2 Texas College markers and one for Garden Valley that was reportedly located in a TEXDOT barn. The marker has been paid for, all that is lacking is permission from a property owner to place the marker. Ms. Betts provided a map of the intersection where the Marker should be placed with her report. She also would like to approach the Camp Fannin Memorial Association concerning markers that were stolen and should be replaced. Mr. McCall, a member of the Association Board, said that he could address the issue next week when the Camp Fannin Memorial Association meets.

Mr. Greg McElroy with The Texas African American Museum and a member of the Greg County Historical Commission, said that they had been working with Texas College and had no success locating the markers. He said that they had been working through the museum to get markers approved. He reported that there is a big push to get historic cemeteries registered and get markers for them. Mr. Wade has also made contact with Dr. Shirley McKellar regarding the Texas College markers to see if she can help locate them.

Regarding the Masonic Lodge on Queen Street marker, the application was lacking a written history. They will have to reapply this fall.

Cemetery Committee:

Mr. Wade reported that the committee needs to meet soon.

Outreach and Coordination Committee:

Mr. McCall had no report.

Camp Ford:

Mr. Sabota reported that he had called Andy in an effort to get all the groups that have an interest in Camp Ford to see if all can combine resources and coordinate the effort. Hopes to meet in the next couple of weeks.

Old Business:

Mr. Herterich urged members to check out the Smith County Historical Sites Atlas and encouraged members to contact high school and middle school teachers and make them aware of this valuable teaching resource. Mr. McCall reported that his wife is employed at Bullard ISD and could share the information with them. Mr. Wade said that he could also assist with the Tyler schools. Mr. Herterich has submitted a press release in an effort to gain awareness of the availability of the Atlas to the general public. He also made a presentation to the Commissioners' Court. Mr. Herterich noted that the Atlas will be updated quarterly.

Regarding Camp Ford, Mr. Sabota previously mentioned the need for a meeting of interested parties. Mr. Thacker was not present, but no one was aware of any progress on the "Fence Repair Workshop". Mr. McMakin suggested that a volunteer work day be organized for general clean-up. Mr. Sabota pointed out that the area is infested with poison ivy and that there are two very large trees down that will take heavy equipment to remove. Also, access to the back part of the site is limited because a bridge is out and that erosion is major issue that will likely take professionals to address. Also, road construction in the area has limited access to the site making it difficult for visitors to access the area.

New Business:

Mr. McMakin discussed the possibility of having an archeology day at Camp Ford. He pointed out that October is Archeology Awareness month in Texas. The logistics of providing sanitation facilities was discussed. Other locations and possibilities were discussed and it was pointed out that care would have to be taken to not damage actual archeological sites.

Mr. Herterich posed the question as to the location of the artifacts that had been recovered from Camp Ford. Several locations were mentioned and it was suggested that the Smith County Historical Society may have some of them. Considering the short time remaining before October, it was suggested that the planning of an Archeology Day at Camp Ford be looked at for next year.

The possibility of a local historical symposium was discussed.

The next issue discussed is that the Smith County Historical Commission have some input in the planning for the new courthouse plaza. There was no clear understanding who is responsible for the plaza and further investigation is needed.

Mr. Herterich reported that he is getting requests/invitations to have input into projects in Smith County. For example, the new extension of Toll Road 49. The Texas Historical Commission will have input. There will be a meeting on 27 August 2025 with Northeast Texas Regional Mobility Authority regarding the Toll Road 49 project. He noted that if resources are damaged, there is a possibility that funds may be made available to develop other historical resources as a mitigation for the damaged/destroyed resources.

Announcement by Mr. Wade, September 20th at 12:00 noon there will be a tour of the museum at Jarvis Christian University. Lunch will be served and everyone is invited.

Mr. McMakin questioned if there was something that could be done around Christmas time. **Mr. Herterich made a Motion to do some sort of symposium and inviting other county groups to attend. The Motion was seconded by Ms. Franks. Motion carried.**

Mr. Wade volunteered to seek information from the Smith County Commissioners' Court regarding plans for preservation of the history of the courthouse block and report back to the committee.

The next scheduled meeting is 14 October 2025 at 1:30 pm at this location.

Adjourn.

Date: 12 August 2025 3:00 pm



Conor Herterich, Chairman



Charles Turner, Secretary