

SCHERTZ HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2023
6:00 PM
MEETING MINUTES

Committee Members in Attendance:

Christopher Hormel (Virtual) Maggie Titterington Dr. Miguel Vazquez

Committee Members Absent:

Becki Babcock (Unexcused) Tricia Whitman (Unexcused) Roz Wise (Excused)

City Representatives in Attendance:

Cyndi Simmons Brian James

Guest in Attendance:

Jan Neville

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at **6:00 PM** by Chairperson Miguel Vazquez.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Jan Neville was present to discuss her family's history with Schertz. Jan Neville's family came to Schertz in 1962 (sometime in the summer because school hadn't started yet). Her dad was in the Air Force for 30 years and they were transferred to Randolph. Her mother was pregnant with her youngest sister. They rented a home in Aviation Heights on Mitchell Street until base housing opened for them. Her maternal grandparents followed them and her grandfather worked for Metropolitan Life Insurance and was transferred to run the San Antonio office on Broadway. They purchased a home catty-corner from where her family had rented. They had already moved on base by then, but when they were living in the house they used to play with the kids across the street. Sometime during that year or early the next year, her mother's only sibling – her Aunt Barbara – had gotten a divorce and came and moved in with her grandparents. They had bought the house from the family that lived across the street. Sgt. Lou Crates was helping her grandparents with some maintenance and repair issues on the house and met her aunt. Ultimately, they got married and he adopted the child that she was carrying at the time she came down. They went to meet their new uncle for the first time and realized that the kids they used to play with across the street were now their cousins.

Her grandmother was always civic-minded. She worked for Civil Service for 28 years and they spent some time in Little Rock, Arkansas with them when her dad was transferred to Alaska for a year and a half. Rather than all of them go to Alaska (her mom was pregnant with baby #3), they moved in with her grandparents. Her grandmother taught chess to kids. One day she saw some kids walking to school in the wintertime and some of them didn't have coats or even sweaters and some of them barely had shoes, so she went to the school and made some inquiries and ultimately her grandfather converted their attic into a clothing store, but it was all free. Her grandma would get lists of families from the different school in the area and contacted those families and would bring them in to "shop".

So, when they came to Schertz, Schertz was trying to get a bond passed for city improvements. At that time, the roads in Aviation Heights were very rough and Schertz had been trying to get this passed for a number of years. Citizens just didn't understand what it was all about – they thought it would end up costing the residents money or add to their taxes. Grandma researched it and found out exactly what it was and went to City Hall and got a list of every registered vote in the City of Schertz. Grandma didn't drive, so granddaddy was her chauffer and drove her to every single registered voter or she was able to call. She explained to them what this bond package was all about, how it was going to benefit them, and it passed. First time in all the years they had been trying. She hadn't even been in Schertz a year at that time. She wasn't one of these people who said, "Somebody ought to do something about this." She was one of the people that said, "I'm going to do something about this."

Jan may have some of the chronology off a little bit, but at some point, during that time, the City of Schertz decided to form what they called a "Citizen's Advisory Committee" which she believes was the predecessor to the City Council. The mayor at that time called her grandfather and said they wanted him to be on the committee and her grandfather asked why. They told him that he got the bond passed and her grandfather told him, no, you don't want me, all I did was drive my wife around. If you want someone on that committee that's going to get things done, you want my wife. Back then, women were not given a whole lot of credibility, especially in politics. Ultimately her granddad convinced them that she was the person they would want to have on the committee and she was named to the committee with Hal Baldwin.

Her grandmother's name was Jeanne Bennett (although her legal name was Jennie Ellen Russell Bennett). She hated the name Jennie and ever since she was young, she had people call her Jeanne and that's how everybody knew her.

Jan's parents are still living – her mom is 89 and her dad is 92. Her dad, just this past year, retired after over 20 years on the City Council for Universal City. For the last several years he was Mayor Pro Tem.

Her mom had her 5th child by the time she was 28 and Jan is the oldest. When they lived in Aviation Heights, her mom used to give them money and send them to Old Bossy for ice cream.

Maggie Titterington asked if Jan was coming to join the committee or to just share history. Jan remarked that she'd like to share the history for possibly inclusion for 2024. For years Jan has felt that her grandmother deserved a lot of recognition for the things she did for the City of Schertz. She got wind of a family where none of the kids were in school. The father was disabled and there were 8 to 11 kids and the mom couldn't work. Her grandmother looked into the situation to see what she could do to help and ended up tutoring all of the older children so that they could get back into school and join the age-appropriate class since it had been several years since they had gone to school. Jan remembers her grandmother tutoring them in her home and then she approached the city about what kinds of city services they had to help this family. At that time, the answer was that they didn't have any. They didn't have a welfare department or anything. So, they said if she was willing to help, they'll reimburse her because at that point, all the food and clothing was coming out of her grandparents' pocket. They named her as the Welfare Director for the City of Schertz and she held that position for 8 years on a voluntary basis until her health caused her to retire in August 1975. Jan then showed us pictures of her grandmother's retirement. Maggie Titterington immediately recognized Roy Richard, Sr. in the photos.

Pickrell Park across from the old elementary school and right where Main Street turns into 1518, there's a small building – Buffalo Valley Youth Association – was her office. She passed away on December 2, 1979. Maggie Titterington would like to know if that's how RACAP started. As long as she could be, she was very, very active in what was going on in the city. If you go to the city website to City Council and look up old minutes starting from 1963 or 1964, Mrs. Bennett is named in almost every single instance.

Her grandparents eventually moved to a home on Maple Drive where her mom's sister had bought a house with her husband. The house on the corner became available so they bought the house next to her Aunt Barbara and Uncle Lou and they had a wired intercom that they strung up between the two houses so they could talk to each other. She grew a vegetable garden and was always canning vegetables and would give them away. She's going to ask her mom to look for additional photos.

Jan would love to be on this committee; however, she does not have transportation. Based on what she heard from Roz Wise and the interest here, she hasn't told her mom what she's doing. They haven't been able to find any documentation on it, however, during the time that her grandma was involved with the City, she found out about some serious corruption going on in the police department, starting with the police chief at that time. She started making waves and ruffling feathers and she got a call either from the police chief or somebody on his staff threatening her that she needed to stop. Her grandmother was all of 5 feet and she went down to his office and demanded to see him and she went in and told him that she wasn't afraid of him. She didn't care what he threatened her with, she's not stopping and you can't scare her off. Ultimately, he and most of his staff were let go. Miguel Vazquez asked if it was someone by the name of Ackerman. It's almost as if the City of Schertz has wiped it clean because they can't find anything.

Jan indicated she's going to scan the pictures and send them to Roz. A number of years ago in 2009, Jan discovered a situation to do with her neighborhood where she lives now and knew that she had to get involved to get some zoning changes made. First, she went to Planning & Zoning and they just gave her a pat on the shoulder and said, "Honey, you don't need to worry about any of that stuff, that's what we're here for. Don't worry your pretty little head, it's okay." And she said, "Well if it was okay then I wouldn't have to be here." She then went to City Council and didn't stand up and say anything at that particular point in time, but after the meeting, Hal Baldwin and the city manager at that time, Don Taylor, and one other person were all talking together. Hal Baldwin and her dad worked together in the Air Force on Randolph so he knew her dad and knew her grandma. Don Taylor used to be the City Manager for Universal City while her dad was on the City Council, so Don Taylor knew her dad. She went up and introduced herself and said, "Hi, I'm Jan Neville, I live in Mobile Villa Estates, I think you know my dad, Chief Neville" and Hal Baldwin said, "Oh, you're Chief Neville's daughter" and then Don Taylor was like, "The Neville that's on City Council in Universal City?" She then also remarked that she believed he knew her grandmother, Jeanne Bennett. I tell you this because I'm going to be attending City Council meetings for a while because of some issues with my neighborhood and I just want you to understand the kind of stock that I come from. That was my way of letting him know until everything is fixed, you're going to be seeing my face at all of the meetings. It took two years, but it happened. The thing about Mobile Villa Estates is it is the only actual manufactured housing subdivision in the City of Schertz – it is not a trailer park. All of the lots and homes are individually owned. The lot on which I live was where my grandfather lived for 20 years after my grandmother passed away and he left it to my mother and now I'm there. And because the Unified Development Code for the city had us designated as a trailer park. What spurred this whole thing was I'd gotten laid off from work and had

some time on my hands and I'm perusing the city website and see a thing about the future land use map for Schertz. What I discovered was that my neighborhood was not on that map. We are surrounded on three sides by commercial property, Mortellaro's Nursery to the side and behind us, Lowe's/HEB on the other side and then there's a strip in the front that's commercial. Our neighborhood only has four streets and we're very small. We don't have an HOA. It is primarily retired people. It was developed in 1964. We're nonexistent on this map, telling me that in the future they figure we're not going to be around. They thought they were going to be dealing with one person – the person that owned the trailer park – and they'd be able to buy the property from that one person. I had to educate them and finally got it across to the Planning & Zoning Committee, it's not just one person that you're going to be dealing with – there are 60 lots in this neighborhood. You have to deal with every single owner. They had to change the entire Unified Development Code. They were working on a revamp at that time anyway, but it took two years.

DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION ITEMS

1. Minutes – Consideration and/or action regarding the approval of the minutes of the regular meeting of September 28, 2023.
 - Chris Hormel motioned and Maggie Titterington seconded to approve the minutes as written. *Motion passed unanimously.*

OLD BUSINESS

2. Landmark Plaque for Samuel Clemens High School – Lotus Creations (*Miguel Vazquez*)
Maggie Titterington commented that she loved the wording, however, there was one thing she'd like to suggest a change – removing the word "cajole". She also agrees that the committee members names should be on the plaque. Miguel Vazquez remarked that it's already in the process of being made.

3. Collaboration with Schertz-Cibolo Cemetery Association for Historical Marker Unveiling (*All*)

Scheduled for Saturday, November 18, 2023. Roz Wise will be manning the booth but is looking for another person to help her. Maggie Titterington advised that she would be able to work 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM. Chris Hormel advised that he will not be able to attend as he has another obligation.

4. Bylaws – Completed, Vote Required (*All*)

Miguel Vazquez advised that we were going to take a vote last month, but there was some minor change. Maggie Titterington advised that she hasn't seen a copy of the bylaws since there were changes made. She has the one from the July meeting, unless that is the only version and nothing has been changed since the July meeting. Before she approves, she'd like to make sure they are the same that she saw in July. Chris Hormel advised that the ones we were going to vote on last month are the ones with the changes. She asked if they could be emailed and we could do an email vote to make sure. Maggie Titterington asked if Chris Hormel would email them.

NEW BUSINESS

5. Financial Report

The financial report was distributed to everyone. No action needed.

6. Work Plan for 2024 *(All)*

- Landmark Properties/Institutions
 - Discussion regarding possible buildings. Maggie Titterington mentioned the first telephone building on Exchange Street behind Schertz Bank & Trust – it's never been designated.
- National Preservation Month – March
- Policies and Procedures Update
 - Chris Hormel needs the bylaws to be approved so that he can move on with working on the Policies and Procedures.
- New Articles for Schertz Magazine
 - Miguel Vazquez spoke with Devan Christensen in Public Affairs, so if we have any articles of significance, it can be put in the magazine as well.
- Participation in the July 4th Parade
 - At the last meeting everyone agreed that it's a good idea. Maggie Titterington commented that she knows how much work it is to do a float, so asking the history club at the high school is a great idea. Miguel Vazquez responded that the simplest thing to do is drive 2-6 cars again. Maggie also commented that she is usually asked to emcee the parade, so she doesn't think she'll be available to ride in the parade. Roz Wise was going to the Randolph AFB car show after the last meeting and was going to ask if anyone wanted to participate.
- Other

7. **Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair** – Voting at January 25, 2024 Meeting

Chris Hormel indicated he would like to step down as Vice Chair. Maggie Titterington would like to be considered for the Chairperson position. Chris Hormel motioned to nominate Maggie Titterington as Chairperson and Miguel Vazquez as Vice Chairperson. *Motion passed unanimously.* The election of new officials will be during the first meeting of the 2024 to be held January 25, 2024.

REQUESTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- None.

ADJOURNMENT

- Maggie Titterington motioned and Chris Hormel seconded to adjourn the meeting. *Motion passed unanimously.* Meeting adjourned at 6:56 PM by Miguel Vazquez, Chairperson.