



**BY-LAWS OF THE WILLIAMSON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
P. O. Box 2521, Georgetown, TX 78627**

ARTICLE I: AUTHORITY AND NAME

1.01 The existence and operation of a county historical commission is governed by the State of Texas under Chapter 318 of the Texas Local Government Code, as amended. Such a county historical commission is not required to incorporate as a non-profit organization as it is a political subdivision and part of county government.

1.02 The Williamson County Historical Commission, hereinafter referred to as the “WCHC”, is designated to coordinate and supervise historic preservation under the direction of the Williamson County Commissioners Court.

1.03 The principal office of the WCHC shall be located in Williamson County.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE AND POLICY

2.01 The purpose of the WCHC shall be to preserve, protect and promote history within the county and to that end the WCHC shall:

- a)** support, whenever possible, programs suggested by the commissioners court and the Texas Historical Commission, and when appropriate, communicate and cooperate with similar organizations in the Central Texas region and adjacent counties for the preservation of the county's historic cultural resources;
- b)** conduct continuing programs of historical marker recommendations and placements in accordance with the Texas Historical Commission requirements;
- c)** promote the preservation of historic cemeteries;
- d)** make recommendations to the Williamson County Commissioners Court for property acquisition, real or personal, which is of historical significance;
- e)** maintain historical marker files for the public;
- f)** comply with all the requirements of Chapter 318 of the Texas Local Government Code; and
- g)** Conduct oral history interviews, record talks, and document written submissions related to Williamson County history and make available for public assess.

2.02 Williamson County Historical Museum, Inc. (Museum) will provide dedicated space inside the Museum for WCHC’s archived materials. WCHC will provide an advisory role (solely) in assisting the Museum in preserving county history.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

3.01 Eligibility. The membership of the WCHC shall be composed of at least seven (7) Williamson County citizens who have demonstrated an interest in the preservation of Williamson County's historical heritage and an understanding of local history and resources. The voting membership shall reside in Williamson County, Texas. Members are expected to be active on at least one committee and contribute toward the fulfillment in Article II above.

Non-resident members interested in preserving Williamson County history but residing outside of the county can serve as Associate Members. Associate members will have responsibilities similar to those of "regular" members with the exception that they will serve as non-voting members of the WCHC.

In making recommendations to the County Commissioners Court for consideration of appointments, the WCHC shall seek to have every geographical section of the county represented on the WCHC. The voting WCHC membership should be balanced between gender, ethnicity, and age. Voting members must be 18 years of age or older.

Prospective members shall complete and submit to their precinct county commissioner the "Formal Request for Appointment to WCHC" form located on the Williamson County commissioners' webpage. All members must be approved by the Williamson County Commissioners Court.

Members can be removed at any time for just cause at the sole discretion of the Williamson County Commissioners Court.

3.02 Term. Membership shall be appointed by the Williamson County Commissioners Court during the month of January of odd-numbered years and such appointed members shall serve for two year terms. Members may be reappointed but should indicate their willingness to continue to serve by communicating with the Chairperson, Secretary or another officer. A member absent for a period of three (3) consecutive meetings or absent four (4) meetings in a fiscal year shall be documented by the Chair with the member's precinct County Commissioner and/or County Judge to discuss the issues that affect a member's willingness or ability to serve on the WCHC.

3.03 Resignation. Resignation from the WCHC may be accepted after a letter of resignation has been read into the official minutes by either the Chairperson or Secretary and forwarded to the Williamson County Commissioners Court. The Williamson County Commissioners Court may fill a vacancy on the WCHC for the remainder of the resigning member's term.

3.04 Ex-Officio Members. Ex-Officio, non-voting members may include the County Judge and the County Commissioners.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS

4.01 Enumeration, Election, and Term. The officers of the WCHC shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. These officers shall be elected by a majority vote of the members present at the January meeting of odd-numbered years. This slate of officers will be presented to the Williamson County Commissioners Court in January for approval. Upon approval of the Williamson

County Commissioners Court, officer terms shall be for two years. Officers elected in-term will serve until the November meeting of the next even numbered year.

4.02 Chairperson. The Chairperson shall be the Executive Officer for the WCHC whose responsibility shall be to preside at all meetings; appoint standing committees, task forces, and their chairperson; report to the Williamson County Commissioners Court at least annually or as frequently as the Court deems necessary on the activity and progress of the WCHC.

4.03 Vice-Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson shall preside at the meetings in the absence of the Chairperson; and, in the event the Chairperson is no longer able to serve in that capacity, the Vice-Chairperson shall possess all the duties and responsibilities of the Chairperson until a new Chairperson is appointed.

4.04 Secretary. The Secretary shall notify members of all meetings; keep an accurate record of attendance; record the minutes of the meetings; and perform such other duties normally pertaining to the office.

4.05 Treasurer. The Treasurer shall receive any monies given to or earned by the WCHC; deposit funds with the County Treasurer; present accurate accounting of the funds at each meeting; process requests for payments approved by the WCHC with the County Treasurer for payment; and perform such other duties as normally pertain to the office.

4.06 Nominations and Election Procedure. Officer nominations shall be made and presented to the general membership at the January meeting of odd-numbered years. In the event more than one candidate is nominated for an office, election shall be by written ballot. A majority vote of all members qualified to vote shall constitute election. Proxy or absentee voting will not be allowed in officer elections.

4.07 Resignation and Vacancy. An officer may resign the office while not necessarily resigning membership on the WCHC by submitting a letter to the WCHC, which shall be read into the official minutes. Vacancies occurring in any office other than the Chairperson shall be filled for the remainder of the term by electing a substitute at the regular meeting following the resignation. Vacancy in the office of Chairperson shall be filled by appointment by the County Judge. The elected officer shall fill out the remainder of the vacating officer's regular term.

ARTICLE V: FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

5.01 Fiscal Term. The fiscal term for the WCHC shall coincide with that of the Williamson County Commissioners Court.

5.02 Budget. The proposed budget for the ensuing year shall be prepared by the Budget Committee and presented in writing to the general membership of the WCHC. Once the general membership of the WCHC approves the proposed General account budget, the WCHC shall then present the proposed budget to the Williamson County Commissioners Court for consideration and approval through the Williamson County Auditors Office per the county budget deadlines. The Budget Committee shall consist of the Treasurer, who shall serve as the committee chairperson, along with at least two appointed members.

5.03 Allocations. Funds shall be disbursed by the Treasurer that directly relates to the business of the WCHC generally as budgeted. The Chair is empowered to expend sums of up to \$300.00, at his or her discretion on the business of the WCHC. Amounts in excess of \$300.00 will require the consent of the WCHC membership either by email or in a regular meeting.

5.04 Receipt of Gifts. The WCHC shall be authorized to accept gifts of money and other property from any source for use in the furtherance of its lawful purposes. The Williamson County Auditor has set up a Program account at the county depository for fundraising revenue and expenses, and a Donation account at the county depository for gifts designated to historical purposes.

5.05 Public Accountability. The Williamson County Auditor or its designated agent shall have the right to audit the financial records of the WCHC at any time.

5.06 Historical Markers. Payment for historical markers within the county will be paid for by the property owner or an organization or individual sponsoring the site. The WCHC Budget Committee may budget funds for marker restoration under special circumstances.

5.07 Record Retention & Destruction Policy. WCHC shall have a written Record Retention & Destruction Policy that follows Williamson County's policies and the Texas State Library & Archives Commission retention schedules.

ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS

6.01 Regular Meetings. There shall be a minimum of four (4) regular meetings per year for the general membership as specified by the State of Texas under Chapter 318 of the Texas Local Government Code, as amended. The date, time and place shall be determined by WCHC. Meeting notification shall be by mail, phone or e-mail. Meeting agendas will be filed for record with the County Clerk's Office 72 hours prior to each meeting and emailed to each member prior to the meeting.

6.02 Quorum. A quorum shall be required for the transaction of business at any meeting. A majority of members constitutes a quorum. Non-voting members will not be included in determining a quorum.

6.03 Parliamentary procedure. Parliamentary procedure will be according to Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

6.04 Special Meetings. One-third of the voting membership may request special meetings if necessary to conduct business between regular meetings.

6.05 Open Meetings Act. All meetings of the WCHC shall be conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, Texas Government Code, as amended.

ARTICLE VII: COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

7.01 The Chairperson of the WCHC shall appoint a chairperson for each of the standing committees and task forces as needed. The chairpersons for the committees shall serve the same term as the officers. Members of the WCHC will be encouraged to join a committee in accordance with the member's preference.

7.02 Standing committees. The following committees shall be on-going:

- a) **Historical Markers** – Upon receipt of historical marker application, WCHC reviews, approves & forwards application to Texas Historical Commission during the annual “open application period”. As necessary, assist the public with applications for the historical markers and Historic Texas Cemetery designation. The WCHC chair or marker chair (appointed by the WCHC chair) serves as the sole liaison with the Texas Historical Commission throughout the marker process. Update and maintain marker lists and marker files in cooperation with the Museum to make them accessible to the public; secure locations and obtain permission for erecting markers. See the Marker Chair Job Description located on Texas Historical Commission’s website for up-to-date details and changes.
- b) **Finance and Budget** – prepare budget for adoption by WCHC voting members and present proposed budget to the County Commissioners Court through the Williamson County Auditors Office; monitor Treasurer’s records when requested by the WCHC by two-thirds vote of the total voting membership.
- c) **Website** - ensure accuracy to the extent possible for information entered onto the website (wilcohistory.org) and any information shared with the public through various media. Subject to majority vote of WCHC members, only information related to WCHC’s primary objectives and website subcategories will be accepted for entry onto the website. They are: markers, cemeteries, oral histories, speaker events, memorial bricks, appropriate historical properties, town histories, and other historical topics. Information submitted for consideration shall be verified and sources to the extent possible. Submittals should be forwarded to the Chair of the Website Committee. Final decision for website appropriateness will be made by the committee and/or WCHC. The following will be submitted to the Website Committee Chair as soon as available:
 - Secretary - ratified monthly meeting minutes.
 - Oral History Chair - oral history summary, photos, and transcribed transcript in pdf and mp3+ formats.
 - Cemetery Chair - cemetery updates.
 - Historical Marker Chair - marker updates and Texas Historical Commission approvals.
 - Memorial Brick Program Chair - changes to the brick program and ongoing results.
 - Speakers Chair - details about upcoming events.
 - Commission Chair - changes to membership, committee chairs and any information related to the commission that can be shared with the public.
 - Commission Members - concerning any information or links related to website subcategories for web entry consideration.
- d) **Community Survey/Census** - identify the ten most endangered historical properties in each town in Williamson County; identify and interview opinion leaders and historical groups for help in the selection.
- e) **Oral History** – record and preserve diverse experiences of current or former Williamson County residents from various backgrounds, particularly those whose experiences are deemed rare or in decline; and promote and educate people about the value of oral history, especially those students and others who can participate in the process of preserving historical experiences as told by individuals who lived, experienced, or witnessed them.
- f) **Properties** - (properties covers a wide assortment ranging from bridges to historical buildings) advise, consult and provide limited assistance with appropriate property situations within Williamson County that have asked for guidance or as the committee determines that there is a need.

- g) **Historic Talks** - raise private funds, for WCHC activities to supplement that which was allocated by the Williamson County Commissioners Court, once annually host a speaker event featuring well-known or distinguished individuals to present history-related topics.
- h) **Bricks** – market and sell bricks to be installed on the walkways surrounding the Williamson County Courthouse. Proceeds from sales will go to support the activities of the Commission.
- i) **Cemeteries** - provide information on cemeteries in Williamson County regarding location, ownership, and condition of cemeteries within the county; preserve historical cemeteries in the county with the help of volunteers; maintain selected abandoned cemeteries, often containing the remains of veterans; provide opportunities for church groups, clubs and individuals to participate in the cleaning and maintenance of old cemeteries.

7.03 Special Committees or Task Forces. The Chairperson of WCHC may appoint chairpersons and members of special committees which will serve to accomplish a specific goal or project. Each committee will be terminated at the completion of the goal or project unless otherwise directed by the WCHC.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

8.01 These by-laws may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) vote of all voting members provided the amendments were submitted in writing to the general membership two weeks prior to that meeting and are approved by the WILLIAMSON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT.

ARTICLE IX – DISSOLUTION

9.01 If the WCHC should be dissolved by vote of the Williamson County Commissioners Court, the property and records of the WCHC shall become the property and records of the WILLIAMSON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT who will ensure that the records are made available to the public or transferred to an organization with a similar mission.

Originated in 1979
 Amended in 1986
 Amended in 2005
 Amended in April 2009

AMENDED by the Williamson County Historical Commission on October 8, 2020 and **affirmed** by the Williamson County Commissioners Court on December 15, 2020.

By: _____
 Printed Name: Eloise Brackenridge
 Title: Chairperson of the Williamson
 County Historical Commission

By: _____
 Printed Name: Bill Gravell, Jr.
 Title: Williamson County Judge