

**HCHC member comments on Draft Bylaws distributed May 8, 2021**

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**Article II. Purpose and Policy. (b)** Create and maintain a Harris County marker program (Article X, Section 9), as a companion and alternative to the THC marker program, for the purpose of honoring historical topics of primarily local interest.

*Suggest adding,*

"This program will employ a combination of formal metal County markers as well as illustrated interpretive panels."

Bylaws Committee response: Added the following text.

"This program may employ a combination of metal county markers and illustrated interpretive panels."

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**Article IV, Section 3. Number of Members.** "The position of any voting member resigning or not accepting reappointment shall be filled ..."

*Suggest that this read,*

"The position of any voting member appointed to Emeritus membership, resigning, or not accepting reappointment shall be filled ..."

**Article IV, Section 4. Emeritus Members.** "A voting member who has made significant contributions to HCHC and is unable, for any reason, to continue as an active member may be designated as an Emeritus member."

*Suggest adding,*

"Active members appointed to Emeritus membership may be replaced by Interim members pursuant to Section 2."

*It probably doesn't happen often but I attended a meeting last year which was postponed for lack of one person for quorum. Trevia had changed to Emeritus status and the bylaws did not provide for replacement since she hadn't exactly resigned.*

Bylaws Committee response: No changes are needed to achieve the desired effect. The current bylaws and the proposed bylaws both provide for replacement of a voting member "resigning or not accepting reappointment." Changing to Emeritus status, which can only be done by action of Commissioners Court, means the person is no longer a voting member, so the position is vacant and should be filled. In the specific instance cited, Trevia Beverly ceased to be a voting member as of the appointments made on December 18, 2012, so her former position as a voting member of HCHC was filled at that time.

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**Article IV, Section 6. Active Participation.** "Every member of HCHC is encouraged to be an active participant by attendance at meetings and seeking out means to participate in the various activities of HCHC. In particular, each member is strongly encouraged to take an active part in promoting, mentoring, researching, documenting, writing, or seeking the financing of at least one possible marker subject during each two-year term."

*I would like to see the words "attending marker dedications" inserted in this clause.*

Bylaws Committee response: Done. It now reads,

"In particular, each member is strongly encouraged to attend most marker dedication ceremonies and to take an active part in promoting, mentoring, researching, documenting, writing, or seeking the financing of at least one possible marker subject during each two-year term."

**Article IV, Section 7. Attendance.** "The HCHC Executive Committee may define circumstances whereby an absence is deemed excused and not subject to the three-absence rule. An excused absence should be approved in advance and, given exceptional circumstances, can be applicable over the full appointment term."

*Perhaps the answer to my question is in the first sentence of the clause but, I just want to clarify whether member emergencies on the day of the meeting qualify as "excused" with regard to approving absences in advance?*

Bylaws Committee response: Done. The second sentence has been replaced with,

"Members who must miss a meeting should so advise the Chair in advance of the meeting, or as soon thereafter as possible, so that their absence can be excused by the members at the start of the meeting. Given exceptional circumstances, an excused absence may be applicable over the full appointment term."

Also added "Excuse Absences" to Article VI, Section 3, Order of Business.

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**Article VII. Officers.** *I didn't see anything about the co-chair.*

Bylaws Committee response: Upon review the committee determined that it was not necessary or advisable to create a co-chair position at this time.

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**Article X, Section 2. Budget Committee.** "This committee shall prepare an annual budget with input from the Executive Committee and the members."

*Suggest adding,*

"The annual budget, with specific line items, is to be presented once a year by the Committee Chair to the Commissioners Court for requested funding."

*The amount of the requested funding should be put in front of the commissioners for a decision, rather than just allow an accepted amount each year without chance for change. This is necessary for the interpretive panels program, as discussed in Article XI below. As mentioned in THC's "CHC Organizational Topics" website, CHCs must make a case throughout the year for county support -- propose budget with line items specific to needs, report to court regularly on expenditures and status of projects, and provide documentation for expenses and payment.*

Bylaws Committee response: Added as requested.

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**Article X, Section 9. Marker Review Committee for Harris County Markers.** *Suggest renaming this committee to remove the word Review. Whereas the THC markers require a "Review Committee" for externally generated proposals, the local county markers would require only a "Marker Committee for Harris County Markers."*

Bylaws Committee response: Renamed it to "County Marker Committee," which became Section 6 of the bylaws to maintain the alphabetical order of the committees.

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**Article X, Section 9. Marker Review Committee for Harris County Markers.**

*Item d defines the blue County Markers, but we need a definition of the interpretive panels, too. I suggest adding this definition, so the later reference to them in Section 3 of Article XI will make more sense.*

"e. Interpretive panels will be a different shape than both the THC and HC markers, and will consist of illustrations as well as text on a standard template. Harris County and the HCHC will be recognized with a logo somewhere on the template."

Bylaws Committee response: The list in Article X, Section 9 (now Section 6) is limited to the elements of the Resolution adopted by Commissioners Court on May 8, 2012. Therefore, the following is added to Article XI, Section 3, Interpretive Panels, in place of its final sentence.

"Interpretive panels will be a different shape and material than the THC and Harris County markers, and will consist of illustrations as well as text on a standard template. Harris County and the HCHC will be recognized with a logo somewhere on the template."

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**Article XI, Section 4. Heritage Trails.** *Suggest adding this entire section.*

"Section 4. Heritage Trails. Interpretive panels may be grouped, along with THC and County markers, into "Harris County Heritage Trails" that are organized thematically and geographically. HCHC efforts to create such trails may be organized as either a Permanent (Standing) Committee or as Ad Hoc Committees. The chair of such a committee will propose an annual plan and budget for each trail, for approval by HCHC members prior to its inclusion as a specific line item into the HCHC annual budget. Panel content, including inscriptions and illustrations, will be prepared by members of the panel committee, and dedications will be conducted by this committee in collaboration with the Marker Dedication Committee."

*The dual intent of this is to a) make sure that there is a recognized avenue for county approval and financial funding of these trails of panels – such as the existing Memorial Villages Heritage Trail or the in-progress Barker Reservoir/Terry Hershey Park Heritage Trail – as part of the normal HCHC budget process, and b) to recognize that the proactive creation of such trails of panels etc. is not a function of existing Marker Review committees, which react to outside requests for individual markers. Also, please note that trail creation is a multiyear process of research, composition, and execution, done by members of the committee.*

Bylaws Committee response: Added this section, modified as follows.

"Section 4. Heritage Trails. Interpretive panels may be grouped, along with THC and County markers, into "Harris County Heritage Trails" that are organized thematically and geographically. The chair of an ad hoc Panel Committee will propose an annual plan and budget for each trail, for approval by HCHC members prior to its inclusion as a specific line item into the HCHC annual budget. Panel content, including inscriptions and illustrations, will be prepared by members of the panel committee, and dedications will be conducted by this committee in collaboration with the Marker Dedication Committee, the relevant Precinct(s), and Harris County Commissioners Court."