

Washington Texas Historical Cemetery Association Bylaws

Amended

History

The Washington Texas Historical Cemetery is located on the original headright league of land deeded to Andrew Robinson in July of 1824, signed by Stephen F. Austin and the Baron De Bastrop. Between 1831 and 1835, Robinson gifted and sold his property to his son-in-law, John W. Hall. Mr. Hall invested a portion of this land along the Brazos River near the junction with the Navasota River, in conjunction with other co-investors in the area, to set up the Township of Washington. The area was surveyed and divided into town and farm lots by Austin Colony surveyor, Horatio Chriesman. The Washington Texas Historical Cemetery is located on the Northern half of what was surveyed as Farm Lot A, section 6. No records have been found that indicate this section was ever purchased by any individual nor the property conveyed within the mid to late 1800's as a cemetery. References to the cemetery can be found in later deed record surveys.

The earliest known burial in the Washington Texas Historical Cemetery was of Mr. Spencer Morris, Sr., who died June 12, 1836, around the age of 60 years. There are no known deed records dedicating the grounds as a cemetery. The cemetery is first found referenced for boundary lines in deeds dated 1927 and 1949. The Cemetery does not have a property identification number assigned to it by the Washington County Central Appraisal District and there is no known documented ownership of the grounds or any plots within the grounds.

An earlier association for the Washington Texas Historical Cemetery was first formed in 2011. It was at this time that an application was made to the Texas Historical Commission for historical designation for the Washington City Cemetery. A dedication celebration was held March 3, 2012, when an official "Historical Texas Cemetery" designation was awarded by the Texas Historical Commission. Unfortunately, this association never gained momentum and there is no evidence to suggest any ongoing restoration or preservation activities being performed over the last 10 years. It is, therefore, by all accounts inactive.

The Cemetery currently is in a state of disrepair and is considered abandoned. Several headstones are tilted and in danger of falling, many headstones have toppled and broken, burial tombs have disintegrated with their ledgers either laying in the ground or destroyed, historical artifacts are scattered across the grounds, dead trees and limbs have fallen onto and caused damage to gravesites, and foliage in much of the Cemetery is overgrown. It is feared that continued neglect will result in permanent loss of all evidence and the historical remains of one of the most significant cemeteries in Texas history.

Article I: Name and Location

1. The name of this organization shall be the Washington Texas Historical Cemetery Association ("Association").
2. The mailing address of the Association is P.O. Box 54, Chappell Hill, Texas 77426.
3. The Physical address of the Cemetery is 19650 Washington Cemetery Road, Washington, Texas 77880.

Article II: Purpose

The purpose of the Association is to:

1. Reclaim, preserve, protect, and maintain the Washington Texas Historical Cemetery located in Washington, Texas.
2. Educate the public about the historical significance of the Cemetery and its interments.
3. Raise funds and organize events for the maintenance, preservation, and improvement of the Cemetery.

Article III: Membership

1. Membership in the Association shall be open to all individuals interested in supporting the purpose and objectives of the Association.
2. Membership shall be obtained by submitting a membership application and paying annual dues as determined by the Board of Directors.
3. Classes of Membership:
 - a. Voting Membership- limited to fifteen (15) in number
 - b. Associate Membership- open to unlimited number
4. Categories of Voting Membership:
 - a. Individual- One person with no other family members having membership in the Association. Holds one member vote.
 - b. Family- A family unit of individuals either directly related or related by marriage, no matter if the individuals live at the same physical address. Holds one member vote.
 - c. Organization- A business, corporation, institution, church, service club, or charity with multiple members or employees. Holds one member vote.
5. Associate Membership privileges shall include participation in Association meetings and events, along with access to Association resources.

Article IV: Board of Directors

1. The governing body of the Association shall be a Board of Directors.
2. The Board shall consist of five (5) members, including a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Historian.
3. The voting members shall elect the Board of Directors at the annual meeting.
4. Directors elected at the annual meeting shall serve a term of one (1) year which commences immediately after the annual meeting is adjourned.
5. There shall be no prohibition against Directors serving consecutive terms, if properly elected.
6. The Board of Directors will meet immediately after the annual meeting to elect the Officer positions for the following year.
7. Vacancies arising during the year shall be filled by calling a special meeting of the voting members for this purpose.
8. The Board shall meet quarterly, and as necessary, to oversee the operations, finances, and activities of the Association.
9. The Quorum to act shall be three (3) or more Board members present.

Article V: Duties of Board Members

1. The Chair shall preside over meetings, represent the Association, and supervise activities.
2. The Vice-Chair shall assume the duties of the Chair in his/her absence and assist in Association activities.
3. The Secretary shall keep records of Association meetings, maintain membership records, and handle correspondence.
4. The Treasurer shall manage the Association's finances, develop an annual budget to be approved by the Board prior to the annual membership meeting, maintain financial records, and provide regular reports to the Board.
5. The Historian shall document all history and research regarding the cemetery.

Article VI: Meetings

1. The Association shall hold an annual meeting for all voting members to elect the Board of Directors, discuss the state of the Cemetery, approve the annual budget, and other pertinent matters.
2. Additional meetings may be called by the Chair, or upon written request of a majority of voting members.
3. Notice of meetings shall be provided to all members at least one week in advance, stating the time, place, and agenda of the meeting.
4. Quorum to act will be a majority of the voting members present.

Article VII: Voting

1. Every voting member is entitled to cast a quantity of votes equal to the number of Directors to be elected.
2. Each voting member may, at his/her discretion, cumulate votes and give one candidate all the votes, or may distribute them among any number of candidates.
3. The candidates receiving the higher number of votes, up to the number of Director positions, are elected.

Article VIII: Amendments

1. These Bylaws may be amended only by unanimous vote of the Board of Directors at a regular Board meeting, or a special meeting called for that purpose.
2. Proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing and distributed for review to all Board members at least one week prior to the meeting.

Article IX: Finances

The fiscal year of the Association shall commence on January 1 and end on December 31 of each year.

Article X: Parliamentary Authority

The most recent version of Roberts Rules of Order shall govern the conduct of all meetings.

Article XI: Dissolution

If at any time this Association should be dissolved, no part of its funds or property shall be distributed to or among its members, contributors, directors, officers, or any person as their private funds. Upon dissolution of the Association, after the payments of all indebtedness, all remaining assets of this Association shall be transferred to a non-profit organization with similar historical preservation objectives, as determined by the membership.

Article XII: Adoption of Amended Bylaws

These amended Bylaws are hereby adopted by the undersigned, being the Borad of Directors of the Washington Texas Historical Cemetery Association and replaces any prior Bylaws of the Association.