

AGENDA ITEM #34

Discuss and take appropriate action concerning need for youth sports fields in Cedar Park area.

75 Commissioner Boatright discussed a real need for more sports fields in the Cedar Park area. The soccer association was unable to accommodate 900+ children the summer of 1999. Approximately 4,500 children are involved in soccer and Pop Warner programs and the Blockhouse facility is no longer available.

Much discussion but no action was taken on this item which will be added to the agenda of March 28, 2000.

MARCH 21, 2000

AGENDA ITEM #35

Discuss and approve expenditures for Juvenile Services Accountability Block Grant ending 7-31-2000.
1257

Juvenile Services Director Charley Skaggs addressed the court and answered questions regarding the grant.

Moved: Commissioner Hays

Seconded: Commissioner Boatright

Motion: To approve expenditures for Juvenile Services Accountability Block Grant ending July 31, 2000.

Vote: Motion carried 4 – 0 with Commissioner Heiligenstein absent from the dais.

AGENDA ITEM #36

Discuss and approve accepting Accountability Block Grant funding for August 1, 2000-July 31, 2001, designating 35% for training and 65% for Juvenile Probation Officer.

Moved: Commissioner Hays

Seconded: Commissioner Boatright

Motion: Approve accepting Accountability Block Grant funding for August 1, 2000 through July 31, 2001, designating 35% for training and 65% for Juvenile Probation Officer.

Vote: Motion carried 4 – 0 with Commissioner Heiligenstein absent from the dais.

AGENDA ITEM #37

Hear report on master plan for courthouse renovation and consider approving resolution of support for same.

Eleven Thirteen Architects, Inc. Partner, Karalei Nunn informed the court 8 of 74 master plans submitted to the Texas Historical Commission relating to the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation grant program have been approved with Williamson County being one of the 8.

The final application for grant funds will be completed by March 31, 2000, and submitted by April 3, 2000. Karalei and Pete are working with the citizens committee to word the application in terms unlike those of an architect. The necessary letters of support are in the process. It will be necessary for a budget to be submitted based on cost for entire project (\$3.5M) and then the minimal amount Williamson County will accept. Ms. Nunn suggested \$1.8M for Phase I consisting of Exterior dome, roof, balustrades and pediments, repointing the brick, landscaping, steps, and refinishing existing wooden frame windows.

Phase II concentrating on interior of building cannot be accomplished until after currently planned additional space in other locations comes on line.

Also a Preservation Covenant (conservation easement designating the number of years the county will not make any substantial changes to the building without approval of THC) is required and is a strong scoring point for awarding the grant funds.

1940

Moved: Commissioner Hays

Seconded: Judge Doerfler

Motion: To approve resolution supporting the application with \$1.8M Phase I as minimum amount to accept and approve 50 year Historic Preservation Covenant for THC grant application.

Vote: Motion carried 5 – 0

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STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF WILLIAMSON

KNOW ALL MEN BY THOSE PRESENT THAT ON THIS, the 21st day of March, 2000, the Commissioners Court of Williamson County, Texas, met in duly called session at the Courthouse in Georgetown, Texas, with the following members present:

**John C. Doerfler, County Judge
Michael Heiligenstein, Commissioner, Pct. #1
Greg Boatright, Commissioner, Pct. #2
David Hays, Commissioner, Pct. #3
Frankie Limmer, Commissioner, Pct. #4
Nancy Rister, County Clerk**

and at said meeting, among other business, the Court considered the following

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, many of the old historic courthouses in the state of Texas are in various stages of disrepair; and

WHEREAS, Williamson County is very proud of their existing courthouse in Georgetown which was completed in 1911; and

WHEREAS, the county is interested in working with the Texas Historical Commission to make some necessary and long awaited renovations to the courthouse; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioners Court believes that it is historically important to restore the courthouse to its original beauty

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMISSIONERS COURT OF WILLIAMSON COUNTY, TEXAS;

urges the Board of the Texas Historical Commission to consider favorably the Master Preservation Plan which is being submitted and to consider approving full funding of the Williamson County Application.

Resolved this 21st day of March, 2000.

***John C. Doerfler* 3-21-00
John C. Doerfler, County Judge**

ATTEST:

***Nancy E. Rister*
Nancy E. Rister, County Clerk**

I. General Information

Property Name: Williamson County Courthouse

Property Address: Austin Avenue and 8th Street

City/ Zip Code: Georgetown, 78626

County: Williamson County

When was the structure completed? 1911

Dates of major modification: 1963 modification of courtroom; 1966 removal of pediments and balustrades

Current County Judge: Judge John Doerfler

Is the building currently owned by the county? Yes

Is it still functioning as a courthouse? Yes

II. Contact Information

Name: John Doerfler

Business Title: County Judge

Address: Williamson County Courthouse

City/ Zip Code: Georgetown, 78626

Telephone Number: 512/943-1550

Fax number: 512/943-1662

E-mail: jantab@wilco.org

III. Historical Designations

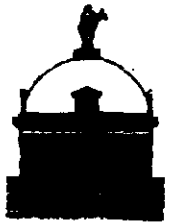
National Register of Historic Places

Recorded Texas Historic Landmark

State Archeological Landmark

IV. Describe the importance of the courthouse within the context of its architectural style.

The Williamson County Courthouse is an example of the Neo-Classical style. It is usually identified by the use of classical columns, typically Ionic or Corinthian, that support the roof structure of a portico that extends the full length of a building's façade. Moreover, the façade is also symmetrically balanced with windows and a centered door. Neo-Classical was a dominant style for institutional structures throughout the country during the first half of the 20th century. This revival style had two waves of popularity, first from about 1900 to 1920, and then from about 1925 to the 1950's. The Neo-Classical style dates from the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. The Exposition had a mandated classical theme, in which many of the best-known architects designed dramatic colonnaded buildings. Because of the widely photographed exposition, the Neo-Classical model became the latest fashion throughout the country. More specifically, the central buildings of the exposition inspired countless public and commercial buildings in the following decades.



GRANT APPLICATION

Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program



Georgetown, Texas

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The Williamson County Courthouse, constructed between 1910 and 1911, is a superlative example of the Neo-Classical style. It follows the typical design with four identical two-story classical porticos and pronounced symmetrical configuration. The porticos, one on each facade, consist of paired Ionic columns that support a terra cotta architrave and extend to the building's cornice line. The porticos are centered above a main entrance on the first floor, and are flanked by three bays on the north and south elevations, and two bays on the east and west elevations.

V. Describe the historical significance of the courthouse.

The current Williamson County Courthouse was accepted by the County Commissioners Court in 1912. The Courthouse was the fifth in the history of Williamson County, and the third to be built on the square. The previous courthouse, built in 1877, was declared not worthy of restoration in 1909, and the voters of the county passed a bond election authorizing \$120,000.00 for the construction of a new courthouse.

While the Courthouse has seen significant historical events in the 88 years since it was built, one of the most fascinating elements in its history is the involvement of the designer and the builder.

Charles H. Page, the architect of the current courthouse, was the founder of one of the most prolific Texas architectural firms of the 20th Century. The son of a contractor, Page began work at an early age, assisting his father around the construction site of the state Capitol building in the 1880's. Page began his architecture career at the age of 16, and by the time he began the design of Williamson County in 1909, he and his brother had designed two Texas courthouses, in Hays and Ft. Bend counties. Page & Brother (and successor firms) would continue work for Williamson County for over fifty years after the construction of the Courthouse. Page himself would continue as a practicing architect until his death in 1957.

The contractor for the construction of the Courthouse does not have such an accomplished life story. William C. Whitney was the successful bidder in March of 1910, but that may have been one of the last things to go well for the Beaumont contractor. While the demolition of the 1877 courthouse seems to have gone smoothly, the construction of the new courthouse was anything but smooth. Whitney used three construction superintendents in a six-month period, and by mid-1911, the Commissioners Court was becoming anxious about the progress. Finally, in November 1911 the building was finished to an extent that it was acceptable, but the Court passed a resolution enumerating the remaining problems with the building. Whitney could be excused for being distracted from the job, however; he was evidently under a grand jury investigation in Beaumont.

The refusal of the County to settle his final draw until the problems were corrected evidently focused Whitney's attention. He spent much of February 1912 in Georgetown attempting to finish the job. By mid-March the Court was satisfied with Whitney's efforts, and paid the final \$4,633.63. Whitney did not have much time to enjoy whatever profit he derived from the job. He and a rival contractor shot each other to death on the streets of Beaumont on April 5, 1912. The reason for the gunfight is unknown to this day.

In perhaps the most significant trial held in the Courthouse, Williamson County became the stage for a major social and political event. In 1923, a dark cloud was obscuring this bright land. The Ku Klux Klan had risen to such prominence that it paraded in force down Pennsylvania Avenue. It penetrated national, state, and local governments spreading a doctrine of intolerance and hiding behind a mask of secrecy. And how was anyone to hinder it? Your neighbor, your sheriff, your friend, your clergyman – anyone might be a member of the "invisible empire." Protest might well result in loss of livelihood – or even loss of life. And Williamson County, Texas, where the most prominent physician in Georgetown was head of the local Klavern, seemed to be no exception. But after members of that local Klavern decided that a certain traveling salesman was engaged in immoral conduct with a widow in Weir, Texas, and took it upon themselves to *correct* him by kidnapping, beating, and tarring him, a fortunate combination of effective law enforcement, energetic prosecution, and an honest court worked together to convey a message to the Klan. Civilized men had had enough. The stage upon which the dramatic reversal of the Klan's power and impunity began – first in Williamson County, and then throughout the nation – was the 26th District Courtroom.

It is significant for its total and enduring effectiveness that this message was not brought about through the efforts of some powerful Federal law enforcement agency, nor by congressional hearings. There was no *special* prosecutor. This was not a ruling of the Supreme Court. It was a homemade, grassroots message from one group of citizens carrying out the law to another group of citizens who felt that they were above the law. Effective investigation by an honest sheriff and energetic prosecution by a dedicated District Attorney resulted in a series of trials in 1923 and 1924 in which the defendants involved were found guilty and sentenced to prison for their assault upon a fellow citizen. It was the first such finding against members of the Klan, and it demonstrated to all that perpetrators of a crime could no longer count on the secrecy of a mask or an organization for protection.

The public's interest in the proceedings packed the courtroom beyond its capacity, and his triumph on behalf of law and order subsequently propelled the young District Attorney, Dan Moody, onward to become the State's youngest ever Attorney General and its youngest ever Governor.

The trials before Judge James R. Hamilton in the 26th District Courtroom are fully documented, of course, in the records of the Clerk of the Court. The story was recounted by Clara Scarbrough in Land of Good Water: Takachus Pomeisu, her award winning history of Williamson County. It was lyrically described by current District Attorney, Ken Anderson, in his book for young people; You Can't Do That, Dan Moody. That book was, in turn, dramatized by Anderson and playwright Tom Swift, and their production, staged in the old 26th District Courtroom, has enjoyed two extended runs to sold out audiences.

In 1963, increased population called for increased county services, and the second floor 26th District Courtroom was modified. The gallery surrounding the courtroom on three sides was removed, the ceiling was lowered, and a third floor was installed above the courtroom to accommodate other county offices. With the construction of a new court's complex, the 26th District Court was moved to the new building.

The old courtroom, however, has continued its function as an arena for dispensing justice, serving currently as a Justice of the Peace Court. The original pew-style seating is still in place, the handsome wooden railing, and much of the courtroom furniture. Handsomely framed portraits of former judges hang on the walls, and "26th District Court" is still painted on the glass transom over the entrance. It is not a difficult task at all to sit on one of the benches and let ones' imagination wander back to the hot fall days of 1923. Once again the windows are open, the courtroom is packed, and the loud voice of the young Dan Moody is calling to his fellow citizens – then and now – for justice under the law.

VI. Describe why the courthouse might be considered endangered.

While the 88-year-old Courthouse has suffered the ravages of time, the building has not seen catastrophic events that have caused significant damage. The building, as the seat of county government, has suffered from heavy use over the years, and there are areas of the exterior that are in grave disrepair, and threaten the soundness of the building. The dome and roof are particularly susceptible to rain and wind damage, leading to damage of the interior, making repair of the dome a top priority. The electrical and data system have suffered significantly from lightning strikes, thus the installation of a lightning protection system is imperative to cope with expanded modern power needs.

VII. Describe the degree of surviving integrity of original design and materials.

The majority of the original design of the building is still intact with the exception of the removal of the terra cotta pediments and balustrades on the exterior of the building, which were removed in 1966. Minor changes over the years have that have had an impact on the original design include; original glass replaced with hard translucent plastic in rotunda skylight; closure of stairwell and district courtroom skylights; conversion of the original county courtroom into the Commissioner's Court and office space; conversion of an oval

staircase into an elevator shaft; and installation of an additional floor in place of the District Courtroom balcony.

VIII. Provide a brief architectural project description. Include a statement of how the courthouse will be utilized after the proposed renovation is complete. What county functions will it house?

The most pressing need at the Williamson County courthouse is the restoration of the dome. This will insure the integrity of the structure from the forces of nature. Along with the masonry work and the window restoration, the exterior will once again be weather-tight. While this work is being accomplished, it is recommended that the balustrades and pediments be restored also.

The list of work needed in the interior of the courthouse includes: HVAC and electrical improvements, the refinishing requirements, code improvements, and the renovation for and relocation of various county departments. Those relocations are dependent on other planning and construction activities underway by the county at this time. The County Commissioners and an assigned committee are currently working on a county wide master plan that includes space planning.

Other interior improvements include creating a return airshaft built in spaces adjacent to the open stairs and elevators that are currently closets. The electrical system will be improved significantly with modifications to the grounding, and the addition of lightening protection systems. A fire rated enclosed stair is proposed as a means to bringing the structure closer to meeting life safety requirements. It is possible to address restroom issues in terms of quantity and accessibility as well as the elevator situation. The County is currently planning on increasing office and courtroom space at the Williamson County Justice Center, which will allow the space to restore the original 26th District Courtroom to the original two story height.

The Williamson County Courthouse will continue to be a functioning courthouse upon completion of the proposed renovations. As mentioned previously, the current master planning undertaken by the County will have some impact on the county functions, but the Court has generally agreed that the County Clerk and the County Tax Assessor/Collector, Information Technologies, Justice of the Peace Court #3, and the remainder of Supervision and Corrections will move to separate county facilities. Offices projected to continue to occupy the Courthouse after renovations include:

- *County Judge
- *County Treasurer
- *Human Resources
- *Elections
- *Payroll and Benefits
- *County Auditor

Additionally, the restored 26th District Courtroom will serve as a visiting courtroom, and a public snackroom will be constructed on the second floor.

Does this proposal address and remedy former inappropriate changes?

Yes. The removal of both the 26th District Courtroom balcony and the balustrades and pediments were considered by many to be inappropriate changes to the Courthouse. The restoration of these two modifications will remedy those changes.

Does a plan exist for protecting county records during the restoration and afterwards?

To be completed.

Is the proposed work in general conformance with the approved master plan?

Yes.

Does the work address the Courthouse's needs in proper sequence?

Under this proposal, the work on the Courthouse would be phased in the following schedule:

December 2000-December 2001

Work to the exterior and site

January 2002-August 2002

Work to the interior

Step 1. Relocate County Clerk to Justice Center

Relocate Tax Assessor/Collector to new location

Relocate Supervision and Corrections to Justice Center

Step 2. Space becomes available for construction of:

Restrooms at 1st floor

Renovate restrooms at 2nd floor

Stair at basement and 2nd floor

1st floor suites for new departments

Rotunda restoration

Elevator upgrade

Mechanical upgrades

Electrical upgrades

Step 3. Relocate the following departments:

Human resources and voter registration to 1st floor

County treasurer to 1st floor
Payroll and Benefits to 1st floor

September 2002

Work to the interior continues

Step 1. Minor renovations to former Payroll and Benefits space

Renovate restrooms at 3rd floor

Complete stair at 2nd and 3rd floor

Step 2. Relocate County Auditor staff to remainder of 3rd floor

Demolish former County Auditor space

Step 3. Restore former District 26th courtroom

Will the proposed project result in a fully restored county courthouse?

Yes. If funds are made available, the Williamson County Courthouse could be fully restored structure within three years, boasting of a new dome, balustrades and pediments, and a restored courtroom. Following the Master Preservation Plan, the restoration would also provide safety improvements such as a fire rated interior stair and lightening protection.

IX. Project Funding
To be completed

X. Photographic Documentation
Attached

XI. Plans and Specifications
No

XII. Preservation Covenant and/or Deed Restrictions

Does the county have a current preservation easement and/or deed restrictions on the courthouse held by the THC?

No.

Would the county be willing to place or extend preservation covenants and/or deed restrictions if awarded a grant? For how many years?

TO BE DETERMINED BY COMMISSIONER'S COURT

**XIII. Evidence of Local Support
Attached**

**XIV. Have all previous courthouse renovations been approved in advance by THC
as required by Texas Government Code 442.008?**

The two major changes to the historical and architectural integrity of the building (removal of courtroom balcony in 1963, and removal of balustrades and pediments in 1966) predate the effective date of 442.008.

**XV. Estimated Budget
To be completed**

XVI. Anticipated Additional Work

XVII. Resolution of Support

Please attach a resolution of support from the Commissioner Court in support of this application.

**XVIII. As owner or legal representative of the owner I agree to follow all rules of
the Texas Historical Commission relating to the Texas Historic
Courthouse Preservation Program if awarded a grant.**

John C. Daehler
Signatures

3-21-00
Date

AGENDA ITEM #38

149

Discuss and take appropriate action on setting aside portion of county landfill for training facility for Sheriff's Department.

373

No action was taken on this item which will be added to the agenda of March 28, 2000.

MARCH 21, 2000

AGENDA ITEM #39

Consider ordering public hearing for creation of Emergency Services District #4.

875

Moved: Judge Doerfler

Seconded: Commissioner Hays

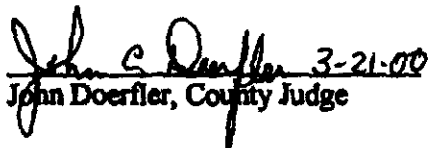
Motion: To authorize public hearing for creation of Emergency Services District #4 at 10:15 a.m. on April 11, 2000.

Vote: Motion carried 5 - 0

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ORDER

On this the 21st day of March, 2000, the Commissioners Court of Williamson County, Texas, does hereby order that a public hearing be held on Tuesday, April 11, 2000, at 10:15 a.m. in the Commissioners Courtroom, 710 Main, Georgetown, Texas, to hear comments regarding the creation of Emergency District Number 4 in the Liberty Hill area of the county.

 3-21-00
John Doerfler, County Judge