

CCCA Community Meeting Minutes
November 13, 2018, McKenna Events Center

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. by Elizabeth Bowerman, President.

Elizabeth thanked everyone for coming and extended a special welcome to new attendees, encouraging everyone to spread the word about CCCA and bring a new person to next month's meeting. After introduction of the CCCA Board Members present, she invited community group representatives to make announcements.

Elizabeth announced that the next session of the Texas Water Symposium is planned for this Thursday, at Texas State University, featuring the topic *"The future of flooding in Texas: How do we protect life and property in the face of extreme weather events?"* Recent catastrophic flood events in the state are causing hydrologists and engineers to rethink traditional solutions to rising flood water. She also mentioned that Exxon Mobil has joined the group building the \$2 billion, 430-mile long Permian Highway Pipeline planned to cut through Gillespie, Blanco, Hays and Caldwell Counties; and that Comal County is offering its University of County Government class March 5 – May 7 and encouraged anyone interested in learning more about how our county government works to enroll.

Committee Chairs made their reports. Marne' Peterson, Resource Development Committee Chair, reported that the committee will be researching possible grant opportunities for 2019 submission and looking into contacting local donors who understand the value of land preservation to the success of the county. Volunteers are encouraged to join the committee and assist with this important effort.

Jensie Madden reported for the Government Affairs Committee, which recently met with Comal County Commissioners and Judge Krause regarding creation of a task force to look into options for land preservation in the county. The consensus of the meetings was that each of the officials was sufficiently onboard with the idea of land preservation that the next step would be for CCCA to help identify possible ways to make this happen, with the understanding that county funding is not currently available.

Joel Dunnington reported for the Outreach Committee: Joel will be giving a presentation on the CCCA to the New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce on Thursday December 6 at 11:30. The CCCA Landowner Workshop is scheduled for February 15, 2019 at Anhalt Hall in Spring Branch. The workshop will address ways for Comal landowners to save family property, offering tools to assist with land management, financial issues, tax valuations and conservation easements.

Georgia Shaffer reported for the Communications Committee, encouraging the audience to visit the 'Recommended Reading' tab on the 'Learn More' page of the CCCA website, where the new "Protected Lands of the Edwards Aquifer" map is posted. Georgia pointed out that there are not many protected lands in Comal County and that's one of the reasons this group was formed. She mentioned that a full version of the map can be downloaded from the web page. Georgia then held up a flyer about the December community meeting and encouraged everyone to take a flyer on the way out and post it on a local bulletin board.

Helen Ballew, CCCA Vice President, announced that Nancy Pappas, Managing Director NBU's Headwaters at the Comal project, will be the speaker at CCCA's January 8th meeting, followed by Ian Taylor, Chief Executive Officer of NBU, at the February 12th meeting.

Helen introduced tonight's guest speaker, Tom Hornseth, Comal County Engineer, who spoke on "The Nuts and Bolts of the Comal County Regional Habitat Conservation Plan." Mr. Hornseth started his talk by explaining that in 2000 Comal County had its first rash of high-density development. This spurred the County to establish its septic system permitting requirements at one-acre minimum lot-size for developments with 'public water' and five-acre minimum lot-size with private residential wells. The County also required developers to identify their future water availability source, stormwater discharge plans and an evaluation of downstream impact. Beyond that, he explained, the State of Texas does not give counties the authority to regulate development or land use.

Mr. Hornseth described the process by which the County Regional Habitat Conservation Plan attempts to preserve Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCW) habitat by requiring developers to pay for protection of alternative habitat for any GCW habitat they destroy (referred to as 'take') in their development process. These compensation funds, called 'mitigation credits' are, theoretically, used to purchase GCW habitat in another part of the county. Unfortunately, Comal County has not been able to identify a 500-acre GCW habitat property (as required by the US Fish and Wildlife Service which oversees the program) to acquire, so funds collected from developers are currently being used to purchase and preserve GCW habitat in Bandera County. One of the solutions to keeping these conservation funds in Comal County is to work to inform owners of large-acre properties that the county is interested in purchasing large properties with Golden-cheeked Warbler habitat, and/or working with property owners to put a Conservation Easement on the property so that the funds stay in Comal County.

Elizabeth thanked Mr. Hornseth for his presentation and assured him that the CCCA is willing and available to help the County in these conservation and habitat protection efforts.

The four CCCA Committees met for brief working sessions. Each committee re-elected their committee chair to serve in 2019: Outreach-Joel Dunnington; Government Affairs-Jensie Madden; Resource Development-Marne' Peterson; and Communications-Georgia Shaffer.

Elizabeth reminded attendees that the December 11 CCCA Community Meeting will be held at the GVTC Auditorium and encouraged everyone to come and to bring a friend. Dr. Larry Sunn of the Comal Trinity Groundwater Conservation District will speak on "Groundwater: What it is, Where it is, and Why we suck!"

Meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.

Submitted by Elizabeth Bowerman for Secretary, Eva Silverfine Ott