

Missouri Board on Geographic Names

May 17, 2018

James C. Kirkpatrick State Information Center

600 W. Main St.

Jefferson City, MO 65101

Voting Members Present: Chair Designee John Dougan, Vice Chair Chris Barnett, Joe Carter, Bryan Chinn, John Fisher, Alan Foreman, David Nail and Henry Sweets. Participating by conference call were Brett Chloupek, Gary Kremer and Frank Nickell.

Voting Members Absent: Joseph Gillman, Debra Greene, Melanie Hans, Lynn Morrow and Tony Spicci.

Non-Voting Members Present: Executive Secretary Brian Rogers and Jane Messenger.

Visitors Present: St. Charles County Manager of Roads and Traffic Amanda Brauer and St. Charles County Assistant Director of Administration John Greifzu.

Chair Designee John Dougan called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

Dougan asked if there were any agenda additions, indicating someone had already requested an update on the spring 2017 Carter County flood recovery efforts. No other additions were forthcoming from the board. Dougan then added that he would like Gary Kremer to provide an update on the State Historical Society of Missouri's new facility in Columbia and activities related to Missouri's bicentennial to which Kremer agreed.

Dougan then asked each member present, as well as the representatives from St. Charles County, to introduce themselves.

Approval of Minutes from the MOBGN's meeting held November 2, 2017

Henry Sweets moved to approve the minutes as presented. Motion seconded by Joe Carter. All in favor. None opposed. Motion approved.

Update on Carter County Flood Recovery Efforts

Dougan stated that the Carter County Courthouse in Van Buren was flooded in April 2017, and that Records Services Division staff from the Office of the Missouri Secretary of State assisted with the air-drying of records necessary for continued County operations. The remainder of their records went to a facility for decontamination and freeze-dried before returning to Carter County. Records Services Division staff will continue to work with the County over the course of the next two or three years to ensure all essential records are microfilmed for preservation purposes.

Board Appointments and Reappointments

Dougan stated that all citizen appointed board members with terms that expired in November 2017 have agreed to serve another three-year term. This includes Henry Sweets, John Fisher and Frank Nickell. He then stated that Lynn Morrow is the only citizen appointed member with a term expiring in 2018, and that Lynn will be asked if he would like to serve another term prior to the board's next meeting in November.

Dougan then explained that the Office of the Missouri Secretary of State has drafted—and had filed with the state legislature—a bill that would add a representative from the Missouri Department of Agriculture to the MOBGN. Although the 2018 legislative session is nearing its conclusion, there is still optimism that bill will pass.

Discussion of a Potential Huesgen Branch Proposal

Dougan indicated that prior to the board's November 2017 meeting, Kremer was approached by an individual wanting to change the name of an Osage County stream from "Housgen Creek" to "Huesgen Branch," to reflect the usage and historical spelling of the "Huesgen" surname in the area. Dougan explained that Executive Secretary Brian Rogers contacted the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in hopes of having the spelling updated in the National Hydrological Dataset, which would officially change the name in the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS), but, unfortunately, DNR is no longer an active steward of the dataset so was unable to make the update. To make the name change therefore, the proponent must submit an official proposal. Dougan explained that Rogers will reach out to this individual in the next few weeks with directions on how to do this through the United State Board on Geographic Names online proposal submission portal in hopes of having an official proposal ahead of the board's November 2018 meeting.

Kremer explained that the stream has historically been known as Huesgen Branch, but that the spelling was for some reason changed to "Housgen" on a Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) map produced in the 1970s. Joe Carter stated he would check the appropriate MoDOT records ahead of the board's November meeting to find exactly when this name change occurred.

Discussion of the Archer Alexander Creek Proposal

Vice Chair Chris Barnett gave an overview of the Archer Alexander Creek proposal submitted by Steve Ehlmann, St. Charles County Executive, and the county's Manager of Roads and Traffic. He stated that it involves a previously unnamed 2.5-mile long stream in St. Charles County, MO, with its head in the city of O'Fallon. It flows generally south through the town of Cottleville to enter Dardenne Creek 3.9 miles north northwest of Weldon. The name commemorates Archer Alexander (1813-1879), a former slave who lived in the area. The name is not found in the GNIS database, but the stream is identified locally and on several Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) and Federal Emergency Management Administration maps as "Tributary B," "East Branch Tributary

B” and “East Tributary B.” The proponents acknowledged that the proposal is not in line with the US BGN’s long name policy, but feels the full name is warranted because “Alexander” was likely the surname of his owner. The cities of Cottleville and O’Fallon, as well as the St. Charles County Council, all passed resolutions in favor of the proposal.

Barnett indicated that there are a number of exhibits associated with the proposal, including a document on Archer Alexander’s background, the above-mentioned resolutions, a number of photographs of the current highway bridge identifying the creek as “Tributary B” and several maps, both historic and current.

Barnett stated that there are a number of branches at the upper end of the identified stream, and that the proposed source is for the longest and straightest of these, in accordance with the US BGN’s policy.

Barnett then asked for a motion from the floor to recommend the proposal to the US BGN. Henry Sweets moved to approve the proposal. Motion seconded by Carter. Barnett then opened the floor to discussion.

Jane Messenger stated that Jenny Runyon, with the US BGN, indicated this was one of the best prepared proposals she has ever seen.

Barnett asked the board if they had any concerns about the proposal violating the US BGN’s long name policy. Carter asked if there was a precedent of the US BGN approving long names in certain instances. Messenger replied in the affirmative, noting that the approval of this proposal would not be unusual, especially since “Alexander” is such a common name. Barnett agreed, stating that approval of long names is common in proposals commemorating specific individuals. John Dougan also agreed, indicating that Mr. Alexander’s historic significance should make this an easy decision.

Barnett then asked the board if they knew of any significance tied to this particular stream, or if it was simply because Mr. Alexander resided in the area. Carter replied that the stream flows through land once owned by the Campbell family, whom Mr. Alexander turned in to the Union Army during the Civil War for hiding Confederate arms.

Barnett asked about the local usage of “Tributary B” and whether it has been proposed as a variant name. Messenger stated that if the proposal is approved, Jenny Runyon would also add all of the variant names to GNIS. Carter stated that he looked at MoDOT maps showing the creek flowing under Missouri Route 364 and found that there was a lot of flooding in the area in the early 2000s. He also found that the Army Corps of Engineers did a watershed study around that time in which “Tributary B” is twice listed, which is probably why the road sign identifies it as such. Carter also stated that these maps and the study indicate that the stream has been heavily channelized near the mouth in recent years. Barnett asked Carter to identify the number of the bridge crossing “Tributary B.” Carter replied that it is bridge number A8201.

Dougan and David Nail asked why the proposal was for the stretch of stream between the green and blue circles on the topographic map exhibit, instead of the two blue circles. Amanda Brauer with St. Louis County stated that the stretch of stream between the two blue circles often flows underground through subdivisions and was thus not chosen for the proposal. Further, she indicated Jenny Runyon suggested the source found in the proposal.

John Dougan asked the representatives from St. Charles County if there are local names in usage for the streams splitting off to the west of Tributary B. John Greifzu responded that these are known locally as Babble and Deer creeks, and as such, were not selected for the proposal. Dougan then suggested St. Charles County submit proposals to officially name these streams. Carter indicated that the watershed study provides the names of known tributaries running in Dardenne Creek and that “Babble” and “Deer” are not among them. Dougan asked Carter to provide Executive Secretary Brian Rogers with this study for inclusion with the official proposal. Carter stated he would send it via email.

Barnett called for a vote on the motion to recommend the US BGN approve the Archer Alexander Creek proposal. All in favor. None opposed. Motion approved.

The representatives from St. Charles County left the meeting at 11:03 a.m.

Discussion of COGNA Activities

Barnett indicated that he has secured funding to represent Missouri at the 2018 COGNA conference in Tacoma, Washington, from June 19 to 23, and is in the process of making travel arrangements.

Barnett stated that at the board’s November 2, 2017 meeting there was discussion about Missouri potentially hosting the 2021 COGNA conference in conjunction with Missouri’s bicentennial of statehood. He then asked Gary Kremer to provide a few details on bicentennial related activities as the State Historical Society of Missouri (SHS) is leading these efforts. Kremer stated that Missouri’s recently passed budget provides \$200,000 in funding for the celebration, but a house committee resolution that would create a bicentennial commission likely will not be passed during the current legislative session. Despite this, SHS has a goal of making this as wide a celebration as possible. To that end, they have created an informal group of stakeholder institutions called the Bicentennial Alliance, including SHS, the Missouri State Archives (MSA), the Missouri Humanities Council, the Missouri History Museum and the Missouri Council for Social Studies, as well as hired someone to travel around the state to engage smaller institutions and civic groups. Dougan then indicated that MSA is contributing a traveling exhibit and SHS an online encyclopedia that will initially focus on historically important Missourians.

Barnett asked Kremer if there was a website with information about the bicentennial celebration. Kremer responded that there is at www.Missouri2021.org.

Barnett then stated that if the board is interested in Missouri hosting the 2021 COGNA conference in conjunction with the bicentennial, he would need to make a proposal at this year's conference. He indicated that Missouri has hosted past conferences in both St. Louis and Springfield, but that Springfield presented some problems due to the expense of air transportation, and that there had been a previous board discussion about hosting it in either Kansas City or St. Joseph. Barnett asked Kremer if there are any plans for bicentennial related activities in either of these locations. Kremer responded that he is not aware of any at this time, but there is good chance that both will host some activities. Barnett then asked if the MOBGN should plan on any kind of activities or representation regarding the bicentennial at the 2021 COGNA conference if Missouri were to host. Kremer responded that he does not know of anything specific because it is still too far out.

Barnett stated that the board does not need to decide on a venue at this point, but that there will need to be a motion for him to propose Missouri as a potential 2021 host at this year's conference. He then opened the floor to discussion.

Dougan asked if the conference would be held in either Kansas City or St. Louis with a toponymic tour occurring elsewhere. Barnett replied that this would certainly be a possibility. Dougan then indicated that the board had previously discussed a toponymic tour related to the New Madrid Fault, but that hosting in Cape Girardeau would be difficult for those coming in from out-of-state. Carter stated that flights to the Columbia Regional Airport are now reasonable if the board was interested in hosting the conference in central Missouri. Barnett agreed and then stated that perhaps the board should at this time just focus on whether Missouri should host the 2021 conference and not the specific venue.

Rogers asked who typically plans COGNA conferences. Barnett replied that it is by a committee including a member of the BGN from the host state, members of the BGNs hosting the previous and following year's conferences and the COGNA executive secretary. Dougan indicated that, should Missouri be chose to host, MSA and SHS facilities will have many bicentennial related events around the time of the 2021 conference so board members will likely need to be involved in the planning.

Kremer asked how many people generally attend a COGNA conference. Barnett replied that due to state budget cuts, attendance the last couple of years has been between 30 and 40, but historically there have been upwards of 100. He further stated that because the conference is so small, any moderate or large Missouri city would have the capacity to host. Barnett then asked for a motion to carry to the COGNA executive secretary at the 2018 conference a proposal for an unspecified Missouri city to host the 2021 COGNA conference. So moved by John Fisher. Motion seconded by Carter. All in favor. None opposed. Motion approved.

Kremer left the meeting at 11:25 a.m.

Report from Jane Messenger on her Recent GNIS Project

Messenger explained that she is now uploading into GNIS information from digitized index cards on geographic place naming activities from approximately the last 100 years. These cards are often missing information or the information provided is incorrect, but they typically include a feature name, its coordinates, variant names, the county and state in which it is located, elevation and the information source. The vast majority are either US BGN “Decision” cards or “Work” cards submitted by the individual states.

Messenger indicated that she is finding many missing features within GNIS, while many of the found features are missing the county and/or state in which they are located. She is also finding many duplicate records, especially in instances where features are situated across state lines, as well as new variants, GNIS typos and card errors. When information is missing or incorrect, Messenger updates the GNIS record, while duplicate records are deleted.

Messenger has so far examined more than 55,000 Work cards, from Colorado, Connecticut and Washington, D.C., while those from Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona and California are digitized and ready for her to review in the coming months.

Board Recognition of Jane Messenger

Barnett indicated Jane Messenger is stepping down from the board following this meeting. He then stated that she was instrumental in the formation of the MOBGN in 1995 after seeing such boards effectively operate in other states.

A photograph from the first meeting was then projected and Barnett and Messenger identified those board members shown.

On behalf of the MOBGN, Barnett then recognized Messenger’s long service to the board and her importance to the successful conduct of business as the long time board secretary. He then presented Messenger with plaque reading “Honoring Jane Messenger, in sincerest appreciation of her 23 years of service on the Missouri Board on Geographic Names. Your commitment to the citizens of Missouri and its geography will be greatly missed.”

Messenger then thanked the board and stated how much she has enjoyed working with everyone.

Discussion about Next Meeting

Barnett stated the tentative date of the board’s next meeting is November 15, 2018, and that it will likely be again held at the Secretary of State’s office in Jefferson City. He then asked if this causes problems for anyone and no answers were forthcoming.

Adjournment

Barnett asked if there was any further business to discuss and no answers were forthcoming. He then asked for a motion to adjourn. So moved by Henry Sweets. Motion seconded by David Nail. All in favor. None opposed. Motion approved.

Meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.