

CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

**REGULAR MEETING
110 EAST STATE STREET**

ARTHUR A. MENDONSA HEARING ROOM

June 6, 2007

2:00 P.M.

MINUTES

CCHPC Members Present:

**George Cohen, Vice-Chairman
Vaughnette Goode-Walker
Stephen T. Lindell
Pamela G. Lossing
Christian Sottile
Lisa L. White
William Haynes**

CCHPC Members Not Present:

Daves Rossell, Chairman

CCHPC/MPC Staff Members Present:

**Ellen Harris, Historic Preservation Planner
Janine N. Person, Administrative Assistant
Constance Morgan, Administrative Assistant**

I. WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Cohen asked the Board members and Staff to give brief introductions.

III. GUEST SPEAKER

Ms. Harris introduced Dr. Charles Elmore, Professor of Humanities at Savannah State University, who was also a keynote speaker at the Vernacular Architecture Forum.

Dr. Elmore spoke about the African-American history dealing with contributions made to the unincorporated areas of Chatham County. He said he is a native of Savannah and a member of the Steele family, along with others who were the original families at Monteith, and that there were things at Monteith and Port Wentworth that needed preserving and saving. While working on his book, "General David Hunter's Proclamation: The Quest for African-American Freedom Before and During the Civil War", he came across some interesting research. He spoke about the Siege of Savannah, the anti-slave laws, and Lazaretto Creek that he felt deserved a historic marker commemorating the site where slaves died, and how they were quarantined in the house built on the land purchased from Josiah Tattnall. He asked the Board members what they knew about Fort Pulaski from an afro-centric perspective.

Ms. Goode-Walker answered that during the Civil War when the field order was issued, that if you were black and got to Fort Pulaski you were free by the Union Army.

Dr. Elmore stated that was correct and said it was something he uncovered while writing the book on General Hunter. He often wavered in his belief that the First African Baptist Church was an underground railroad. He spoke more about Fort Pulaski, Mr. Haynes, and the black slaves becoming free. When Dr. Elmore was commissioned to do research for the park service, an Underground Railroad link was established. They commissioned the archaeological division to do a reproduction oil portrait of Mr. Haynes, frightened black people, Fort Pulaski, and an American flag. He spoke about Special Order No. 7 and Special Order No. 11 that freed the slaves. He said Monteith was a community founded by slaves over 200 years ago, and he had relatives that were buried in the Richmond Church and Cherokee Hill cemetery, the battle of Monteith Swamp, Houston Church, the White Oak Baptist Church, and the Hermitage Plantation.

Ms. Goode-Walker asked about the markers for the auction.

Dr. Elmore answered it would be at the old Ten Broeke Race Track between Louisville Road and the Coastline Railroad.

Ms. White asked if the churches mentioned were on the National Register.

Dr. Elmore stated he did not think they were but thought that Houston Church should have a marker. He said the Historical Society approved a marker for them.

Ms. White asked if the different places were within the city limits of Port Wentworth.

Dr. Elmore stated he was not sure but thought they were in Port Wentworth.

Mr. Lindell asked if Monteith was all contained within Chatham County.

Dr. Elmore stated it was all in Chatham County.

Mr. Lindell asked if Lazaretto Creek was used for a broader purpose with Ellis Island for general integration.

Dr. Elmore stated that people coming into Savannah were quarantined, but a huge percentage of the quarantine slaves died at Lazaretto Creek and it is like a forgotten sore in history.

Mr. Cohen thanked Dr. Elmore for his presentation and acknowledged him as a great resource.

IV. REVISED CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS APPLICATION

Ms. Harris stated there had been minor changes to the application that the Board reviewed last year. She made minor revisions with Mr. Gregori Anderson and the Department of Building and Regulatory Services to make sure it met their criteria. She asked Board members if there were any questions and gave a brief overview of the changes.

CCHPC ACTION: Ms. Lossing made a motion that the Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission does hereby approve the changes to the Certificate of Appropriateness application as submitted. Mr. Lindell seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

V. UPDATES

A. Contact with Communities/Individuals Interested in District or Property Nominations

Ms. Harris stated the New Ogeechee Missionary Baptist Church was the first applicant and had the first reading of the ordinance to designate. She said there would be a second reading of the official designation on June 11, 2007, at 9:30 a.m. at the Chatham County Courthouse on Bull Street.

Ms. Harris said the private Maridon property on Wilmington Island will have the application, materials, and ordinance to be approved at the July 5, 2007, meeting.

Ms. Harris said that Isle of Hope was still collecting signatures and were up to 60 signatures. She thought they needed to collect 72 signatures, which would be 51 percent of the people.

B. Plaques for Historic Properties

Ms. Harris stated the discussion at the May 2 meeting regarding having plaques for historic properties when they are listed on the Chatham County register has a program through the Historic Savannah Foundation, and that it should be utilized. She said Ms. Melissa Jest is the staff person who handles the program.

C. MPC Historic Preservation Department- Board Retreat- June 15

Ms. Harris stated the Board retreat would be held at the MPC, that it would be an excellent opportunity, and the agenda is tentative.

V. MEETING MINUTES - May 2, 2007

CCHPC ACTION: Mr. Sottile made a motion that the Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission does hereby approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Lindell seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Cohen asked if Board members would be able to attend the July meeting.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Chatham County Historic Preservation Commission the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris,
Preservation Planner

EH/jnp