

CHATHAM COUNTY- SAVANNAH HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT COMMISSION

**REGULAR MEETING
112 EAST STATE STREET**

ARTHUR A. MENDONSA HEARING ROOM

September 7, 2006

4:00 P.M.

MINUTES

HSMC Members Present:

**Walter Wright, Chairman
Laverne Ricks-Brown, Secretary
Phillip Williams
Frank Lang**

HSMC/MPC Staff Present:

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

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Wright introduced himself and asked the other members of the Commission to introduce themselves. Everyone welcomed Mr. Williams as the newest member of the Commission.

Present for the petition was Mr. Gregg Schroeder.

Ms. Harris gave the Staff report.

**RE: Petition of the United Way of the Coastal Empire
Part I: Thematic Review
File No.: C-060721-50784-2
United Way Sculpture**

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The petitioner is requesting Part I thematic approval for a monument to be erected in front of the portico steps of the United Way Building at 428 Bull Street.

FINDINGS:

The petitioner originally submitted the application while a moratorium on new monuments and public art was in effect. The moratorium has subsequently expired for monuments on private property. The Site and Monument Commission informally reviewed the application on August 3rd, but made no recommendation because of the moratorium. The proposed monument will be visible from the public right-of-way on Bull, Taylor, and Wayne Streets.

The site is in front of the headquarters of United Way of the Coastal Empire, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving peoples' lives by mobilizing communities.

The theme of the monument will be social and humanitarian, relating to the mission and goals of the United Way. This theme relates to all citizens of the City and County. There are no other known monuments dedicated to either the mission of the United Way or Herschel Jenkins within the City. It does not fit into any established thematic pattern in the City.

The proposed format will be a sculpture in the form of a statue in Georgia marble. The petitioner presented two sketches at the previous meeting: one consisted of a family on the hand of the United Way, and the other consisted of a statue of Herschel Jenkins with two children on the hand of the United Way. The petitioner stated at the previous meeting that the statues would be one-and-a-half life size.

Herschel V. Jenkins was one of the original founders of the United Way the Coastal Empire and a well-known philanthropist. He was born in Effingham County in 1871 and moved to Savannah in 1888. He worked for the Old Central Railroad Bank, Central of Georgia Railroad and the Ocean Steamship Company before retiring as Publisher and President of the Savannah News-Press in 1957. He passed away in 1960. His philanthropic activities, in addition to generous support of the United Way, included chairmanship of Armstrong State College and serving in a leadership capacity on a number of civic improvements, including the building of the Talmadge Bridge. He was a very significant figure in Savannah and his contributions relate to all citizens.

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend approval of the theme. The Petitioner will still need to submit Parts II and III to the Commission. Consider reducing the size of the statues to life size.

Mr. Lang asked who owned the building. He thought that it would be owned by the citizens.

Mr. Gregg Schroeder (President of the United Way of the Coastal Empire) stated they are a not-for-profit charity, but they are a separate entity that has an all-volunteer Board of Directors, but it is not a public entity.

Mr. Wright asked Mr. Schroeder if they would like to address the Commission in any way, or if they had any comments.

Mr. Schroeder stated the idea originated at their annual meeting they held in March, when Mr. Mach approached them. He had done quite a bit of sculpture work primarily in Georgia marble. He said he has a block of Georgia marble somewhat taller than that, but if it was the Commission's desire to make it life-size and not one-and-one-half, then that was fine. Mr. Mach volunteered to sculpt it as a gift to the community. Of course, it will be in great taste and professionally done.

Mr. Wright asked Mr. Mach if it would be a problem to make it life-size versus one-and-one-half.

Mr. Isaac Henry Mach stated he was a sculptor by trade, and his heart went out to United Way. He has great respect for the United Way. It is not the only piece that he wants to do for Savannah, he wants to start promoting other art endeavors for the community in general. He stated he came up in very poor surroundings and a gentleman by the name of Mr. Adler started him at the Telfair Art Academy when he was a child of eight or nine years of age. He wants to do it not just for the United Way, but to create something that Savannah would be proud of.

Mr. Wright stated it was a fine gesture on Mr. Mach's part to do this pro bono. He stated the display is an example of some of Mr. Mach's work.

Mr. Mach stated the display is Carrera marble, which is an interpretation of the 23rd Psalm. He said it is similar but not exactly like Georgia marble. The Georgia marble that he will be using has striations of darker gray in it. He handpicked it and it is 11 feet tall and weighs 10 tons, which he will reduce it to whatever United Way wants. The base will be cupped hands, which is their logo, the helping hand.

Mr. Wright asked if he would cut out some of the hedges and make a niche.

Mr. Mach stated that is correct. He said the two centerpieces of the columns where the arrow points on the picture would be five feet deep by six and one-half feet wide at that point. They would put something as a graffiti guard around it in bronze installed last. The sculpture would be just above the rail guard to get recognition and the height they need for visual aesthetics.

Mr. Wright stated the Commission was not directing the statue to be life-sized, but those are some of the informal comments. He said the Technical Advisory Committee would examine the design considerations.

Mr. Mach stated it was no problem at all to reduce the statue to life-size.

Mr. Schroeder asked what was the next step.

Ms. Harris stated they would need to submit Part II. She stated there was a checklist of the things to submit to Staff. When Part II was submitted, then the Technical Advisory Committee would review it and make a recommendation to this body. If the body so chooses, then the Technical Advisory Committee and the Commission can have a joint meeting.

Mr. Wright stated they will make it as user-friendly as possible.

HSMC ACTION: Ms. Ricks-Brown made a motion that the Historic Site and Monument Commission does hereby approve Part I: Thematic Review File No.: C-060721-50784-2 as submitted. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

I. Approval of Meeting Minutes - August 3, 2006

HSMC ACTION: Ms. Ricks-Brown made a motion that the Historic Site and Monument Commission does hereby approve the minutes as submitted. Mr. Lang seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

II. Update on changes to Johnny Mercer Marker

Ms. Harris stated at the last meeting the Commission approved the Johnny Mercer Marker, on the condition that they look into the capitalization of the title of "founding president." She said that Christy Crisp, the petitioner, had looked it up and found it should not be capitalized at all, that both letters should be lower case. Ms. Crisp also found in the process of doing her research that where the Academy Awards were mentioned, that it needed to have a trademark

logo sign beside it, and that was added. It was approved at Staff level. It went before the City Council and was approved unanimously.

III. Update on World War II Monument

Ms. Harris stated the Commission should have a memo that states that the Chairman of the Veterans Council, Mr. Ernst, contacted Ms. Harris and she met with him and the Chairman of their Design Committee, and they had a positive meeting regarding the World War II Monument.

Mr. Wright asked if it was in response to his letter.

Ms. Harris stated it was in response to his letter. They explained that the designs published in the newspaper which caused some concern about the size, were actually designs of existing World War II monuments in other cities, and not proposed designs for this particular square. It just was not made clear in the newspaper. They were still soliciting designs from different architects because their competition is ongoing. They will continue to solicit designs until December 31st. They will decide on a design at the beginning of January, and they hope to be ready to submit something to the Commission by the February meeting. They agreed to consult with Ms. Harris during their deliberations on the design. They said they would keep her informed and she could be a part of that process to offer advice as they go forward. She thought it was a really positive meeting.

Ms. Harris stated she explained the whole process to them, the application procedure, what they had been approved for, and what they had not been approved for. They understand, and are very willing to work with the Commission, as the Commission is to work with them.

IV. Update on Moratorium/Monument Master Plan Status (December 16 extension)

Ms. Harris stated the moratorium, in order to develop the Master Plan and Guidelines, has been extended. At the City Council meeting on August 17, 2006, they agreed to extend it for four months to December 16, 2006. It only applies to monuments on public property and does not apply to any markers anywhere, and it does not apply to monuments on private property.

Mr. Wright asked if the World War II Monument petitioners could still go forward with the process.

Ms. Harris answered absolutely. She said if the application process has been started, those monuments are exempt from this moratorium. That would include the World War II Monument.

Ms. Ricks-Brown stated she had a question pertaining to the comments made regarding the Haitian Monument's accuracy. She asked if the Commission had any ability to double-check some things to verify accuracy and request changes if necessary.

Ms. Harris stated technically speaking they already approved the design. She knew that Mr. Smith had some concerns about it, and she pulled the minutes and found out whom the military consultant was that they used. She recommended Mr. Smith follow up with the French military historian consultant. She had not heard anything else.

Mr. Wright stated Mr. Smith mentioned to him that he appreciated getting the information in the mail and no longer considered it an issue.

a. Next meeting (scheduled October 5)

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Savannah-Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris
Preservation Planner

EH/jnp