

SAVANNAH – CHATHAM HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT COMMISSION

**REGULAR MEETING
112 EAST STATE STREET**

ARTHUR A. MENDONSA HEARING ROOM

November 2, 2006

4:00 P.M.

MINUTES

HSMC Members Present:

**Walter Wright, Chairman
Laverne Ricks-Brown, Secretary
Phillip Williams, Board Member
Frank Lang, Ex-Officio**

HSMC Members Not Present:

Gordon Smith, Vice-Chairman

HSMC/MPC Staff Present:

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

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

Present for the petition was Mr. Brian White.

- I. RE: Petition of the Coastal Heritage Society
Parts I, II, and III
File No.: C-060928-56397-2
Memorial Field in Battlefield Park**

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The petitioner is requesting Part I (Thematic), Part II (Format, Location, Budget & Funding, Commissioning), and Part III (Design) approval for a monument to soldiers of the Siege of Savannah, a Revolutionary War battle, in the form of a memorial field as part of the larger Battlefield Park project.

FINDINGS:

Moratorium Status: While the vision for Battlefield Park has been evolving for a number of years, construction of an earthen fortification (redoubt) began in the fall of 2005. The City has determined that because construction of Battlefield Park began prior to the implementation of the moratorium, the memorial field is exempt from the moratorium.

Visibility: The proposed monument will be visible from the public rights-of-way on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, Louisville Road, Purse Street, and West Harris Street.

Location: The location of the proposed monument is located on the public lands (owned by the City of Savannah) of Battlefield Park, the site of the Siege of Savannah which took place on October 9, 1779. The original Spring Hill Redoubt was discovered during an archaeological

excavation in the summer of 2005. An interpretive re-creation of the redoubt was built a few hundred yards away from the original. The memorial walk will be located approximately 90 feet from the recreated redoubt, and 25 feet from the original redoubt.

Theme: The themes of the monument will be education, conservation, military, and political. The monument will serve as an interactive interpretative site as visitors will be able to walk along the memorial stones that lead to the redoubt, recreating the same formation that soldiers used to attack the British over 200 years ago. The archaeological remains and artifacts as well as the battlefield itself will be conserved as a part of this project. As a significant military and political-themed monument, the project commemorates the battle site of the Siege of Savannah in which soldiers from Haiti, France, Britain, Native American tribes, and America all fought.

There are other monuments within the City which commemorate the people and events associated with the Revolutionary War including the British Evacuation of Savannah at the south end of Forsyth Park Extension, the Coutineau de Kerlonguen Memorial in Colonial Park Cemetery, Greene Monument in Johnson Square, the proposed Haitian Monument in Franklin Square, the Jasper Monument in Madison Square, the Jasper Springs Monument off Highway 80, the Pulaski Monument in Monterey Square, the Southern Line of Defense Monument in Madison Square, and the Washington Guns on Bay Street. The memorial walk at Battlefield Park is unique in that it lies on the original site of the Siege of Savannah and is a memorial to all the fallen soldiers of that battle.

Format: The format for the proposed monument will consist of eight hundred granite markers laid out in eighty rows of ten, each funded by an individual donor. The markers represent the number of soldiers historically found in an attacking column of troops. Each marker will measure two feet by two feet, the approximate space occupied by a soldier and his equipment. Inscribed on each marker will be the soldier's name, rank, and contributions made to the war. The last line of the inscription will list the donor's name. The total dimensions of the memorial walk will be 199 feet 6-inches by 24 feet 6-inches. The petitioner has stamped engineering construction drawings for the memorial walk.

A flagpole will be placed at the west end of the walk.

There will be a sign near the intersection of Louisville Road and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard reading:

“October 9, 1779
In Memory of Those Who Fought Here”

The proposed sign will be made of steel channels and tubing, stainless steel expanded metal, and bronze lettering. It will be 20 feet long and 2 feet 4 1/8-inches tall. This sign was approved unanimously by the Historic District Review Board (File Number H-060928-3692-2) on October 11, 2006.

The old Siege of Savannah Monument, which was approved for removal by the Site and Monument Commission on July 21, 1999, will be reinstalled on the site near the original redoubt. The exact location is unknown at this time.

Budget and Funding: The City of Savannah has approved funding for the purchase of the memorial stones. Private donors may purchase inscriptions on the memorial stones. Over

thirty stones have been purchased and \$286,976 in private donations has been pledged. More than 60 percent of the funding has been pledged for the remaining construction costs.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of Parts I, II, and III. Submit exact location of reinstallation of the old Siege of Savannah Monument to Staff.

Ms. Harris said the Technical Advisory Committee had a meeting that afternoon, and they recommended the Commission approve the project. Their discussion was about the upkeep and maintenance of the site. Dr. Blood stated concerns stemming from the condition from the old Siege of Savannah Monument, and the appropriate entity should do a better job with the upkeep. However, the old Siege of Savannah Monument had been on private property and a private entity was responsible. It subsequently was removed because the lack of upkeep and visitor access. Ms. Harris felt the situation had been mitigated with the new project. She stated other questions were regarding the inscriptions. The City had approved the funding to purchase all of the stones, and all 800 of the stones without inscriptions will be installed. Over 30 of the stones have paid donations for the inscriptions to be placed. The entire monument can be installed, and as the donations are received, the inscriptions will be added.

Mr. Williams asked if maintenance would be by the City or the Coastal Heritage Society.

Ms. Harris stated she understands that the City owns the land, but Coastal Heritage Society maintains a contract for the upkeep and would be responsible.

Mr. Williams stated it appears from the drawing that the stones would be level with the ground, and if the stones are polished, the weed eaters would scuff up the edges of the shiny face. He asked if stones could be raised a little bit so the weed eater would hit the edge instead of the top.

Mr. Brian White (Coastal Heritage Society), the Project Manager said it would be a steel finish, not as smooth as a countertop, but not a rough surface. It has a scuff and is non-slip. A trimmer line will not damage it.

Mr. Wright asked if there was a good roster of the soldiers.

Mr. White answered there was, but no one could tell exactly how many people fell in the battle on that morning. Four hundred died on the field, and roughly 800 soldiers died later because of mortal wounds, including Count Cashmere Pulaski and Jasper. The 800 number is not arbitrary, but it interpretatively symbolizes the size and scale of a column of troops in attacking formation. There were five columns and they are representing one column. First and foremost, it represents the fallen soldiers whose bodies were dug up and discarded to an undisclosed location when the railroad came through. They never had a proper burial or marker.

Ms. Ricks-Brown asked how much it would cost the donor for marker inscription.

Mr. White stated the last amount decided on was \$1779 per stone, symbolizing the anniversary of the battle on October 9, 1779. The money made is put back into the greenspace to enhance it further.

Mr. Williams asked if they considered lighting on the sign and the markers.

Mr. White answered yes. He said the markers would be unlit but the flag would be lit because it would be flying at night. The City has stated that they want to put five lights along Louisville Road. They are in the process of picking a style of light. They might duplicate the ones from MLK, or change to identify the space as an Industrial and Revolutionary War field, distinct from the rest of the Historic District.

Mr. Williams asked if they are going to up-light the sign.

Mr. White said yes, they are going to light the sign with low voltage halogen spotlights.

Mr. White stated everything placed on the field has an interpretative meaning. The distance away from the redoubt is the space where the most casualties would have been suffered. The second bloodiest battle of the Revolutionary War, and the single bloodiest hour of the Revolutionary War took place in our City, but it has been unrecognized of for the past 226 years.

SMC ACTION: Ms. Ricks-Brown made a motion that the Savannah - Chatham Historic Site and Monument Commission does hereby approve the petition as submitted. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES - September 7, 2006

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

III. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Next Meeting - Scheduled December 4, 2006

Ms. Harris stated the next meeting would be December 4, 2006, if applications were received. She said it is not the normal first Thursday of the month meeting due to a scheduling conflict.

B. Contact Information

Ms. Harris asked everyone to update their contact information.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Savannah – Chatham Historic Site and Monument Commission, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris
Preservation Planner

EH/jnp