

SAVANNAH - CHATHAM HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT COMMISSION

**REGULAR MEETING
112 EAST STATE STREET**

ARTHUR A. MENDONSA HEARING ROOM

February 1, 2007

4:00 P.M.

MINUTES

HSMC Members Present:

**Walter Wright, Chairman
Gordon Smith, Vice-Chairman
LaVerne Ricks-Brown, Secretary
Phillip Williams, Commission Member
Frank Lang, Ex-Officio**

HSMC Members Not Present:

HSMC/MPC Staff Present:

**Ellen Harris, Preservation Planner
Janine N. Person, Administrative Assistant
Brian Carney, Historic Preservation Intern**

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

Ms. Harris gave the Staff report.

**II. Petition of Dr. Julius Hornstein
File No.: C-020812-52863-2
King Oliver Marker**

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The petitioner is requesting approval to erect a plaque honoring Joseph "King" Oliver, a pioneer in Jazz art form who spent the last years of his life in Savannah (1937-1938).

FINDINGS:

The petitioner originally submitted a marker application in 2002, and the Site and Monument Commission approved (August 22, 2002) the Theme with a continuation for the Location and Format.

Joe "King" Oliver died in Savannah in 1938. He was a renowned figure in Jazz, a pioneer in the Jazz art form, mentor to Louis Armstrong, composer and inventor of the trumpet mute.

The plaque is to be installed at 514 Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard. The plaque will be bronze and measure 12 inches by 22 inches.

COMMENTS:

“Brunswick” on the image of the album is spelled incorrectly.

Consider starting a new paragraph with the sentence, “King Oliver’s fame was raised among the great early....”

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the marker with minor text revisions.

Dr. Julius Hornstein gave a brief history of the last years of Joe “King” Oliver’s life, how he was exploited, his royalties were denied, he invented of the Jazz mute, and overall how he was under-recognized. He mentioned a biography that is being written by Jean Pierre Leon, and shared his excitement about the project.

Mr. Wright asked if the plaque is being installed on the actual building that Mr. Oliver’s rooming house was in.

Dr. Hornstein answered no. He said the pool hall where he worked was at 528 Montgomery Street, and he lived within one-half block of that, which was the site of Joe Levine’s Dry Goods Store.

Dr. Walter Evans stated he gave permission for the plaque to be placed on the site.

Mr. Smith asked why they chose this particular site.

Dr. Evans stated there are only two buildings that have been restored in the area. Other buildings have not been restored or were demolished. This building is close to the area where Mr. Oliver lived and worked on Montgomery and Gaston Streets.

Dr. Hornstein stated the site is directly across the street from the SDRA, which will bring tourist and visitor traffic. He believes it will enhance the historic aura of MLK and Old West Broad Street. Mr. Oliver died unrecognized and unappreciated. He only received a gravestone in New York a few years ago. This effort would be correcting that wrong. Mrs. Oliver is still alive and may do the unveiling.

Mr. Wright asked if Mrs. Oliver lives in New York.

Dr. Hornstein answered no. She lives at the Rose of Sharon.

Dr. Evans said if the monument is approved, Wynton Marsalis will be in town at the unveiling on March 24, 2007. He said there is a New Orleans connection of Joe “King” Oliver, Louis Armstrong, and Wynton Marsalis, all trumpeters. They have arranged for Mr. Marsalis to be present at a ceremony for the unveiling.

HSMC ACTION: Ms. LaVerne Ricks-Brown made a motion that the Savannah – Chatham Historic Site and Monument Commission does hereby approve the petition as presented. Mr. Smith seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

III. APPROVAL OF NEW APPLICATIONS

- A. Marker Application
- B. Request for Site Evaluation Application
- C. Part I: Theme and Location- Monument/Public Art Application
- D. Part II: Design and Funding- Monument/Public Art Application

Ms. Harris stated the revised application forms the Commission received are the updated application forms, which reflect the guidelines and criteria developed in the Master Plan. They include a Marker Application, and the Monument and Public Art application, divided into Parts I and II. Part I addresses Theme and Location, and Part II addresses Design and Funding. The third application is a Request for Site Evaluation. This application is necessary if the applicant desires a site not listed as an available site in the Master Plan. There is a total of four application forms.

HSMC ACTION: Mr. Williams made a motion that the Savannah – Chatham Historic Site and Monument Commission does hereby approve the four new applications as presented. Ms. Ricks-Brown seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

IV. MASTER PLAN AND GUIDELINES PRESENTATION

Ms. Harris stated the Commission reviewed the Master Plan and Guidelines on December 24, 2006, and recommended approval to City Council. The City asked the Commission to have another public meeting to allow for public comments, and to have a formal presentation for the public. She has prepared a presentation, however, there are no members of the public present.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Ricks-Brown stated someone mentioned a monument at Lake Mayer Park that was not presented to the Commission, and asked what they could do about it.

Ms. Harris stated she looked into it after comments were previously made. She said Lake Mayer is owned by the City and operated by the County, and the County erected the monument. As a municipal government, the County is not subject to review by the Commission, nor is the City. If they present things to the Commission, it is as a courtesy. It is the same with all Boards, for example, if the City wanted to make a change on a building that they own within the Historic District, they inform the Historic Review Board as a courtesy, but they don't have to get the Board's permission. Because it was a County project, they did not have to come before the Commission.

Ms. Ricks-Brown asked if some notification should come to the Commission.

Ms. Harris stated she agreed, and said if the Commission wanted her to contact the County authorities she would. However, she did not feel it would be in their best interest.

Mr. Williams stated he felt it took some of the power and legitimacy away from the Commission.

Mr. Smith stated he wanted it on the record that the Commission did not approve the monument.

Mr. Wright stated that the Commission was not consulted.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Savannah - Chatham Historic Site and Monument Commission, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris
Preservation Planner

EH/jnp