

SAVANNAH - CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT COMMISSION

**REGULAR MEETING
112 EAST STATE STREET**

ARTHUR A. MENDONSA HEARING ROOM

May 6, 2009

4:00 P.M.

MINUTES

HSMC Members Present:

**Gordon Smith, Chairman
Phillip Williams, Vice-Chairman
Walt Harper
Adrienn Mendonca
Joshua L. Ward
Walter Wright**

HSMC/MPC Staff Present:

**Thomas L. Thomson, P.E./AICP, Executive Director
Ellen Harris, Preservation Planner
Janine N. Person, Administrative Assistant**

City of Savannah Staff Present:

**Michael Brown, City Manager
Luciana Spracher, Research Library Archivist**

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

Mr. Smith introduced Ms. Adrienn Mendonca, a new Commission member.

II. Petition of the Chatham County Veteran's Council

File No.: C-050817-88954-2

Part II: Final Design and Funding

WWII Monument, River Street

Present for the petition was Mr. Bill Quinan.

Ms. Harris gave the Staff report.

NATURE OF REQUEST: The petitioner requests final design and funding approval of the proposed World War II Monument on River Street to the west of the Hyatt. Previous actions were:

- August 24, 2005, the Historic Site and Monument Commission (HSMC) approved the theme of a WWII Monument.
- December 15, 2005, the HSMC approved Oglethorpe Square as the location for a WWII Monument.

- February 16, 2006, City Council approved Oglethorpe Square as the location for a WWII Monument.
- January 6, 2009, City Council approved River Street as the location for the WWII Monument and approved the concept of the “World Apart” with a representation of the different branches of the armed services.
- April 2, 2009, the HSMC approved the Concept Design.

FINDINGS:

Hemispheres: The proposed monument will consist of a central element divided into two hemispheres to represent the world split apart during WWII and the two theaters of war. The hemispheres will be 26 feet 6 inches wide (at the widest point) and 20 feet tall. The hemisphere will be constructed of cast bronze: the water represented by a blue patina bronze with a smooth finish and the land masses represented by a brown patina bronze with a textured finish. Samples of the bronze finishes will be furnished at the meeting.

There will be a five-foot-wide open passage through the two hemispheres, tapering upwards and outwards. The walls of the passage will consist of an eight-foot-tall granite wall. The names of fallen Chatham County soldiers will be engraved on these walls along side an image of the Purple Heart medal. The criteria used for which names to include on this wall has been provided in the supplementary material (see page 12).

Above the granite wall will be solid bronze and will have, on one side, an image of the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal and an image of the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal. On the other side, an image of the American Campaign Medal and an image of the World War II Victory Medal will be displayed.

Additionally, both sides of the WWII Victory Medal will be cast in bronze relief and inset in the paving in the floor of the hemispheres.

The “Victory Garden” surrounding the globe will be enclosed with a one-foot-tall Georgia Granite wall. The wall will be three feet six inches beyond the globe. It will be planted with appropriate low growing flowers.

Flagpoles: There will be three flagpoles to the south of the monument. These will fly the United States flag, the Georgia State flag, and the POW/MIA flag. They will be 35 feet tall and illuminated at night.

Pedestals/Benches: Along the reconfigured planting beds adjacent to the monument there will be benches flanked by six granite pedestals. The benches will be brick with a cast stone seat and back to match the Georgia granite. If available, reclaimed wood from local WWII era shipbuilding sites will be incorporated in to the seat back/bottom.

The pedestals will be 2 feet 4 inches by 2 feet 4 inches and will be 3 feet 6 inches tall, at their tallest point. Each will feature the bronze medallion of the six services selected to represent the U.S. armed forces during WWII: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Army Air Forces, and Merchant Marine. The Army Air Forces were a branch of the Army but whose accomplishments during WWII led

to the recognition of the U.S. Air Force as a separate branch in 1947. The members of the Merchant Marine were recognized as WWII veterans in 1988. These are the same six branches recognized at the National WWII Memorial in Washington, D.C. There will also be the motto for each branch on the pedestal.

Local Contribution Walkway: There 20-foot by 80-foot walkway between the monument and the River with an image highlighting locations of key wartime production sites and cargo port facilities along the riverfront. The walkway will be constructed of etched Cambrian black granite blocks. A sample will be provided at the meeting.

Dedication Plaque Pedestal: There will be a dedication plaque pedestal to the south of the monument close to River Street. The Georgia granite pedestal will be 2 feet 4 inches by 4 feet 8 inches and will be 3 feet 6 inches tall at the tallest point. The slanted face will have a bronze plaque with the names of key monument participants and the dedication date (see page 23 for full details).

Lighting: Down lighting has been proposed for the interior to illuminate the names of the fallen soldiers on the interior of the globe. This lighting will be inset in the “shelf” feature above the names. The flagpoles and exterior of the hemispheres will also be illuminated through lighting inset into and flush with the ground.

Paving: The proposed design includes paving the area surrounding the two hemispheres in a circular pattern with inscribed memorial bricks. Beyond the circle, bricks will be laid in the “Holland Parquet” pattern to match the existing brick pattern.

Landscaping: The two existing square planters flanking each side of the monument will be reconfigured into triangles to provide more access to the monument.

Funding: The estimated cost of the monument will be \$2,404,707. A funding plan has been provided. The budget is reasonable and the applicant appears capable of raising the necessary funds.

Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art Standards: Relevant standards regarding the design from the Master Plan and Guidelines include:

- *Monuments should be considered permanent and designed accordingly.*
- *Monuments should be designed and constructed of materials suitable for outdoor display. Future maintenance and conservation requirements should be considered.*
- *Monuments should be designed to be reasonably resistant to vandalism.*
- *Monuments should be designed so as not to pose a danger to the curious public, such as the use of sharp objects or loose parts.*
- *Monument design should include landscaping, paving, seating, drainage, lighting, fencing, or other protective measures which may be considered necessary.*
- *Monuments should be of superior quality and craftsmanship.*
- *A monument should be of original design, and public art should be an original work of art (one-of-a-kind) or reproduced in editions of less than 200.*
- *Monuments should be designed to complement and enhance the site in which it is located. It should not compete with or encroach upon existing monuments, public art, or buildings.*

- *Monuments should be respectful of the architectural, historical, geographical, and social/cultural context of the site.*
- *Monuments should be compatible in scale, materials, and form with its context.*
- *The format of the monument should effectively convey the message of the monument to the public.*
- *Donor names may be incorporated into the design (such as inscribed on bricks) but should be discreet and not detract from or dominate the monument or artwork.*
- *The designer and/or fabricator (for a monument) should have completed projects of similar size and scale in the public arena and be able to provide appropriate documentation.*
- *The designer and/or fabricator (for a monument) should have an excellent reputation and be able to provide verifiable references attesting to the quality of work.*
- *The designer and/or fabricator (for a monument) should be able to provide images or samples of existing similar monuments or works of art.*
- *The designer and/or fabricator (for a monument) should be able to demonstrate the ability to meet the proposed timeframe.*

Relevant standards regarding the text from the Master Plan and Guidelines include:

- *Text should be well-researched and based on historically accurate, documented facts.*
- *The text should accurately and effectively convey to the reader the desired message.*
- *Quotations should be noted accordingly and permission from the appropriate authority received.*
- *Text should avoid offensive, obscene, or inflammatory language.*

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of the final design with a reconsideration of the Dedication Plaque Pedestal. For this element, Staff recommends making the element more discreet, such as inseting plaque into the pavers or incorporating it into the benches, rather than being a separate, stand alone element. Staff also recommends simplifying the text on the dedication plaque by not listing the names of the Committee members. Instead just use “Chatham County Veteran’s Council” as this is inclusive of all members. There is little precedent on other monuments to list the names of individual committee members, but dedication plaques typically list the dedication date and the name of the sponsoring organization. Staff recommends approval of the funding.

Mr. Harper asked if the armed forces emblems would be in color.

Ms. Harris stated that they would be cast bronze.

Mr. Wright asked about the number of names. He said that on Skidaway Road at the Memorial Stadium he counted 392 names, but the figure he hears is 492.

Ms. Luciana Spracher (Archivist for the City of Savannah’s Research Library and Municipal Archives) stated that she has specific numbers to give during the presentation.

PETITIONER'S COMMENTS:

Mr. Bill Quinan (Chairman of the Veterans Council of Chatham County) stated that the veterans have come for final approval and have worked long and hard, and that it will be a world class memorial and a lasting tribute to the soldiers and sailors that made the supreme sacrifice in World War II.

Mr. Smith asked if the amount of escrow has been set.

Ms. Harris stated that it has not been set. She said that once it receives approval, it will be forwarded to the Park and Tree Department, and the director of that department will set the escrow amount based on the review of the final drawings.

Ms. Luciana Spracher stated that the Veterans Council has gone through a final design process that has been collaborative with Mr. Eric Meyerhoff, Demiurge, and the City of Savannah staff. She said they looked at how to resolve some of the lingering issues; specifically materials, layout and the use of space, how to incorporate more local meaning, and how to use historical research and evidence to make more informed design decisions. The result is a more meaningful, well thought out high-quality monument. She discussed the monument displaying the slides while giving a brief description.

Mr. Williams stated that they have come a long way and that it is a better monument. He suggested they consider using bronze flagpoles instead of the bright aluminum flagpoles to accentuate the flags. He asked if there is a way to divide the globe in half once instead of dividing the slate below and to spread the globes apart more for people to walk through with one clean break. It might be cheaper than building a precast wall behind the granite, it could be all bronze, and it would be stick-built behind it to brace it. He does not like it in its present state because it seems to take away from the concept of the two worlds apart.

The precast concrete seating will stain over time. He said it is raised over the brick and might chip, so there could be a maintenance issue with the precast. He suggested using brick to aid in the maintenance and it could be built cheaper. It is a great monument

Mr. Ward asked where the lighting would be.

Ms. Spracher stated that the center piece on the outside would have up lighting that will be flush and set into the brick walkway to light the globe from the outside. She said the inside where the wall is splayed provides an interior “shelf” that will have inset down lighting to light the names of the fallen.

Mr. Ward asked about the flagpole lighting.

Ms. Spracher stated that the flagpoles would have ground lighting that will go up.

Mr. Ward asked if there would be anything for the medals above the names.

Ms. Spracher stated that the pedestals will be lit from the flush mount.

Mr. Ward stated that the granite wall around the Victory Garden is at one-foot. He suggested that it be raised to the height of the seating at 16 inches to have a clean datum for the whole monument.

Ms. Mendonca stated that it might prevent some tripping hazards.

Mr. Michael Brown (City Manager) stated that a lot of work has been done with additional details, and thanked the Commission for their knowledge, service, and mission to the community. He said that the elements of the form and function that go together have been achieved, and the monument is appropriate, durable, safe, sustainable, etc. The work has moved into the details of the aesthetics and values, which is the role of the group. He feels the veterans have done a great job of respecting the review requirements and they are dealing with good suggestions about values and aesthetics, and they have given honor to the fallen and those who served in a beautiful setting in the United States. They are asking for the Commission's affirmative vote because it is their intent to present it to City Council. With the work of the veterans and the Commission's vote he believed that although there may be some questions that the monument is ready to go.

Raising money is necessary to build it right and to maintain it into the future. He thinks the veterans have done their work on this, thought it through, worked diligently on the budget, and it's realistic. He has received excellent feedback from people in the community, it will get everyone involved including school children, and is a true opportunity to contribute and learn. He has worked with the restoration of monuments, correcting past mistakes, and he does not see any mistakes with this monument. He feels they have learned from the past mistakes and that this monument will be a wonderful tribute, addition, and asset to Savannah and nationally. It is incumbent on them to get national figures involved in the fundraising and the tribute.

He thanked the veterans for their effort in dealing with the difficulty, said that it was well worth it, and hopes the Commission will vote in the affirmative so that he can present the monument with the veterans at the City Council meeting.

Ms. Spracher stated that she has been working with the Veterans Council on compiling the names for the walls. She said there are 536 names as a result of the data collection process. The criterion has two clauses that resulted in 453 individuals being grandfathered in, and leaving 83 individuals to be verified through military records and the criteria. Of the 453 individuals that have been grandfathered in, 43 have spelling inconsistencies or questions that will go through the verification process to make sure they are appropriate.

Mr. Wright asked if the plaque on Memorial Stadium that covers World War II and Korea is inaccurate, and stated that some names are not on there.

Ms. Spracher stated that it does have inaccuracies and that part of the discrepancy is because the plaque does not list the government's list of Merchant Marine casualties that Chatham County suffered. She said the list went through a public review in 1959 and that names were presented by the public. There are some Merchant Marines on there and certain people from the armed forces who are not on there but are on the government list, which is why there are two clauses. One for the government's published military list representing the Department of War, the Department of Navy, and the Treasury Department for the Merchant Marine, as well as grandfathering in the Memorial Stadium's plaque.

Ms. Harris stated that the TAC reviewed the application this morning and unanimously recommended approval as submitted.

HDRB ACTION: **Mr. Wright made a motion that the Savannah – Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission close the Public Comment session. Mr. Harper seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

BOARD DISCUSSION:

Mr. Ward asked if there is feedback on the raising of the granite wall around Victory Garden.

Mr. Williams stated that he does not like the idea because it sets the earth down further and you see less of the geometry. He said he would rather have nothing there but understands that there needs to be something there to keep people from hitting their heads.

Mr. Harper stated that there needs to be some definition of the Victory Garden and it is a safety issue. He said that he does not think the height needs to be any higher because it will promote people to stand and walk under it.

Ms. Mendonca asked how close the Victory Garden wall is to the sphere.

Ms. Harris stated that it is 3 feet 6 inches from the widest portion of the hemisphere.

Mr. Wright asked about Staff's recommendation to eliminate the free-standing dedication plaque. He asked if the Commission is going to recommend approval to City Council or are they recommending approval with changes.

Mr. Smith stated that the Commission could do it with a recommendation or with a motion to amend.

Mr. Williams stated that Ms. Harris said there is precedence for it. He asked about the Haitian memorial.

Ms. Harris stated that the Haitian memorial lists the Board of Directors of the Haitian Historical Society.

Mr. Ward stated that he agrees with Staff, especially in its new location. He said he is fine with the listing of the names but as far as setting the plaque on a pedestal, he would prefer to see it inset on the ground.

Mr. Wright stated that it could be integrated into the pedestal.

Mr. Ward stated it could be taken off the post because it is still on the raised pedestal. He said it should be a plaque inset in the pavers.

HSMC ACTION: Mr. Ward made a motion that the Savannah – Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission amend the motion to remove the dedication plaque from the pedestal and be inset into the pavers with the revised location. Mr. Wright seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

HSMC ACTION: Mr. Harper made a motion that the Savannah – Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission recommend approval of the monument to City Council with the amendment that the dedication plaque from the pedestal be inset into the pavers with the revised location. Mr. Wright seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Harper stated that he wanted to thank all of the officers of the Veterans Council for sticking with the monument. He asked about the groundbreaking ceremony.

Mr. Quinan stated that if everything goes well and they receive the final approval, there will be a groundbreaking ceremony on Memorial Day, May 25th, at 3:00 p.m.

III. MEETING MINUTES: April 2, 2009

Mr. Smith stated that he thought that Rosie Rosenblume’s name is misspelled and should be “Rosenbloom”, but that he is not certain.

HSMC ACTION: Mr. Williams made a motion that the Savannah-Chatham County Site and Monument Commission approve the minutes with Staff to check on the spelling of the name. Mr. Ward seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Ms. Harris stated that when there is an official meeting that Commission members can park in the garage for free if they have their parking ticket stamped and signed to validate it. She said that sometimes the sign will say “Full” and you won’t be able to get a ticket. Press the “Call” button to ring the attendant, tell them you’re here for a meeting, and they should let you in.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris
Preservation Planner

EH/jnp