



S A V A N N A H - C H A T H A M C O U N T Y  
HISTORIC SITE & MONUMENT COMMISSION

Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room  
February 4, 2009 4:00 PM  
Meeting Minutes

**Historic Site and Monument Commission February 4, 2010 Final Agenda**

**I. Call to Order and Welcome**

1. [Call to Order](#)

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

**II. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

2. [Meeting Minutes December 3, 2009](#)

Attachment: [HSMC&TAC Minutes 12-03-09.pdf](#)

Approval of the December 3, 2009 Meeting Minutes upon motion of Mr. Harper, seconded by Mr. Williams and carried.

**III. Regular Agenda**

3. [C-100121-54796-2 Forsyth Park Sculpture](#)

Attachment: [Photographs of proposed site.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Site Evaluation Staff Report.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Artist Resume and Samples of Work.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Site map, plans.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Parts I and II Staff Report.pdf](#)

**Ms. Harris** gave the staff report. She said it would be beneficial for the HSMC to make two separate motions. The first motion would be on the Site Evaluation and the second motion would be on the Design Parts I and II. She reported that the Technical Advisory Committee met this morning, discussed the appropriateness of the site, and visited the proposed site to further discuss the appropriateness. Some of the TAC's concerns were whether the proposed area was large enough to accommodate the proposed sculpture. They discussed that the height might be overwhelming for the building it will be near. TAC was also concerned about the sight line in front of the building and adjacent to the sidewalk. While on site, TAC identified another site that they believed would be more appropriate. Consequently, the TAC voted not to recommend the petitioner's proposed site, but voted to recommend an alternative site. It is her understanding that the petitioner is in agreement with the alternate site as suggested by the TAC. She did not have a site plan to show the HSMC, but

showed them pictures of the site. It is the circular area just to the west adjacent to the court near the playground. The sight lines would not be blocked and TAC believes the art in the alternative site would probably be better appreciated in this area by passers-by.

### **BOARD DISCUSSION**

**Mr. Williams** asked who was present at the TAC meeting.

**Ms. Harris** explained that eight (8) members were present: 1. Dr. Peggy Blood of Savannah State University; 2. Dr. Ella Howard of Armstrong Atlantic State University; 3. David White, City of Savannah Park & Tree; 4. Eileen Baker, City of Savannah Cultural Affairs; 5. Daniel Carey of Historic Savannah Foundation; 6. Stan Deaton of Georgia Historical Society; 7. Beth Reiter, MPC; and 8. Richard Bjornseth of SCAD. They voted to recommend an alternative site.

**Mr. Karatassos** asked if the City staff looked at the site and determined the engineering.

**Ms. Harris** said that the City staff looked at the original proposal for the site and requested additional information. Therefore, it will have to come back for technical review.

**Mr. Karatassos** asked what questions were raised by the City.

**Ms. Harris** said the questions concerned the location of the underground utilities and the drainage plans.

**Mr. White** (TAC member) reported that the proposed site location chosen by TAC is already concrete. One of the main things that TAC realized once onsite was that when you are inside the building and looking onto the park, it is all grass and lighting, a monument would disrupt the view. Conversely, when you are in the park looking back towards the building, the architectural integrity of the semi-circular patio with something located in the middle, also disrupts the view. Therefore, TAC felt by putting the sculpture in the circular area just to the west adjacent to the court area would provide a better view. A seating wall is here just in case someone wants to sit and enjoy the art. Mr. White said the playground is nearby and he believes the dog sculpture would be delightful for the children.

**Ms. Mendonca** asked if TAC talked about the possibility of children climbing on the sculpture.

**Mr. White** said this discussion came up, but the sculpture will be on a pedestal about 18 inches off the ground. Hopefully, the children will not climb on it; however, it is not delicate and is made of bronze.

**Mr. Karatassos** stated that the Julia Backus Smith statue is similarly made and it was bent by people sitting and riding on it. If it can happen.

**Ms. Soule** asked if she was correct in remembering that there is another circular area to the south. She asked if this site was looked at which is a little further away from the playground.

**Mr. White** stated that the TAC looked at both sites and felt that the alternate site they chose is in close proximity to the original site and has the seating wall and would be more appropriate than the other site that is in an open area with no seating.

**Ms. Soule** said she went by the site this afternoon and she did question the size of the original site. The patio area is near the proposed site. She agreed that the original site is not the best location for the sculpture.

**Mr. Williams** asked who designed the layout.

**Mr. White** believed that Tom Purdue is the architect. He is a former employee of the City of Savannah.

**Mr. Karatassos** asked if staff had consulted the architect.

**Ms. Harris** answered no.

**Mr. Karatasso** stated that he is concerned that they are taking a reactive approach to something that somebody wants to do. He does not have a problem with somebody wanting to put something up in this area, but he looked at the map and there are other areas suitable for outdoor displays. He motioned that this item be tabled for a future date until such time that the staff could back with a more comprehensive recommendation. This motion died for lack of a second.

**Ms. Mendonca** stated that she realized that the TAC recommended an alternate site. She asked Ms. Harris if she is in agreement with this recommendation.

**Ms. Harris** stated she is in agreement with the TAC's recommendation for the alternate site.

**Mr. Karatassos** said the HSMC should have the City's technical staff recommendation prior to getting the staff recommendation.

**Ms. Harris** clarified that any recommendations for approval from this board is contingent upon the City's approval and before the recommendation goes to City Council, the technical review by the City will be completed.

#### **PETITIONER COMMENTS**

**Mr. Jeff McLaughlin, area general manager for the Kessler Group**, was present for the petition. Mr. McLaughlin believes that the new site would work well.

**Ms. Mendonca** asked if the sculpture is already existing.

**Mr. McLaughlin** answered yes.

**Mr. Karatassos** said this is a public site that a private individual wants to place private art.

**Mr. McLaughlin** said they want to put a statue in Forsyth Park for the public.

**Mr. Harper** felt they are getting away from the original request, which is the site plan. They are getting into the structure of the statue. He stated that they need to keep on target which is the site appropriateness regardless of whether it is this statue or another statue.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Attorney Walter C. Hartridge** stated that as he understood, the site that has been asked to be approved has been withdrawn and another site has been suggested that has not totally been studied. He said, therefore, he respectfully suggests that this ought to be tabled until the location is secured and until prior approvals are attained. They are going forward with something that is dealing with perhaps the most important public space in the Historic District, which is Forsyth Park. He did not believe that a hardship would be placed on the petitioner if this was deferred to get this right. Once the statute is put here, it is there forever. There is an issue concerning do we have too many monuments and placing private art in a public space. He believes this really needs to be carefully considered so they can get it right.

**Mr. Smith** also gave a brief history on Forsyth Park. He said in his opinion the statue disrupts the architectural integrity and blocks the sight line.

**Mr. Karatossos** motioned that this matter be tabled to the March 4, 2010 meeting in order to get a more comprehensive staff recommendation that the HMSC could consider.

**Ms. Mendonca** seconded the motion. The motion to continue to the meeting of March 4, 2010 unanimously passed. Ms. Mendonca asked that the master plan be looked into see if there is any liability involved.

**Mr. Karatossos** moved that the second half (Parts I and II) of the request be continued to the March meeting. This was seconded by **Ms. Mendonca**. The motion passed 4 to 2.

**Mr. Smith** suggested that some other area be looked into because of the historic nature of Forsyth Park.

#### IV. Other Business

##### 4. [2010 Officer Elections](#)

**Mr. Smith** stated that their by-laws state that officers must be elected each year. The officers are chair, vice-chair and secretary. No officer may hold officer office for more than three consecutive terms. The following officers were elected: **Mr. Gordon Smith, Chair; Mr. Phillip Williams, Vice-Chair; and Walt Harper, Secretary.**

#### V. Adjournment

##### 5. [Adjourned](#)

There being no further business to come before the HMSC, Mr. Smith adjourned the meeting at 4:50

p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris  
Presevation Planner

EH:mem

*The Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission provides meeting summary minutes which are adopted by the respective Board. Verbatim transcripts of minutes are the responsibility of the interested party.*