



Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room  
November 17, 2010 4:00 PM  
Meeting Minutes

## HSMC November 17, 2010 Meeting

### I. Call to Order and Welcome

#### 1. [Order](#)

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by the Chair, Mr. Gordon Smith.

### II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

#### 2. [Meeting Minutes August 5, 2010](#)

Attachment: [HSMC August 5, 2010 Minutes.pdf](#)

#### **Board Action:**

Approval. - PASS

#### **Vote Results**

Motion: Eli Karatassos

Second: Walt Harper

Walt Harper - Aye

Eli Karatassos - Aye

Adrienn Mendonca - Not Present

Gordon B. Smith - Aye

Phillip Williams - Not Present

### III. Regular Agenda

#### 3. [C-100630-87276-2 Jonathan Bryan Marker- Continued](#)

Attachment: [Marker text and style.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Historical information.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Dictionary of GA Biography.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Franklin Square.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Franklin Square pics.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Staff report 11-17-10.pdf](#)

**Ms. Harris** gave the staff report. This is a continued petition from the meeting of August 5, 2010. She reported that the petitioner is requesting approval for a Georgia Historical Society marker to be located along Bryan Street with the specific location at the discretion of the Historic Site and Monument Commission.

When the petition was presented to the Commission on August 5, it was proposed that Ellis Square be the location of the marker. They continued the petition to seek guidance from the City of Savannah regarding their vision for Ellis Square as no markers have been erected there. Ms. Harris reported that the City recommended that a different location be considered along Bryan Street. The City also recommended that no markers be considered in the future for Ellis Square. Therefore, the petitioner has revised the proposal for an alternate square along Bryan Street with the specific location left to the discretion of Commission. Ms. Harris said she did a review of the different squares along Bryan Street and there are six. Franklin Square currently has no markers, but has one monument. This is an active square with a significant number of visitors and can effectively accommodate the marker. The remaining five squares did not stand out impressively.

**Ms. Harris** reported that the staff recommends Franklin Square as the more appropriate location for the Jonathan Bryan marker. She showed some images of the recommended location.

**Mr. Karatassos** believes this is a great location and is much better than Ellis Square. A lot of people are here and the marker will get much more visibility and will fit in greatly.

**Mr. Smith** asked how close will the marker be to the sidewalk.

**Ms. Harris** stated that she was going to leave this up to the discretion of the City Engineering staff.

**Mr. Smith** said he is concerned about the bicycles.

**Ms. Harris** said that staff is also recommending a change to the spelling of "Whitfield." She said further research revealed that "Whitefield" is the appropriate spelling.

**Board Action:**

Approval of the marker with text revisions and to be located in Franklin Square. - PASS

**Vote Results**

Motion: Eli Karatassos

Second: Walt Harper

Walt Harper - Aye

Eli Karatassos - Aye

Adrienn Mendonca - Not Present

Gordon B. Smith - Aye

Phillip Williams - Not Present

4. [C-101019-56235-2 History of Emancipation: Special Field Order No. 15 Marker](#)

Attachment: [Marker design.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Marker text.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Site photographs.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Staff report.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Location map.pdf](#)

**Mr. William Hanley**, Program Coordinator for the Georgia Historical Society, was present on behalf of the petition.

**Ms. Harris** gave the staff report. She reported that the Georgia Historical Society is requesting Madison Square as the location to place this marker. The square is in close proximity to the Green Meldrim house where General Sherman met with African-American leaders in the community and most likely wrote the field order.

**Ms. Harris** stated that she visited the site and there are a number of markers and monuments within this square. In the proposed location, if someone were reading this marker, the Green Meldrim house would be behind it. Therefore, the staff recommends this location for the marker.

**Mr. Harper** stated that he has a concern. In the earlier petition, Ms. Harris mentioned that Johnson Square which has four markers and eight monuments, appears to be full. Reynolds Square was noted as having three markers and one monument. This square also appears to be full. He said the square that is being recommended for this marker has seven markers and three monuments. Based on the information given regarding Johnson Square and Reynolds Square being full, why would Madison square not be considered full.

**Ms. Harris** stated that Madison Square actually has three markers and three monuments.

**Mr. Harper** stated that he was aware of this, but there are four other markers in close proximity of this square. This is already a heavily used square when it comes to events. The downtown squares are becoming worn as has been referenced by the Mayor and City Aldermen. He is against putting the marker in Madison Square, but he is for the marker.

**Mr. Karatassos** asked Ms. Harris if she was proposing that the marker be in the grassy area. Where exactly is it being proposing that this marker be located?

**Ms. Harris** showed a picture of the Green Meldrim house which showed the connecting sidewalk. The proposal would be to coordinate with the City utilities to pick the exact location in the grassy area. This would be the northwest quadrant of Madison Square closer to the road rather than closer to the center, either to the north or south of the sidewalk. This would be similar to the placement arrangement as the marker in Franklin Square.

**Mr. Karatassos** stated there is nothing else in this same quadrant. In other words, it would not be competing with another marker here. He does not know if many outdoor activities are held in this square.

**Mr. Harper** stated that 23 scheduled events through Park & Tree were held in this square

versus a lot of the other squares. The only other squares most often used are Whitefield Square and Johnson Square. If you go here, you will see that the sod is worn down and Park & Tree has added in the southwest quadrant a walkway to accommodate some plantings that they are going to put here. Moreover, they put the walkway here because the grass does not grow as the people trample it. Mr. Harper believes that Madison Square is a well-used square and has a lot of monuments and markers here already. He asked if there would be an objection to placing the marker to the next square on the west, which is the Pulaski Square. This square has nothing in it and it faces the church and the Green Meldrim house.

**Mr. Karatassos** asked if the west faces the church.

**Mr. Harper** answered yes. A parking lot is between the two, but it is still there.

**Mr. Karatassos** guessed that the petitioner selected Madison Square because of the history behind it. If it was not the Green Meldrim house, he would say put it anywhere you want to, but this is a very appropriate place to put the marker. It has a lot of significance to it. Otherwise, they could put anything anywhere. They could have put the other marker on Charleton Street, but they put it on Bryan Street because it relates to the marker. If this is the emancipation marker, it is terrible that we don't have one already, then why would it not be across from the Green Meldrim house?

**Mr. Harper** said the Pulaski Square is across from the Madison Square.

**Mr. Karatassos** said nobody uses this square, which means that people will not see the marker. The petitioner wants to place the marker in Madison Square because they want people to see the marker.

**Mr. Harper** said the marker may draw more people to the Pulaski Square.

**Ms. Harris** stated that she believes it is important to look at what is in the guidelines when they are evaluating sites. Mr. Harper's point regarding if a square is already too full is addressed in the guidelines. This is a criteria that they need to review to find out if too many markers are here. Every square is different, the size is different and the placement of the different markers seem to be handled better on a case-by-case basis. Ms. Harris pointed out that the guidelines say that it should be as close proximity to the site to which it is related as possible and be clearly visible from a public right-of-way. Markers commemorating an event should be sited within 100 feet of the event site or adjacent to the nearest public right-of-way.

**Mr. Karatassos** moved for approval of the staff's recommendation.

**The motion failed for lack of being seconded.**

**Mr. Hanley** entertained questions from the Commission.

**Mr. Harper** stated that the only thing that he objects to is the location of the marker. He does not object to the marker. He asked if there is any place else where this marker could be placed.

**Mr. Hanley** answered as this marker is written, there is no other place that it should be

placed. He said they feel it is a very significant topic and ideally they would like to have it in front of the house because of its importance to the state and nation. The most powerful location would be in front of the church, but this was never an option for them. Therefore, the square is the most appropriate place for the marker because you are literally standing across the street looking at it. As it is written, this would be the only place that they will consider this marker be located. They did have thoughts about maybe changing the marker text and choosing a secondary location.

**Mr. Karatassos** stated that it appears there is a marker on the southeast corner of the Green Meldrim house, between the church and the Green Meldrim house.

**Ms. Harris** said that it is on private property.

**Mr. Karatassos** asked if there would be an objection to putting the marker further to the north on the same side of the street.

**Ms. Harris** stated that her understanding is that the property owner is not willing to consider this. It is on private property.

**Mr. Karatassos** asked how bad they want the marker here.

**Mr. Hanley** stated the existing marker is more about the architecture of the house than about the emancipation. This Special Order 15 is specifically about the emancipation. They don't want to be redundant. They are trying to tell different stories of the Civil War. This is part of the Civil War anniversary project where they are telling somewhat the untold stories of this war including the influence of African-Americans, the homefront, the labor forces, etc. They are trying to tell stories that are not represented in markers that have already been in place since the 1950s which are more focused on the valor, troop movements, generals and the bigger items rather than specific histories.

**Mr. Harper** said the petition states that William T. Sherman met at the home of Charles Green with 20 leaders from Savannah's African-American churches including Garrison, Frazier, Ulysees Houston, and William Campbell. He asked Mr. Hanley if the marker could be placed at any of these churches that reference the leaders that Sherman met with.

**Mr. Hanley** answered that they have considered this. He said that the most appropriate location would perhaps be the Second African Baptist Church. It would be a different marker with different text.

**Mr. Harper** wanted to know which square the Second African Baptist Church is located on.

**Mr. Hanley** said the Second African Baptist Church is located on the square between Habershan and York Streets.

**Mr. Karatassos** stated that if he understood correctly what Mr. Hanley is saying, they wrote the text specifically to the site.

**Mr. Hanley** confirmed that they wrote this specifically for the site because they felt it was

important and the existing marker did not effectively tell the history.

**Mr. Karatassos** said he does not believe the Commission will be able to come to a consensus on this petition; so they should send the petition to the City without a recommendation.

#### **IV. Other Business**

##### 5. Update on Status of Master Plan and Guidelines Revisions

**Ms. Harris** reported that she met with the City Manager regarding the Master Plan and the Guidelines Revisions. Presently, the City is going through the budget process. Consequently, the City Manager asked that they wait on sending a formal recommendation to City Council for their approval until after they complete the budget process. She said, however, as a matter of policy, they are internally implementing the changes that the Commission has already voted on and approved. When this is scheduled to go before City Council, she will let the Commission know. Hopefully, it will be at a meeting in December, but it may not be until a meeting in January, 2011.

#### **V. Adjournment**

##### 6. Adjourned

There being no other business to come before the Commission, Mr. Smith adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris  
Cultural Resources and Urban Planning Manager

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.*