



Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room
March 1, 2012 4:00 PM
Meeting Minutes

HSMC March 1, 2012 Regular Meeting

I. Call to Order and Welcome

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

1. [January 5, 2012 Meeting Minutes](#)

Attachment: [January 5, 2012 Minutes.pdf](#)

Board Action:

Approval of the minutes of January 5, 2012 with an amendment as pointed out by the chair (two typographical errors on page 4 - "Hutchinson and under"). - PASS

Vote Results

Motion: Walt Harper
Second: Eli Karatassos
Thomas Gensheimer - Aye
Eli Karatassos - Aye
Ryan Madson - Aye
Mary Soule - Aye
Walt Harper - Aye

III. Regular Agenda

2. [C-120126-53963-2 Fairway Oaks-Greenview Historical Marker](#)

Attachment: [Staff Report and Recommendation C-120126-53963-2.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Supplementary information.pdf](#)

Mr. Pete Simon, President of Fairway Oaks-Greenview Neighborhood Association was present on behalf of the petitioner.

Ms. Ellen Harris gave the staff report. The petitioner is requesting approval to install a metal plaque on a brick base at the entrance of the Fairway Oaks - Greenview Subdivision

entrance. This subdivision was recently listed on the National Register of Historical Places and is the first mid-20th century suburban residential district in Georgia to be listed.

Ms. Harris reported that staff recommends approval as the proposal meets the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments and Public Art.

Mr. Harper asked if this is on the east side of Waters Avenue.

Ms. Harris answered yes.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Mr. Simon was hopeful that the Board would approve their petition.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

Board Action:

Approve the petition because it is consistent with the Master Plan and Guidelines and that the petitioner coordinate with the City Departments to ensure no utilities are damaged during installation. - PASS

Vote Results

Motion: Eli Karatassos

Second: Walt Harper

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Walt Harper - Aye

Eli Karatassos - Aye

Ryan Madson - Aye

Mary Soule - Aye

3. C-120130-32287-2 Floral Art Installation 437 Abercorn Street

Attachment: [Supplemental information.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Staff Report and Recommendation C-120130-32287-2.pdf](#)

Ms. Katherine Sandoz was present on behalf of the petition.

Ms. Ellen Harris gave the staff report. The petitioner is requesting permission to install a floral art installation at 437 Abercorn Street in conjunction with a floral painting exhibit at Kim Iocovozzi Fine Art. Flowers made from plastic shopping bags donated by the Trustee's Garden of Savannah are attached to contractor's netting and will be hung above the door to the gallery. The installation will be 112" by 56," and will be installed without damage to

the building. The installation will be in place March 5, 2012 through April 9, 2012. The artist and property owner assume responsibility for installation and timely removal.

Ms. Harris reported that staff recommends approval of the public art because it meets the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Ms. Sandoz did not have anything to add to the staff report.

Mr. Madson asked why is the art going to be up for a short period of time.

Ms. Sandoz said the exhibition dates are March 5 through April 9, 2012. Therefore, the paintings and fiber works that are shown in Kim Iocovozzi Fine Art will only be shown for this time period. Consequently, they planned for the exterior facade installation to be for this time period as well.

Ms. Soule stated that it is amazing that the artist was able to find so many colorful bags. Normally, what is seen is beige on beige.

Ms. Sandoz said there is quite a bit of beige in the final facade piece, but many community members donated to the project.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Members of Trustees Garden were in attendance in support of the request, but did not make any public comments.

Board Action:

Approval of the proposed temporary public art at 437 Abercorn Street because it meets the standards - PASS set forth in the Master Plan and Guidelines.

Vote Results

Motion: Eli Karatassos

Second: Ryan Madson

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Walt Harper - Aye

Eli Karatassos - Aye

Ryan Madson - Aye

Mary Soule - Aye

4. [C-120214-53557-2 Candy Chang's "Before I Die..." Mural 109 MLK Blvd.](#)

Attachment: [Staff report and recommendation c-120214-53557-2.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Supplemental information.pdf](#)

Mr. James Zdaniewski was present on behalf of the petition.

Ms. Ellen Harris gave the staff report. The petitioner is requesting approval to erect a temporary mural at 109 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, a contributing building within the Savannah Historic District. The proposal is based on Candy Chang's "Before I Die..." mural in which a facade is painted with black chalkboard paint, stenciled in white with "Before I Die..." and a series of blank spaces so that pedestrians might fill in the blanks with the chalk provided. This mural was first installed on a dilapidated building in New Orleans in 2011 and has subsequently been installed in cities all over the world. The proposal in New Orleans was reviewed by and received a Certificate of Appropriateness from the New Orleans Historic District Landmark Commission.

As 109 MLK Boulevard is a contributing building within the Savannah Landmark Historic District, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was notified and asked to provide comments. To date, no comments have been received.

This proposal is submitted in conjunction with the Savannah Urban Arts Festival and will be displayed from April 7- May 7, 2012. The petitioner accepts responsibility for daily maintenance to ensure that no profanity or other inappropriate contributions are made. At the end of the period, the wall will be painted white.

Ms. Harris stated one of the standards states that neighborhood support or opposition should be taken into consideration. She has received a number of letters and emails supporting the proposal. She passed these letters and emails to the Board members.

Mr. Karatassos asked if this is the old Greyhound Bus Station.

Ms. Harris answered yes.

Mr. Harper asked staff if any negative letters were received regarding the request.

Ms. Harris reported that she had not receive any letters in opposition.

Ms. Harris said another standard states that the mural should be of an original design. She explained that the mural's concept is intended to be duplicated. The author has actually produced a manual on how to duplicate the concept in your community. Ms. Harris believes the intent of this standard is met.

Ms. Harris reported that staff recommends approval of the public art because it meets the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art. The staff recommends that some information might be provided on the mural to passers-by who are interested in finding out more information about it. May be a website could be listed either through the Savannah Urban Arts Festival, the Artist website or See Saw just to give a little information about the art.

Ms. Soule assumed approval was given from the building owner and Judge Realty.

Ms. Harris reported she has the approval in writing.

Mr. Karatassos said this may be already taken care of within this Commission's procedures, but he believes that when this type of petition comes before them, they need to have some line of communication with the Metropolitan Police Department to make them aware that the mural is being installed. Procedurally, when a mural of this type is done, the staff should send the police department some type of communication letting them know the mural has been approved and will be installed.

Ms. Harris said Mr. Karatassos' suggestion was great. When the Board approved the mural at 33rd and Habersham Streets, she sent a copy of the approval to the appropriate City personnel and contacts within the police department to ensure that they were aware of the mural being installed. She said this could be done in advance as well to ensure that they know about the proposal before it is installed in case there are some concerns.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Mr. Matt Hebermehl thanked the Board for approving their art request at 34th and Habersham Streets. Mr. Hebermehl believes it has been everything they said it would and could be. They intend to carryout the same due diligence in ensuring professionalism with this project. They have a video that shows the impact that these projects have within the communities where they are installed. Consequently, he believes that it is important that as they develop and grow in the greater community of Savannah that they don't let it become another thing that remains in the bubble of Savannah, but show the other communities that what is being done here is relevant nationally and internationally.

Mr. Karatassos asked when will this work be done.

Mr. Hebermehl answered April 7 through May 7, 2012. The Savannah Grand Festival is April 15 - 21, 2012. A collective team of people have been trying to make this happen. They felt that a month would be a nice timeframe to let the public actually enjoy and participate in this.

Mr. Gensheimer asked Mr. Hebermehl what has been the longest duration of this type of art.

Mr. Hebermehl stated that Frances told him that New Orleans installation of their project has been up about one year.

Ms. Soule said the petition states that the petitioner will be monitoring the mural. She asked the petitioner how often will the monitoring take place.

Mr. Hebermehl said they will monitor the mural daily. A part of this project is the documentation of what is written so that they can use the information moving forward to learn more about Savannah's community. Once the project is approved by this Commission, they have people in place who are willing to assist with the monitoring of the mural. Scott Wilson has been very supportive and he is sure they can get help from the students at SCAD. He spoke to a class at Savannah State University; the students were receptive and curious as to how they can assist with this project.

Mr. Madson asked if this is a pilot project more so than longevity.

Mr. Hebermehl answered that it is an ongoing element of how they can move forward to integrate contemporary fresh public art projects that are respectful to Savannah's historic preservation and have contemporary things happening in a historic environment.

Mr. Gensheimer asked the petitioner how do they do this in a way that makes sense.

Mr. Hebermehl answered that this particular proposal and the other projects that have been implemented are wonderful as they are meant to be interactive. This is somewhat a sounding board. While it is conceptually a contemporary art installation, but in practice it is a way for others to express themselves.

Mr. Madson stated that he agreed with Mr. Hebermehl. He believes the more people become depended upon face book, twitter, and the other digital networks as a means of communicating, the tangible quality of communicating with people will be lost. This kind of project will allow people to actually hold the chart on the wall which symbolizes that Savannah is a community that says "yes" rather than "no." In this particular location, he knows that Section 8 housing, Broughton Street Commons, the Courthouse, SCAD museum, Jepson Center, restaurants and bars, students and the visitors are here. He believes they can truly get a sense of what it means to visit and get to know this community by having this wall which will exemplify what it means to live in Savannah.

Mr. Karatassos said the display is limited by the amount of space that is there.

Mr. Madson said the information packet shows that the suggested display will be an 8 x 42 foot wall. He believes that in Brooklyn, NY a mural was done that basically wrapped around the entire city block. Others were done in other cities that was placed on the side of the building. Therefore, it not so much the size, but the impact that people have an opportunity and what it represents.

Mr. Gensheimer said the petitioner has said that they want to record and document the mural photographically. He asked if this is posted on a website.

Mr. Hebermehl said it is not posted on a website. They have been documenting everything regarding 34th and Habersham Streets such as photos in their notebook that has a chart and matrix listing of what people are saying each day. He believes it is great to have a wall at 31st Street and Waters Avenue and down town. A part of the entire point in doing this is to get a feel of what people are saying in the different locations.

Mr. Karatassos said that he believes people will actually be saying "I want you to see what I have written." Therefore, he believes it would be a shame for the public not to be able to go to a site and see what has been written. He has worked as a project manager for Chatham Transit Authority (CAT) and knows that in CAT's grant from FT, a large part of the grant program is that once the facilities are done that there is an art component to it. He would like to know if it would be advantageous to have an art component during the construction of this. If not, then once it is done, this could be one of the ongoing art function. Mr. Karatassos said he likes this and believes it is terrific.

Mr. Hebermehl said that Denver International Airport just completed a project called "Terminal Kings." They commissioned twelve (12) of the best graffiti artist in the world

to paint on a 100 feet long panel. Every time there is construction at Denver's airport, they will save the panels and basically use them as a wrapping. But, their documentation will show people what they have done. He understands that people want their voices to be heard in a meaningful way.

Mr. Harper stated that he had two concerns. Profanity has already been asked about and putting things up that should not be thereon. The petitioner has told the Board that he will be monitoring this two or three times a day. If someone is driving down MLK (north or south), he believes drivers will be slowing down to look at the mural. Therefore, he is of the opinion that this will cause some traffic congestion in this area. Mr. Harper said he is somewhat warming up to this idea, but if he had been asked about this two days ago, he would have said absolutely no. He is concerned about putting the mural in the Historic District.

Mr. Hebermehl asked Mr. Harper if his concern is about the traffic or aesthetically of what it represents.

Mr. Harper said his concern is about aesthetics.

Mr. Hebermehl explained with cars parking here, the mural is not the most visible thing seen. There are fourteen (14) feet between the street and the sidewalk.

Mr. Gensheimer said he admires the proposal and appreciates that the petitioner brought it forward, but his one regret is that the aspirations for semi-permanence is not here. He wonders how they can use this as a moment to reflect on what interactive public art means and what it means in the Historic District. The mural is only being proposed to be up for one month. But there are examples of this type of mural being put up semi-permanent or permanent.

Mr. Madson said he lived in Charlottesville, VA and on its downtown wall in front of City Hall, basically a public chalk board was installed. It was set up with very nice architectural details and was permanent. Chalk was placed there so people could write on the board. However, the failure of this project was that it was never directed towards a specific audience. This is the elegance of it, but also the failure of it. On one hand, there was a lot of profanity, people wrote things about city council and each other; but on the other hand, there was graffiti and drawings that were artistic and really nice, although not necessarily relevant to civic life. Mr. Madson said, however, what he appreciates about this mural is that it is directed towards individuals, a dream of the person who is writing this as it is something they want to do before they die.

Mr. Gensheimer said he believes that as a specific direction, this is a way they can talk about having public art as an aspect of civic engagement. He believes this mural does so strongly.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Ardis Wood said they are at a crossroad that she believes will set a precedent. She is not saying it is good or bad. However, she would be very cautious about putting your toe in and then feeling as if this is the way to go. She is concerned that this proposal is in the Historic District, which is one square mile. Savannah is sixty-five (65) square miles, while

Chatham County is two hundred seventy (270) square miles. They must be careful and not dilute the value and identify that the district has. She would love to see this indoors anywhere. They need to also be careful about trying to do everything in a place that has great uniqueness. This might be great at the mall as there are many people walking by there.

Mr. Karatassos said Savannah had more than 11 million visitors last year. He asked Ms. Wood that of the 100 hundred of square miles that she referenced how many of those people came here to see the one square mile that she spoke of.

Ms. Wood answered that she believes zero came to see graffiti outdoors.

Mr. Karatassos said if a statement is going to be made about the kind of community we are, we are not a museum, but a living, breathing downtown; if they are going to tell the world about the kind of place we are and continue to be the destination city that we are; the city that is diverse enough to let the people do the kinds of things that we do, what better place to do it as everybody that comes to Savannah would see the mural. The same people go to the mall, the same people sit inside houses and look at walls. But, the millions of people who come here and the people who live here need to understand that we can talk to each other and we can communicate to each other. To him, it would be a shame if this mural was not put down town. He lives down town. Mr. Karatassos said he hears Ms. Wood's concerns. The first mural was the "toe in the water." Now, they are deciding if they want to go to the "ankles." Personally, the toe in the water felt good.

Ms. Wood said she believed that this would dilute the community. We now have pedaling through the Historic District; we have a hearse with a raised top and to her this dilutes what we are about. These things can be done elsewhere. In her opinion, you cannot have these things in many places. She believes it dilutes the character.

Mr. Kim Iocovozzi said he has been involved with art for many years in Savannah. He said that Ms. Wood has used words such as dilution and graffiti, but what is being proposed today, is neither one of these words.

Mr. Daniel Carey of Historic Savannah Foundation admitted to them that this is difficult; he does not have an answer and, therefore, is appreciative of the fact that they are tackling this. It is not easy. Mr. Carey said what is exciting to him is the process, the committing of the art, the interactive process and then watching it happen. He believes this is fascinating. Mr. Carey said having it on site and available for a period of time is good and appropriate. He does not know what the period of time should be. He asked the Commission if the time is within their jurisdiction to determine how long something should be up. At some point he believes that the duration question should be addressed. Mr. Carey said he fully supports experimentation and it is really important that it be reversible. He believes that this mural is a reversible installation. He gets this from the Secretary of Interior's Standards. When change is instituted in a building, one of the first test is, is it reversible. Can you undue it and get it back to what it was? The Landmark District is 2.2 square miles. He does not think that it is immutable at all. The mural does evolve and changes. Mr. Carey believes that it should allow for creativity, etc. But, on the other hand, he believes it is a one of the kind unique resource. He believes further that this community has worked for decades to preserve it. He believes these are the questions that

Ms. Wood was pointing out. These are the considerations that the Board will have to process. These are the things that they should ask and discuss. When they experiment with something such as this, they should know that they can back out of it if it is not going well or is not executed well. If it is not received well, we need to be able to back out of it.

Mr. Francis Allen, resident of the Landmark District, said he was present a few months ago when a discussion was held regarding the mural ordinance. He believed the ordinance was well crafted and he believes the Board made the right decision. Now, they have started to see some of the fruits of this such as the ones being proposed today and the mural that is already installed on Habersham Street. This installation is for a limited duration and is themed under a larger context of the urban art festival; it is being installed on a boarded-up building where the wall is already covered with graffiti. At the end of this mural's installation, the wall will be painted, leaving it in a better shape than it was.

Mr. Allen said the mural is an internationally recognized and acclaimed installation. The walls have been installed in New Orleans, Brooklyn, Hapistan, San Diego, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Montreal, Mexico, and other cities around the world. The murals that were installed in New Orleans and Portsmouth were in historic districts. A mural was installed this week at the Ted 2012 conference in Long Beach. A mural is scheduled to be installed in Denver, Reno and Johannesburg within the coming months. It has been featured on NBC. The project was created by Candy Chang, who is a Ted Senior fellow and a 2011 Urban Innovation Fellow. Fortune Company magazine named Ms. Chang as an emerging master of design, while Oprah Magazine named her a Live Your Best Life Lovable Hero. This is what this mural is about, living your best life. Everyone present here today has dreams, hopes and aspirations. In almost all cases, the first act towards making those dreams a reality is getting them out of your head by writing them down. The "Before I Die" wall reflects the hopes and dreams of the entire community from the east side to the west side, young and old citizens and students are supportive of this.

Ms. Katherine Sandoz said one of the things that she learned about the wall which she already knew is that just the act of being there and in a group brought the community together. People came from the east side, west side, the Landings, and the Islands. All ages were represented. To her, the interesting thing about this project is that it joins one thing that we all have in common, which is "life." The other thing that we all share is a "need to belong or a need to be loved." These are very universal things. Everybody in this city, not just the 2.2, not just one or any number you cut up, but everybody in this city shares this. Therefore, this is a chance for us to celebrate an honor. She feels this is a community of people speaking to each other in person, but also in social media. They will take care of this wall and will act as ambassadors of the city. Ms. Sandoz urged the approval of the mural.

Mr. Gensheimer asked if any of the Board members felt this would set a precedent downtown. He realized that Mr. Harper had some reservations.

Mr. Harper said a part of his reservation is that if this is approved, it will start setting a standard for downtown. He is in favor of approving this, but not in this location because of the high visibility of this area and the location. He believes it will set a precedent that they are not going to be able to undo. This also echoes the concerns of a couple of other people who are on the Park & Tree Commission.

Mr. Karatassos stated that he does not believe approving the mural will set a precedent. He is in favor of installing this mural. This city has so much to give to the world, not only in art and music, but we have a bulging music community of young people who were sort of "shut out" because the city decided not to let them listen to music before the age of 21 and this was a shame. They cannot keep curtailing the creative juices of this community. He believes that these kinds of things are reasonable and they are not outrageous. As Mr. Carey has stated, they are reversible. Therefore, what is wrong with trying it; not doing something is easy, but to try something takes a lot.

Ms. Soule said she too, lives downtown. One of the things that brought her downtown is that Savannah is a unique city and has been unique from its inception; the way it was laid out and the way people care for it. She likes to see innovative things and see people interact. She wants to know what her neighbors are thinking and what they want to do before they die. When she saw this proposal, she said that the location was perfect because they want to bring in the MLK corridor and make it more alive. This building is deteriorating and it looks to her as a perfect place to do this project. Ms. Soule said, therefore, she is in favor of it. It is temporary and she does not see with them approving it this time and learn from it means that people will be able to do this in perpetuity.

Mr. Madson stated that since he has been participating on this Board not just this term, but also previously, he has been aware of their inherited conservative mission in the way that they reflect on the proposals. He believes that they can treat projects such as this, rather or not it's a precedent for making future decisions, but as an opportunity to reconsider their roles as stewards of built environments and really push for high contemporary art, monuments and installations regardless of their prestige conservatism, temporariness or permanency. Mr. Madson believes the Board can use this as a platform to argue for the highest possible quality examples of public art. This may not set a precedent, but it could be a way for them to experiment like they may do with this proposal with interaction with the public in the ways that they can do things that might be unpredictable. They may just have to take a leap of faith with some of the proposals. However, they will also keep their broader mission of being stewards of high quality public art in the public realm.

Mr. Genshemier stated that he did not see this as setting a precedent as this can be reversible. They don't have to make the same decision the next time. Consequently, he has no objection to the site or the project.

Mr. Harper asked that the motion be amended to include that documentation be made of all the entries that are put on both walls, 109 MLK Boulevard and 1100 East 31st Street, and compare them to the different areas. He is kind of warming up to the murals; they are temporary. He asked the petitioner to bring the documentation to the Board.

Board Action:

Approval of the proposed mural at 109 MLK Jr. Blvd with the condition that the petitioner document the results of the mural and report back to the Board. - PASS

Vote Results

Motion: Eli Karatassos	
Second: Ryan Madson	
Thomas Gensheimer	- Aye
Walt Harper	- Aye
Eli Karatassos	- Aye
Ryan Madson	- Aye
Mary Soule	- Aye

5. [C-120214-54301-2 Candy Chang's "Before I Die..." Mural 1100 East 31st Street](#)

Attachment: [Supplementary information.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Staff Report and recommendation C-120214-54301-2.pdf](#)

Mr. James Zdaniewski was present on behalf of the petition.

Ms. Ellen Harris gave the staff report. The petitioner is requesting approval to erect a temporary mural at 1100 East 31st Street, on the facade facing Waters Avenue. The proposal is based on Candy Chang's "Before I Die..." mural in which a facade is painted with black chalkboard paint, stenciled in white with "Before I Die..." and a series of blank spaces so that pedestrians might fill in the blanks with the chalk provided. This mural was first installed on a dilapidated building in New Orleans in 2011 and has subsequently been installed in cities all over the world. The proposal in New Orleans was reviewed by and received a Certificate of Appropriateness from the New Orleans Historic District Landmark Commission.

This proposal is submitted in conjunction with the Savannah Urban Arts Festival and will be displayed from April 7- May 7, 2012. The petitioner accepts responsibility for daily maintenance to ensure that no profanity or other inappropriate contributions are made. At the end of the period, the wall will be painted white.

Ms. Harris reported that the staff recommends approval of the proposed mural because it meets the standards for murals found in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments and Public Art with the recommendation that some information regarding the affiliation to the Savannah Urban Arts Festival be provided.

Mr. Harper suggested that with this mural, they forgo all the discussion as both murals are the same.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

Board Action:

Approval of the proposed mural at 1100 East 31st Street with the condition that the petitioner document the results of the mural and report back to the Board. - PASS

Vote Results

Motion: Eli Karatassos

Second: Ryan Madson

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Walt Harper - Aye

Eli Karatassos - Aye

Ryan Madson - Aye

Mary Soule - Aye

IV. Other Business

6. [Yamacraw Public Art Park- Plaque Update](#)

Attachment: [Missing plaques.pdf](#)

Ms. Harris reported that at the Board's meeting of January 5, 2012, staff was directed to give a status report of the Yamacraw Public Art Park missing plaques. **Jerry Flemming, Director of the Park and Tree Department**, will provide a status update on the plaques and **Jerome Meadows, the original artist for the Art Park**, will discuss replacement options and costs.

Ms. Harris presented the background information on the Yamacraw Public Art. In 1994 the Historic Site and Monument Commission received a formal application for the plaques to be installed and it was approved. However, it was not until May 2006 that the opening took place. The park contains three bronze statues of children and has photo-etched panels depicting key moments in Yamacraw's past memorializing native and African-American history in this particular area. She showed on the monitor pictures of where the plaques were damaged and removed. In 2007, considerable damage was done to the park as a whole, to the plaques, the statues as well as two benches were uprooted and destroyed. At this time, a restoration took place. There were a total of sixteen (16) plaques. Ms. Harris said it is her understanding based on the information she received from the Park & Tree department that four (4) plaques remain intact; seven (7) plaques are stored at the Park & Tree department and five (5) missing.

Ms. Harris reported that Mr. Flemming was present and would answer the Board's questions. She stated that Mr. Meadows would answer questions, too. The information is being given today to the Board was not for a vote, but for discussion on what are the possibilities they might pursue.

Mr. Harper asked Ms. Harris if the minutes showed the materials the plaques were to be made out of.

Ms. Harris stated that she believes the plaques were made out of aluminum.

Mr. Harper asked did the minutes reflect that the aluminum is what the Commission wanted.

Ms. Harris said she will pull the minutes to verify this, but she believes the Commission

requested aluminum.

Mr. Karatassos said aluminum is not as durable as bronze.

Ms. Harris stated that she had some samples if the Commission wanted to see how it works. Historically, markers are made out of a lot of different materials; bronze is certainly the most common. The Georgia Historical Society markers are much thicker than this, but they are made out of an aluminum steel compound. Another option would be to make them out of acrylic such as the markers on River Street.

Mr. Harper said he would like for the Park & Tree Director to give the Commission a synopsis of what he thinks on the Yamacraw plaques.

Mr. Flemming stated that he believes the main synopsis of what happened is that the material was too lightweight and could not handle the rugged environment in an outdoor situation. He believes that whether it was aluminum or bronze if it was a quarter (1/4) inch thick it would hold up a lot better. Mr. Flemming believes the bronze will be more durable than the aluminum. The main concern is what the surface can hold up to as far as public abuse. Generally, though, bronze would be more durable.

Ms. Soule told Mr. Flemming that she noticed that the printing was fading and not just physical abuse, but also abuse from the weather. she asked if there is some way that the plaques could be protected from the weather.

Mr. Flemming answered that this is one of the concerns about the etchings out of aluminum or bronze. It is amazing what technology is out there. People are actually doing this type of stuff on their bronze headstones. If you go to the cemeteries, you will see where they can turn a photograph into a three-dimensional relief photo of a person on there. He believes this technology has been around for ten to fifteen years or probably longer. Therefore, he does not know whether it has had a chance to stand the test of time. Nevertheless, he believes that the bronze etching would hold up much better. There is some concern about the original documents and based on what the etching is made out of may affect the quality of the image that is on the metal. Mr. Flemming believes that an image from a photograph is easy to computer generate onto metal, but an etching may be more difficult to do. However, Mr. Meadows may have more information about this than he does. Mr. Meadows has been in contact with the Matthews Bronze Company. As far as he knows, Matthews Bronze Company somewhat started the process of taking the etching and putting them on bronze from a photograph.

Mr. Karatassos asked how are the plaques affixed to the wall.

Mr. Flemming answered that most of them are no longer affixed to the wall. However, he believes the samples has a metal backing. Without the metal backing, the aluminum has no strength at all and could become more damaged. The metal backing enables the aluminum plate to hold up better. If it was solid aluminum one piece, it would probably be more durable than shown here. However, he thinks that if they go with the aluminum, at a minimum it needs to be a quarter inch thick or thicker.

Mr. Gensheimer asked if it would be possible to anchor the plaques to the masonry using

heavy-duty masonry screws.

Mr. Flemming said it can be done. But from a vandalism point of view, bolts with rosettes are more prone to vandalism than proxy. The attempt is to glue it down so that it will remain. Some bronze plaques have hidden hardware in the back where you screw it into the plaque and an individual could not get to it. Some of this technology could be helpful.

Mr. Karatassos suggested that maybe it could be screwed on if the metal is deep enough. Maybe it could be sunk and then put the plaque over it. These are really outstanding plaques.

Mr. Harper asked if stainless steel could be used for this.

Mr. Flemming answered that it is probably plausible, but he is not familiar with etching on stainless steel. There are some imitation bronzes that are actually made out of aluminum components that are durable and hold up. But, of course, bronze does tarnish, where the aluminum components that are made to look like bronze do not. However, there are a lot of products that are appropriate for outdoor environment. The main thing is that in our public areas it is subject to vandalism, therefore, it has to be rugged and be able to handle normal wear and tear.

Ms. Soule asked staff what is the next step.

Ms. Harris said Mr. Meadows has done research on alternate materials and he could share his findings with the Commission.

Mr. Meadows said as Ms. Harris pointed out, he was brought into this project in 1997 to assist the Yamacraw Public Art Committee with the undertaking of this project. As Ms. Harris stated, ten years later the plaques were finally installed. He explained that what happened to the budget of the initial project over a ten year period is why they have the aluminum plaques as opposed to the bronze plaques. The increase in pricing that occurred over this ten year period, the committee's decision was that they could not raise anymore money. They researched another product and it was revealed that aluminum would serve the outdoor setting as it had been used previously and it was rated to stand up to the kind of weather condition that Savannah yields. His thoughts are twofold. He has done a similar project in Anchorage, Alaska. In terms of replacing the same design plates, but on a bronze surface, what they determined was they wanted to use something that was less expensive and easily replaced. They recommended a fiber glass plastic resin material. If this material is damaged, they can be removed and replaced quickly.

Mr. Meadows believes that what is being discussed today is alternatives for a heavier quality material. But, they will have to deal with the idea that the possibility that some of the plaques will be interacted with in a negative way. His preference of the two obviously is to support the vision of the original project. He believes the quarter inch bronze would be more in keeping with what this commemoration was designed to accomplish. To his knowledge it is the only commemoration of the Yamacraw native people. It is also the commemoration of the African-American legacy and history along Waters Avenue. Therefore, due to the importance of this to Savannah would presuppose that we have materials that are indicative of the value of that history. Consequently, as they are

discussing the two choices, he would be more in favor of that, but he welcomes the Commission's thoughts as they move forward. Based on the Commission's input, the idea would be to further refine this search and discovery and by the Commission's next meeting be able to provide them with a budget for what it would cost to reproduce these and whatever material they determine.

Mr. Harper asked staff what materials the plaques on River Street are made of.

Ms. Harris answered that the plaques are made out of an acrylic substance.

Mr. Harper asked if this is somewhat like what Mr. Meadows spoke about.

Ms. Harris answered exactly.

Ms. Soule asked if there is an escrow account to handle this. If not, where will the money come from?

Ms. Harris explained that when this project was approved, it is her understanding that the committee did not ask for an escrow account. But now a newer policy has been instituted.

Ms. Soule asked if the funds would come out of Park and Tree's budget.

Ms. Harris said the money could possibly come from a number of places, but they need to know how much money they are talking about.

Mr. Madson asked, therefore, if the Commission would advise the artist in coordination with Park and Tree to come up with some cost estimates with varying qualities and report this to the Commission.

Mr. Meadows said he has heard mentioned that once the plaques are replaced, that there could be a rededication process. One of the things that happens with public art is that it is borne of public will to make it happen. The survival is really based on the public's will to protect it. Hopefully, the enthusiasm becomes like a virus in the community where the people who are behind it are putting forth great enthusiasm. This happened with Yamacraw, even though, it took ten years to get there. The dedication ceremony was quite a spectacle. But, over time, if the energy is not sustained, then people who are not necessarily feeling the value of art and do not have it within themselves to appreciate the value of what this project is about; if they are not being shown, the people tend to respond in a negative way. Mr. Meadows stated that he believes that whatever they do, particularly if they use something that is more emblematic of the value and the importance of this memorial, if it is rededicated in a certain manner, then it would help to reinvigorate the community to appreciate what this about. This is not only Yamacraw, but it is a statement for all art. They were previously talking about the murals and what they speak to the larger community, this is something that should be of value to the entire city.

Mr. Karatassos asked if the Housing Authority has been brought into any of the discussion regarding these plaques.

Mr. Flemming said his concern is that once the project is completed, who will maintain

it. At the time the plaques were initially installed he believed the property was owned by Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Therefore, a year and one-half of the ten years was spent getting the property transferred to the Housing Authority of Savannah. He believes that it was through the Housing Authority that Park and Tree was charged with the authority to maintain it. Mr. Flemming stated that the park is maintained by Park and Tree within the Housing Authority's area. The city and Housing Authority have a lot of joint projects. However, Park and Tree's maintenance budget is primarily cutting grass and picking up litter. They don't have a budget for maintaining the monuments within this park. There is no endowment fund for this monument.

Mr. Gensheimer said maybe with this in mind, Mr. Meadows and Mr. Flemming may move towards a rededication and a part of this would be reinstalling the plaques, but also find ways to do the most with the least in terms of a few repairs or any kind of improvements that need to be made. He understands that there is no money in escrow that would allow them to go ahead and repair the plaques. Maybe this would be an opportunity, however, to give them a small overhaul.

Mr. Flemming stated that when they get an amount of what the cost will be, they can put it into the five (5) year capital improvement plan and City Council will consider it.

Mr. Karatassos said once they know what this will cost, may be they can find someone who will sponsor this.

Mr. Flemming said he recommends just as was done with the Toomer monument when vandalism was here, they turned it into a public relations campaign just to alert the public about it. There is the need to bring it to the public's attention because the damage is probably occurring by children who live in the neighborhood and there is not public awareness that this is going on. By alerting the entire community that vandalism is going on; that it is expensive to repair it and maintain it, there is a certain benefit of doing this. This would certainly be public relation campaign and a rededication.

7. Update on Status of Revisions to Master Plan and Guidelines

Attachment: [River Stret image as of 6 14 2.pdf](#)

Ms. Harris said that in December 2011, the Commission approved adding the mural policy as Chapter 6 and some other minor revisions. Presently, this has not been placed on City Council's agenda. The city is currently in litigation on a sign/mural which was

painted, to her understanding, without a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) and without a permit. They are in some litigation as to whether it is a sign or a mural. City Council would prefer not to address the mural policy until this has been satisfied.

Ms. Harris said the Commission still has the authority to approve murals. Therefore, she does not believe that this detracts from any of the work that this Commission is doing or will continue to do.

Mr. Harper asked when was this done.

Ms. Harris answered that this was several years ago, but it was only recently brought to the attention of the City for enforcement actions.

V. Adjournment

8. Adjourned

There being no further business to come before the HSMC, Ms. Soule adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is May 3, 2012 at 4:00 p.m. in the Arthur Mendonsa Hearing Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris
Cultural Resource 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.