



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  
April 4, 2013, 4:00 PM  
Meeting Minutes

**April 4, 2013 HSMC Special Called Meeting**

**I. Call to Order and Welcome**

1. [Order](#)

**Chair Soule** called the Special Called Meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. Ms. Soule welcomed every one in attendance and gave the purpose of the special called meeting.

**II. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

2. [March 7, 2013 Meeting Minutes](#)

Attachment: [March 7, 2013 Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)

**Board Action:**

Approve meeting minutes of March 7, 2013. - PASS

**Vote Results**

Motion: Walt Harper

Second: Thomas Gensheimer

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Walt Harper - Aye

Eli Karatassos - Not Present

Robert Pirro - Aye

Mary Soule - Aye

**III. Regular Agenda**

3. [13-001340-PA Ridin' Mural 109 MLK Jr. Blvd.](#)

Attachment: [109MLKRidinMuralapplication Part 1.pdf](#)

Attachment: [109MLKRidinMuralapplicationPart 2.pdf](#)

Attachment: [13-001340-PA Staff Report.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Technical Advisory Committee Comments.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Public comments.pdf](#)

**Mr. Matt Hebermehl** was present on behalf of the petition.

**Ms. Ellen Harris** gave the staff report. The petitioner is requesting approval for a mural entitled "Ridin" on the east (front) façade of 109 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The mural will be temporary - 30 days.

**Ms. Harris** stated that the "Before I Die" mural, also a temporary, 30 day mural was approved for the same location in March 2012 by the HSMC. A mural by the same artist and of a similar design was reviewed by the HSMC on March 7, 2013 in a different location, 228 West Broughton Street, and was denied.

**Ms. Harris** explained that the artist has provided the following statement regarding the theme of the mural: the proposed mural Ridin' invokes the spirit of Savannah's rich tradition of hand painted signs. The content of the mural is in line with the vernacular style found in signs for locally owned businesses on MLK Jr. Blvd. With heart and sense of humor, the signs give us a true look into life in Savannah; Ridin' isn't any different. Simultaneously, Ridin' references Savannah's rapidly growing bicycle culture. Savannah is increasingly becoming more and more bike friendly. Bike racks are ubiquitous throughout the Historic Landmark District, and the city recently received a national Civlovia grant.

**Ms. Harris** reported as required in the Master Plan and Guidelines, written notice was sent to all property owners within 200 feet of the subject property. A sign was posted on the property fifteen days prior to the meeting. A certified letter was sent to the Downtown Neighborhood Association. Additional notification was sent to the Downtown Business Association and Historic Savannah Foundation. She said the following persons sent letters of support for the proposal: **Mr. Tom Kohler of Savannah Citizens Advocacy; Ms. Paula Wallace, SCAD President and Cofounder; Megan Luther; and Mr. Jose Ray.**

**Ms. Harris** additionally reported that the Historic Site and Monument Commission Technical Advisory Committee was notified of the proposal. Three members of this committee sent comments. Their comments are:

"I have read the proposal. (Although I supported the original, I have a higher support that it is temporary)." **Dr. Peggy Blood, Savannah State University**

"The proposed mural certainly enhances and energizes the selected temporary space. It is an excellent fit. Recommend approval." **Eileen Baker, Director of Cultural Affairs**

"This project is located on the historically significant Greyhound Bus Station (109 MLK) within the Savannah Historic District. Because of the temporary nature of the mural on the existing non-historic plywood panels, no Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is required from the Historic District Board of Review. I hope to see this structure restored one day and the mural may help draw attention to this significant structure. For reference, I have attached photos of the condition of the building prior to the installation of the plywood panels and background information on its history and significance." **Sarah Ward, City Preservation Officer**

**Ms. Harris** said that the proposed design includes two people sharing a ride on a bicycle. She said that while the depiction illustrates an illegal activity, it is unlikely this will impact

bicyclists behavior. Ridin' is proposed to be a temporary, 30 day mural on the eastern facing wall (front). The estimated size of the mural is 9 feet all by 36 feet wide.

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

**Mr. Robert Pirro** stated that the mural looks great and he fully supports it.

#### PETITIONER COMMENTS

**Mr. Hebermehl** thanked the HSMC for having the Special Called Meeting. He said that he was in agreement with Ms. Harris' report. He entertained questions from the HSMC.

**Mr. Harper** said he was in total support of the mural. However, it was mentioned that the mural depicts an illegal activity. He asked Mr. Hebermehl if there was a way he could make a tandem bike. It is close to being tandem now. Would this be too much to ask?

**Mr. Hebermehl** said he respects the request and understands that this is not the preferred way of riding a bicycle, but personally he chose this because whether it is legal or not, it is an icon in the city. For him to change it, would change the intent of what this is about. Nevertheless, if this is what it takes to get it approved, he would be open to it. However, if it is not required, then he prefers not to change it. Also, if he has to change it, he would have to resubmit the design to Converse for their approval.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

**Mr. Jamie Byron** stated that he resides in Savannah and knows that the mural was not approved for 228 West Broughton Street. Mr. Byron thanked the MPC and the HSMC for approving the mural at the 109 MLK Jr. Boulevard location. This shows a great willingness on the part of the City to open its doors to the rest of the world. This helps to personify our city and puts it forward in a positive way.

#### **Board Action:**

Approval of the mural because it meets the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art. - PASS

#### **Vote Results**

Motion: Robert Pirro  
Second: Walt Harper  
Thomas Gensheimer - Aye  
Walt Harper - Aye  
Eli Karatassos - Not Present  
Robert Pirro - Aye  
Mary Soule - Aye

#### IV. Other Business

##### 4. [Invitation to Archaeology Site Visit](#)

**Ms. Harris** reported that as part of the MPC's efforts to raise awareness about the importance of archaeology, the MPC is organizing three site visits to the archaeology site at Abercorn and King George Boulevard which is being conducted by Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). All board members, elected officials, and MPC staff are invited to attend the site visit. The site visits are currently scheduled for:

Tuesday, April 23, 2013 leaving at 10:00 a.m. and returning at approximately 12:30 p.m.  
Wednesday, May 1, 2013 leaving at 10:00 a.m. and returning at approximately 12:30 p.m.  
Thursday, May 9, 2013 leaving at 2:30 p.m. and returning at approximately 5:00 p.m..

**Ms. Harris** said the buses will leave from the MPC office. Space is limited. She asked the HSMC to please let her know if they plan to attend so that she may reserve their seat. If space is available in the parking garage, the board members may park there.

Ms. Harris stated that if anyone wanted more information on the site, please visit:

<http://abercornarchaeology.org/>

##### 5. [Commissioner's Items](#)

#### V. Adjournment

##### 6. [Next Meeting- May 2, 2013](#)

##### 7. [Adjournment](#)

There being no further business to come before the HSMC, Ms. Soule adjourned the meeting at 4:25 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting is Thursday, May 2, 2013 at 4:00 p.m. in the Arthur A. 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.*