



Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room
October 3, 2013, 4:00 PM
Meeting Minutes

October 3, 2013 HSMC Special Called Meeting

I. Call to Order and Welcome

1. [Order](#)

Mr. Eli Karatassos, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance to the Special Called meeting.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

2. [September 5, 2013 Minutes](#)

Attachment: [September 5, 2013 Minutes.pdf](#)

Board Action:

Approve Meeting Minutes of September 5, 2013. - PASS

Vote Results

Motion: Robert Pirro

Second: Thomas Gensheimer

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Eli Karatassos - Aye

Ryan Madson - Aye

Robert Pirro - Aye

III. Regular Agenda

3. [13-004190-HM | Rotary Club Historical Marker | East Median of Liberty and Bull](#)

Attachment: [Staff report.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Submittal packet.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Revised location drawing.pdf](#)

Mr. Charles E. Powell was present on behalf of the petition.

Ms. Ellen Harris gave the staff report. She stated that the HSMC is very familiar with this

petition as it was reviewed at their meeting on September 5, 2013. She explained that at the meeting in September the HSMC recommended approval of the proposed marker with the condition that the wheel be located slightly to the north so that the marker and the wheel are symmetrical.

Ms. Harris said she contacted the Traffic Engineering Department to ensure that there were no concerns about automobile sight lines. The petitioner's revised location map was sent to Traffic Engineering who stated that they did not want the rotary wheel moved to the north as it will impede automobile sight lines.

Mr. Karatassos explained that basically Traffic Engineering wants the HSMC to leave the wheel where it is presently located. It is okay for the new marker to be further south as it does not affect the sight lines. He believes, however, it would look better if it was centered. The two would probably look better if they were closer together instead of being far apart. The wheel is only three and one-half feet wide and you can see through it. However, it would probably be most economical if the petitioner does not move the other marker.

Mr. Karatassos said it is left to the HSMC's discretion, but he believes the staff is asking them to reconsider what they have done previously. The petitioner does not object to this.

Mr. Madson asked for clarification.

Mr. Karatassos explained that the HSMC is being asked to possibly agree with the suggestion of Traffic Engineering by not allowing the wheel marker to go further north which means that the new marker will be placed south of the existing marker. Or, the HSMC may come up with a new location for the new marker.

Mr. Gensheimer asked wasn't there also an alternate site stated for the new marker.

Mr. Karatassos stated that the alternate site was on the corner, but there was a concern about the trees.

Dr. Pirro asked if the alternate site on the corner is acceptable by the petitioner.

Mr. Powell said their first choice is the median, but if it does not work here, they will be glad to move the marker to the corner. Whatever, the HSMC approves is okay with him.

Ms. Harris explained that Traffic Engineering has said that they do not want the marker in the median.

Mr. Karatassos asked staff if Traffic Engineering has the ability to overrule the HSMC.

Ms. Harris explained that she can forward the HSMC's recommendation to City Council and Traffic Engineering will inform the City Manager of their objections. It is ultimately City Council's decision and could overrule Traffic Engineering, but it is unlikely that they would because it is a safety issue.

Board Action:

Approval to reconsider the petition. - PASS

Vote Results

Motion: Robert Pirro

Second: Ryan Madson

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Eli Karatassos - Aye

Ryan Madson - Aye

Robert Pirro - Aye

Board Action:

Approval to place the marker to the south of the present marker (WHEEL) and recommend approval to City Council of the proposed Rotary marker as submitted because the marker meets the standards and guidelines. The petitioner should coordinate with the City Engineering to ensure no utilities are damaged during installation. - PASS

Vote Results

Motion: Thomas Gensheimer

Second: Ryan Madson

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Eli Karatassos - Aye

Ryan Madson - Abstain

Robert Pirro - Nay

4. [13-004840-HM | 4 East Jones Street | Historical Marker](#)

Attachment: [Submittal Packet.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Staff Recommendation.pdf](#)

Mr. Smith was present on behalf of the historical marker request.

Ms. Ellen Harris gave the staff report. The petitioner is requesting to erect a historical marker at SCAD Morris Hall at 4 East Jones Street. The theme of the marker commemorates the historical significance of Morris Hall. The proposed marker is a cast bronze plaque, measuring 18" x 22" with raised border and copy. The copy will be 3/4" tall in SCAD's own custom serif font. Morris Hall was built in 1853 and became part of SCAD in 1990. Attributed to architect John S. Norris, the building once served as a grand residence for bank and philanthropist Alexander A. Smets and as home to the German Harmonie Club, a Jewish men's association. The funds have been fully secured.

Ms. Harris reported that staff recommends approval as submitted.

Mr. Karatassos stated that the building also once served as the home of the Savannah Jaycees.

Dr. Pirro asked if Ben Morris is deceased.

Ms. Harris answered that she does not believe that Mr. Morris is deceased. However, she was not sure. The information regarding Mr. Morris is for a building identification sign. The marker explaining why the building is named after Mr. Morris would come under a different category.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

Board Action:

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

Vote Results

Motion: Thomas Gensheimer

Second: Ryan Madson

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Eli Karatassos - Aye

Ryan Madson - Aye

Robert Pirro - Aye

5. [13-004811-PA | 3515 Montgomery Street | Montgomery Hall Mural](#)

Attachment: [Staff Recommendation.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Submittal Packet.pdf](#)

Attachment: [TAC Comments.pdf](#)

Mr. Matthew Hebermehl was present on behalf of the petition.

Ms. Ellen Harris gave the staff report. The petitioner is requesting a mural to be located at 3515 Montgomery Street. The petitioner has provided a statement that says "the mural is an abstracted representation of the vibrancy of this site's past, present and future." The proposed location of the mural is on the north façade of the tower of Montgomery Hall. It

will be visible from Montgomery and Exchange Streets. The petitioner provided the following statement regarding the location: "Before housing SCAD's Digital Arts programs, Montgomery Hall was a coffin factory, carriage factory, and a building supply company. Train tracks run parallel to the building, carrying cargo in and out of the city. Historically and moving forward, this location continues to be a commercial, creative and energetic hub."

Ms. Harris said the proposed mural will be located on a stucco tower element and will be architecturally integrated with the horizontal banding of the building. The immediate neighborhood is industrial in character with some commercial and residential beyond the immediate context. She said there is no known neighborhood support or opposition to the mural. Ms. Harris said a certified letter was sent to the Neighborhood Association as well as all property owners within 200 feet. No comments were received.

Ms. Harris reported additionally that the request was sent to the Technical Advisory Committee for comments. Two members responded. They were Dr. Peggy Blood of Savannah State University and Mr. Harry Delorme of Telfair Museum of Art. **Dr. Blood** commented that "there is no doubt that this meets the requirements and the work seems impressive on the building. However, it is questionable if the mural represents the context of the neighborhood." She stated also that her "only comment and concern is that she hopes that our city does not become one of those cities flooded with mural regardless if they are representational or non-representational. We have a special charm and beauty across this city that we need to maintain, regardless of the different programs institutions may promote." Dr. Blood said her vote is "yes" for the mural. **Mr. Delorme** commented that "I support the mural proposal and the staff recommendations."

Ms. Harris stated that regarding the design, the petitioner has noted that the mural celebrates and represents the creative spirit fostered by the SCAD with upward movement flow, vibrant colors and energetic strokes. The proposed mural is 30 feet wide by 70 feet tall and spans the three stories of the building. The timeframe for installation is approximately two weeks and funding has been fully secured; it is on private property.

Ms. Harris reported that staff recommends approval of the mural with the following conditions:

1. Ensure that the horizontal banding on the façade remains distinct.
2. Clarify if the sponsor and artist names will be incorporated into the design.
3. Clarify if there is a weatherproof and vandalism-resistant coating.

Mr. Karatassos, for clarification, asked staff if this has been confirmed that this is within the HSMC's purview and there are no questions about the location and so forth.

Ms. Harris confirmed that this is within the Commission's purview.

Dr. Pirro asked if SCAD owns this site.

Ms. Harris answered yes. The HSMC is representing the City as this is on private property. The request will not go to the City Council.

Mr. Gensheimer asked if SCAD has chosen an artist to do the work.

Ms. Harris explained that Matt Hebermehl has been chosen to do the art work. She said some examples of Mr. Hebermehl's work was included in the packets sent to the HSMC.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Dr. Pirro asked Mr. Hebermehl if SCAD was paying for the mural.

Mr. Hebermehl answered yes.

Dr. Pirro asked Mr. Hebermehl if the mural shown on the screen is the one that will be painted at this location. Will it contain any logos, slogans or symbols as representation for SCAD?

Mr. Hebermehl answered no.

Mr. Karatassos said his only comment is the mural's abstract is okay with the exception of the bottom right panel. He said that to him, it is a little creepy as he was able to detect a face with three colored eyes, nose and mouth. He does not know what this will do towards affecting a young mind. He wishes it was a little more abstract.

Mr. Hebermehl explained the mural's design.

Mr. Gensheimer said the mural is a large abstract. Will the actual mural be as shown on the screen or will there be some variation? The last mural that the HSMC approved for MLK was not done exactly as was originally shown to them.

Mr. Hebermehl asked how was it different than what was shown.

Mr. Gensheimer said when the HSMC saw the final version it was different than what the image projected.

Mr. Karatassos said the HSMC was not going back to MLK mural, but they were only asking Mr. Hebermehl if this mural would look exactly as the image that is being presented now.

Mr. Hebermehl said he was directed by SCAD and based upon his personal finite work, SCAD commissioned him to create something that represented this on this wall. SCAD and he have agreed upon something that they believe is appropriate. His full intention is to create what they have agreed upon as closely as he can as this is what SCAD has approved. This was a rigorous process of going back and forth and looking at multiple versions to get to this point. Therefore, to the best of his abilities, he will paint what the HSMC is looking at now.

Mr. Hebermehl said regarding the Converse art, if the HSMC is talking about the star on the shoes and the shoes are there, he understands why this is an issue. In the preliminary discussions with the Zoning Administrator, Geoff Goins, Mr. Goins makes the decision whether something is a sign, whether it is promoting a product or whether it is art in nature. Mr. Hebermehl thanked the HSMC for not letting that project die when it came

before them. He said he was clear about who was sponsoring the mural and what it was about, but the art was not about the shoes and in his view, the content of that art was about Savannah and kids on a bike. Yes, there was a star on the shoe, but Geoff Goins approved the mural as such and then it was presented to the HSMC. He believed that there was not a stretch as the content, composition, and color scheme were all consistent with the sketch.

Dr. Pirro asked Mr. Hebermehl that if SCAD's president would have said she would like to see changing the face into a little of SCAD's logo, would this be an issue.

Mr. Hebermehl answered yes. He knows the rules of what murals can be and what they cannot be; he knows that with the rules of sponsorship, such as on the monument, it said sponsored by Wal-Mart, that it would not be Wal-Mart's logo. He said regarding the converse mural, he discussed with Mr. Goins about having the element in there and he approved it as art as it was not advertisement.

Mr. Karatassos said the flag that was raised with him was when it appeared to become an ad. He said it did change from a mural to an ad. However, the HSMC wants to ensure that what is proposed to be done is actually what will be done and no one should corrupt Mr. Hebermehl's work by having it become a sign. The HSMC does not want to bring this issue up again.

Mr. Hebermehl wanted to assure the HSMC that they have come this far and he will never try to sneak something in that was not approved where he could have to come and ask for forgiveness, etc. He said he has given his life to this and has sacrificed a lot within the last two and one-half years to get to this point. He is not trying to throw this away and is not trying to sneak anything by anybody. Mr. Hebermehl said with the Converse mural, in particular, he feels he was very honest about what the mural would be and the art was not about the shoes. He said eventually it would be a print ad, but the art was not an advertisement for the shoes. Shoes are shown on the mural, but it is not about Chuck Taylor, but the mural is about Savannah.

Mr. Gensheimer asked if SCAD was to put something on top of this mural, "would the HSMC have anything to say about that?"

Mr. Karatassos stated that SCAD cannot alter the mural or change it. He is a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals and a request was submitted by SCAD for their four letters "SCAD." This was a sign and the letters were bigger than they were supposed to be. They cannot alter it and if they do, it is a violation of zoning.

Ms. Harris explained that the Zoning Administrator is the individual who has the authority to say whether it is or is not a sign. Any sign has to have a permit and go through the process. There are restrictions as to where a sign can be placed, how large it can be; and so forth. It is not a blanket approval.

Dr. Pirro said his concern is what the HSMC approves as the mural is what is painted thereon as the final product.

Mr. Hebermehl said that Savannah is thought to be a leader in the arts and arts education. SCAD has been located in Savannah for 35 years; yet, there is often very little evidence of contemporary art in the public realms. He said almost no permanent contemporary public

art is seen in the City of Savannah. He said, however, it is great to see that SCAD is taking on a more leadership role in promoting contemporary art in the public realm. Mr. Hebermehl said he is also glad to see that the HSMC is often supportive of public art.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

Board Action:

Approval of the mural at 3515 Montgomery Street with the condition that the horizontal banding on the façade remains distinct and that there is a weatherproof and vandalism-resistant coating. - PASS

Vote Results

Motion: Ryan Madson

Second: Thomas Gensheimer

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Eli Karatassos - Aye

Ryan Madson - Aye

Robert Pirro - Aye

IV. Other Business

6. [Commissioner's Items](#)

7. [Next Meeting- Regular Meeting- November 7, 2013](#)

Ms. Harris introduced Ms. Leah Michalak, Preservation Planner, who will be involved with the Board in the future on some of their projects. The HSMC welcomed Ms. Michalak and said they look forward to working with her.

V. Adjournment

8. [Adjourned.](#)

There being no further business to come before the HSMC, Mr. Karatassos adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Ellen I. Harris
Director of Urban Planning and Historic Preservation

EIH: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.