



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
September 5, 2013 4:00 P.M.
Meeting Minutes

September 5, 2013 HSMC Regular Meeting

I. Call to Order and Welcome

1. [Order](#)

Vice-Chair, Eli Karatassos, called the HSMC Meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance.

2. [Gordon Smith](#)

Mr. Karatassos stated that he believes everyone knows that Mr. Gordon Smith, past chair of the HSMC has passed away. A moment of silence was held in memory of Mr. Smith and the many years of dedicated service he rendered to the HSMC. A sympathy card from the HSMC will be presented to Mrs. Smith.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

3. [June 27, 2013 Minutes](#)

Attachment: [June 27, 2013 Minutes.pdf](#)

Board Action:

Approve Meeting Minutes of June 27, 2013. - PASS

Vote Results

Motion: Walt Harper
Second: Ryan Madson
Thomas Gensheimer
Eli Karatassos
Ryan Madson
Robert Pirro
Walt Harper

- Aye
- Aye
- Aye
- Aye
- Aye

III. Regular Agenda

4. [13-004190-HM | Rotary Club Historical Marker | East Median of Liberty and Bull](#)

Attachment: [Staff report.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Submittal packet.pdf](#)

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

Ms. Christy Crisp was present on behalf of the Georgia Historical Society.

Ms. Ellen Harris gave the staff report. The petitioner is requesting to place a historical marker entitled "A Century of Service - The Rotary Club of Savannah" at the east median of Liberty Street at Bull Street. Staff feels that this event is not commemorated elsewhere sufficiently. It has relevance to the community as a whole and there is sufficient documented evidence. While there is an existing monument in the form of the Rotary wheel at the proposed location, the proposed marker commemorates a particular club and its specific contributions and does not duplicate the same information. The proposed location is on public property and, therefore, this petition will have to go to City Council for final approval.

Ms. Harris said she consulted with the City's Traffic Engineer to ensure that there are no concerns about the probability of accidents at this location or automobile sight line issues. The Traffic Engineer has assured Ms. Harris that as long as the marker is placed to the south side of the existing marker he has no concerns. The Rotary will be celebrating their 100th birthday on January 5, 2014. The unveiling will be held at this time.

Ms. Harris stated that if the Commission feels the proposed site may be too small to accommodate two markers without causing overcrowding, the tree lawn at the southeast corner of Liberty and Bull, in front of the DeSoto Hilton may be a viable alternative location. However, staff has no concerns with this, but just wanted to point out for the HSMC as a potential secondary site if this was a concern of the Board.

Ms. Harris stated that staff believes the text has been well researched and that the petitioner has provided a bibliography. The funding is estimated at \$5,000.00 which has been fully secured. The Georgia Historical Society administers the marker program and will assume responsibility for the repair and replacement of all markers. The petitioner has requested that the Escrow Payment be waived.

Ms. Harris reported that staff recommends approval as submitted. The petitioner should coordinate with City Engineering to ensure no utilities are damaged during installation.

Ms. Harris entertained questions from the HSMC.

Dr. Pirro asked if text is printed is on the base of the wheel.

Ms. Harris answered yes. The petitioner will be able to explain this when he comes forward to make his presentation.

Mr. Harper said his concern regarding this is the spacing in this area. There is already

a monument here and it says "Rotary Club of Savannah." Therefore, this is not just a generalized marker for the Rotary, but it is for the Rotary Club of Savannah. He asked why do they need two markers basically delivering the same thing within five feet of each other.

Ms. Harris said the overcrowding issue occurred to her as well and this is why she identified a second site as a possible solution should the Board have concerns about overcrowding. She said regarding the duplication, she believes that because the marker provides the historical information about the Rotary Club in the form of the text and the existing monument does not provide any historical information on it, that the efforts are not being duplicated. Essentially, they serve two purposes commemorating basically the same concept while highlighting different areas.

Mr. Harper said he has no issues with putting the marker in the tree lawn next to the Desoto.

Mr. Karatassos said the two look like they go together and you would probably not know that they were not done separately. Because this marker is low and the other marker is high actually brings attention to it. If the marker was in the other section, it would be behind the vegetation and would not be seen. Therefore, the two locations are not complimentary to each other. Mr. Karatassos said he understood the concern, but his personal belief is it will work out fine. He said but first let's hear from the petitioner and get some more specific information.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Ms. Christy Crisp and **Mr. Charles E. Powell** came forward.

Dr. Pirro stated that he could not read the left panel on the original monument. What does it say?

Mr. Powell answered basically it is a statement about the principles of the Rotary Club and what it stands for. He explained that the wheel has the date 1925 on it. The Rotary Club erected this wheel at the entrance of Savannah in 1925 which was Highway 17 at the Houlihan Bridge and put a fountain around it. It was somewhat like a welcome station. As you can image, in 1925 horses were here along with carts and automobiles. This same wheel was moved to the Traffic Circle in Garden City. However, when Lynes Parkway and Interstate 516 were built, Herb Traub of their Rotary Club had the wheel moved. The significance of the historic marker is to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Rotary Club to the community.

Mr. Powell said that he agrees that the site they have chosen maybe a little crowded. But, when you look at it, you will see that it really fits with the wheel. Moving it across the street as Ms. Harris has suggested in front of the hotel may be a fine site. Mr. Powell said that the Rotary Club just wants to commemorate its many years of service to the city.

Mr. Harper asked staff that instead of putting the marker off to south, could both of them be centered in the median and place the wheel to the right a little more and place the plaque in between.

Ms. Harris answered that she believes the primary question would be who will pay for it.

She said that Park & Tree funds would probably not be available. The question then would become whether the petitioner would be willing to make this a part of their contribution. She explained that her only similar experience such as this was with the Bishop Turner monument, which the HSMC discussed at their last meeting. The Bishop Turner monument has been removed from Papy Street and put into storage while the hotel and garage are being built. The developer paid for this removal. After the hotel and garage are completely built, the monument will be reinstalled here with a new base.

Ms. Harris said if the monument is moved, they want to ensure that it be done by someone with the same kind of experience afforded to move the Bishop Turner monument.

Mr. Harper said the Rotary Club monument is basically on a pole in the ground. How hard would it be to move it two or three feet over?

Ms. Harris explained that the monument is two pieces. The wheel is here and she has no idea how it is mounted in the ground and also the plaques are here. She asked Mr. Harper if he was saying move the plaques as well.

Mr. Harper answered yes.

Mr. Karatassos said if the two were put in the ground at the same time, there would possibly be one foundation to deal with. But, the plaques in the ground could possibly be left in the center with the two poles on each side. This might be somewhat attractive. Both the monument and the marker applies to the same club, but they commemorate different times in historic. He asked Ms. Crisp if they had any thoughts on this.

Ms. Crisp stated that to the extent that it costs money, they would have to talk with their market sponsors, the Rotary Club about this. They are not opposed to the idea in general, but it does bear discussion. Ms. Crisp said they would need to get a clear idea on how much this would cost. She said to speak generally, in their Review Committee meeting, they usually review the applications for markers from across the state. They look for questions of accessibility and visibility and either of these are particularly in question. Ms. Crisp said frankly whether it is in the median on Liberty Street or in the tree lawn should be fine. They are fine with whatever the HSMC decides.

Mr. Karatassos asked Mr. Powell to respond to this.

Mr. Powell stated that he feels sure the Club will entertain the idea of bearing the cost for moving this over to give the site symmetry if this is what the HSMC is after. Both the bottom base and the wheel would have to be moved to balance it. He said that he would be happy to ask in their meeting on Monday that J. T. Turner or someone in the Club look at this and give them an estimate. Mr. Powell said they will be glad to consider doing this to get the marker in the median.

Mr. Harper asked how tall is the existing monument.

Ms. Crisp said this would typically depend upon how far it is put in the ground. She said that it will be a little more than six feet.

Mr. Madson said he believes their concern about symmetry is valid. Most of the markers that he knows of in the median are centered symmetrically. He believes the median is an appropriate site. However, it does need to be more symmetrical. Mr. Madson said he believes that the tree lawn is less dignified given that a taxi que is here. Next to the Desoto is an exhaust that will be blowing hot air. This is not a corner where people linger.

Mr. Powell said because of balance, he believes it would look better if the two bottom plaques are placed directly in front of the existing structure or move the entire monument over.

Mr. Powell asked if the Rotary Club would need to go through this entire process again in order to move the existing monument.

Mr. Karatassos answered no.

Mr. Powell said he feels that the Club will agree, but he cannot speak for the Club until he talks with the president and the board. He will talk with them Monday regarding this.

Ms. Harris said the recommendation would go to City Council who will have to approve the moving and the installation of the monuments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

Board Action:

Recommend to City Council the approval of the Rotary Club Historical Marker in the Median at Liberty and Bull Streets with the condition that both be centered proportionally and symmetrically - PASS within the Median. The petitioner should coordinate with City Engineering to ensure no utilities are damaged during installation.

Vote Results

Motion: Ryan Madson

Second: Walt Harper

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Walt Harper - Aye

Eli Karatassos - Aye

Ryan Madson - Aye

Robert Pirro - Aye

5. [13-004305-HM | Candler Oak Historical Marker | 516 Drayton Street](#)

Attachment: [Staff Recommendation.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Submittal Packet.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Mounting information.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Revised Mock Up.pdf](#)

Ms. Karen Jenkins was present on behalf of the petition.

Ms. Ellen Harris gave the staff report. The petitioner is requesting approval to erect a historical marker at 516 Drayton Street to commemorate the Candler Oak. The petitioner has provided a detailed statement regarding the theme of the monument regarding the civic, institutional and environmental aspects of the Candler Oak. Ms. Harris stated that an existing marker commemorating the Candler Oak will be removed when this marker is installed. The new marker will be closer to the existing fence along Drayton Street to be more visible.

Ms. Harris explained that the proposed marker will be rectangular and 36" tall x 48" wide. The proposed material is 1/2" thick high pressure laminate. The marker will be mounted on two poles. The petitioner has stated that the marker has an approximately lifespan of 20 years and Savannah Tree Foundation will be responsible for its replacement in 20 years. Ms. Harris said at the time of publication of the staff report, additional information was needed on the marker including how the marker would be mounted and how it would be installed in the ground. She said the petitioner subsequently provided the information and is included in the HSMC packets. Consequently, the pedestal for the support has been provided as well. The angle is 30 degrees.

Ms. Harris stated that staff is recommending a few revisions to the text which could be worked out with staff for final approval. One of the revisions - the second paragraph starts talking about the Civil War but quickly jumps down to 1930. Staff recommends that the information about 1930 be a separate paragraph to allow for the different time periods.

Ms. Harris said additionally it appears that the *italicized* text is in some way associated with the photograph while actually the contents gives a historical overview. Therefore, staff recommends a different treatment of the text.

Mr. Karatassos said one way to handle this is to do what the newspaper does which is to put a box around it.

Ms. Harris stated that there are a few things with the text that she feels could easily be worked out at staff level if the HSMC is amenable to this. The funding for the marker has been fully secured and sponsored by the Savannah Tree Foundation. Because this is private property, no escrow payment is required.

Ms. Harris stated that the marker will be placed on private property and, therefore, does not need approval from City Council.

Ms. Harris reported that staff recommends approval of the maker. The petitioner has met all the conditions with the potential of reworking the text language.

Mr. Madson said it appears that the proposed location is approximate. The text needs to be legible. The font is rather large. Therefore, common sense would dictate exactly where to put it.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Ms. Karen Jenkins came forward and introduced **Ms. Heather Gordon**, consultant, who is working with them. Ms. Gordon did the historical research for the content of the marker.

Mr. Harper asked how close will the marker be to the fence, as obviously one would have to look at it from the sidewalk.

Ms. Gordon said the existing marker which they will replace with the new sign marker is closer to the tree and is a little difficult to read from the sidewalk. Now that the property is owned by the Savannah Law School, the general public is no longer invited onto the private property. The easement recorded for the tree gives the public the right to view the tree. Therefore, they feel the updated marker positioned close enough to the fence to be legible from the sidewalk is in order. Ms. Gordon said that it will be adjacent to the fence, but not right on top of the brick and stucco fence.

Mr. Karatassos said the petitioners need to be concerned about vandalism.

Ms. Jenkins said they were aware of this, but she believes this goes for any marker anywhere in Savannah. She explained that their proposal is to put the marker along Drayton Street inside the fence.

Mr. Harper said the HSMC was concerned about centering in the previous petition, but with this he believes it would be better if it was off to the side because if not, it will obstruct the view.

Ms. Jenkins said if they are looking straight at the tree, you are not looking at the sign in front of the trunk.

Mr. Harper said he believes that 45 degrees would be better as the rainwater and everything else would be able to come off it much better.

Dr. Pirro asked Ms. Jenkins what she thought about staff's recommendation that the *italicized* material be incorporated into the larger historical data. Does this make sense to you?

Ms. Jenkins stated that she would let Ms. Gordon answer this question.

Ms. Gordon answered that they prefer to keep this separate. She understands the staff's concern that maybe this looks like a caption in a box or something would offset that. However, the italicized data is a slightly bigger font. It highlights such things as the first easement in the country. They want to give a quick summary about the tree to capture attention to read the text. Therefore, they prefer to have it separate. They are certainly open to suggestions, but their preference is to keep it separated.

Mr. Karatassos said he believes that their staff is very good about looking at these type of things and come up with a good compromise and recommendation. He said he believes if

they approve the request, they are saying that there needs to be some obvious separation in font. The petitioner needs to work this out with staff and if staff is satisfied then he guesses the HSMC will be satisfied with it.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

Board Action:

Approve the Candler Oak Marker on the condition that the text be worked out with staff. - PASS

Vote Results

Motion: Ryan Madson

Second: Thomas Gensheimer

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Walt Harper - Aye

Eli Karatassos - Aye

Ryan Madson - Aye

Robert Pirro - Aye

IV. Other Business

6. [Discuss 109 MLK Mural- Advertising](#)

Ms. Harris said 109 MLK Mural - Advertising was put on the agenda at the request of Dr. Pirro.

Dr. Pirro said they all have seen the image that Ms. Harris sent to the HSMC regarding this mural. He explained that someone took a photo of the mural and incorporated it in a Converse advertisement. What caught his attention is that a sneaker of Converse is included in the image. He was wondering that when the HSMC approved this petition earlier if they should have taken this in consideration. This is public space and the mural is funded by a private company; but it has the products of the Converse company in the image. In the future, should this be something that the HSMC should consider and, therefore, probably not approve the mural. This is private placement instead of public art.

Mr. Karatassos said if it is a sign, it does not need to come to the HSMC. It should go to one of the other boards or to the City.

Mr. Harper said he believes the HSMC was looking at this as a mural. He did not think about it until it was mentioned today. The mural was paid for by Converse and it represents

Converse. This makes it advertisement at that point, but when it was brought to the HSMC, it was brought as a mural. He does not think that they thought about it as being advertisement at the time of approval.

Mr. Karatassos asked staff that when the HSMC approved Whole Foods mural, did it have "Whole Foods" anywhere there on.

Ms. Harris answered no.

Mr. Karatassos said he does not disagree that it warrants more discussion, but he does not see this as an ad, but as a sponsorship. He does not know if the HSMC would not be able to let public art be sponsored. What did they do with Wal-Mart? They don't want this to be considered a sign.

Mr. Gensheimer asked what are the rules dealing with private placement in murals. Is this addressed in the rules?

Ms. Harris said when Wal-Mart was sponsoring a historical marker, it said sponsored by the Georgia Historical Society and Wal-Mart. There was a lot of discussion at that time. She explained that she tried to distinguish between murals and signs by stating that a mural shall not advertise a specific business product or service. However, beyond this in Chapter 5 Design it talks about text for markers, monuments or works of art..... Number 5 says that donor names maybe included; provided the names are identical but smaller font than the rest of the text and that no slogans or corporate logos are included.

Mr. Harper said he does not see anything wrong with the mural if they had taken out the logo. This is something that just got by them. He believes there was an intent to do this.

Ms. Harris showed the HSMC the image that was provided to them for approval.

Dr. Pirro said looking at the image that was provided to the HSMC, they do not see a sneaker. Therefore, this is different.

Mr. Harper said this is the artist interpretation of that.

Dr. Pirro said when you look at the image, the sneaker is very much in the front. He said he is not sure whether or not they want to consider adding product placement as well to the rules.

Mr. Karatassos asked the HSMC that if someone wanted to do a killer mural and the person was drinking a Coca-Cola, would they not want to approve the mural because they are drinking a Coca-Cola or would you want that beautiful artwork.

Mr. Harper said if Coca-Cola was sponsoring it, he probably would not want it.

Mr. Karatassos said he is interested in getting some great art here in the area. The mural is different, how do they handle it. Do they say the representation is different than what was brought before the HSMC. The art is different. However, he believes the tennis shoe makes it relevant because the logo is on there.

Mr. Harper said rather it is Converse, New Balance, Nike or whatever, it is still a tennis shoe and the logo does not need to be on there. They already know what it is. They know whether it is Coke, Pepsi, Sprite and so forth as they know it is a soft drink.

Mr. Harper said they run into this same thing on the Parade Committee. He said they do not allow advertisement on the floats. He said even though a float might be sponsored by a particular product and at that time it becomes advertisement and follows under a different aspect. Mr. Harper said he agrees with Mr. Karatassos and do not believe that there was a blatant switch.

Dr. Pirro stated that what is there is certainly a different image than what the HSMC was told. He believes that in the future, they need to ask the petitioner who is sponsoring this and are you going to represent any products for that company on the artwork.

Mr. Madson said public art intent is primarily advertised. This is a decision that they can agree on and then explain that they vote against it because it looks like advertisement. Some may think of it as advertisement and some may not think of it that way. He believes it is a matter of degree. The guidelines should state this. In one case it could be a discretion in one direction and a mistake in another.

Mr. Harper believes this is already covered in the guidelines because it covers logos.

Mr. Karatassos said it is one thing to put it up there on a wall with the logo thereon. However, the magazine does point it out and makes it look like the HSMC was complicit in this. He said this is a very fine line and he believes that now they are aware of it. This is one of those things that they need to watch carefully. They also need to tell the petitioners that the HSMC wants a complete representation. If there are going to be any subsequent changes including addition of logo and so forth, this must be pointed out to the HSMC. Then maybe somehow they can point out to the petitioner in an appropriate way so they understand that they cannot show them one thing and do something else that is materially different.

Mr. Harper asked if the HSMC actually saw this logo on that shoe. Is there anyway that the logo could have been added to this photograph.

Ms. Harris answered no. This is not the case.

Mr. Karatassos asked if the logo is on there now.

Ms. Harris answered that she has been by the site and took a photo of it; yes it is there.

Mr. Harper asked what if the logo was not on the mural, but Converse wanted to do an advertisement with it and placed the logo onto the mural.

Mr. Karatassos said he believes this was appropriate to raise for discussion and now they are saying be more careful. He believes that the petitioner should be given something in their application that says there cannot be any additional logos added after approval. They need to cover themselves and make this very explicit to the petitioner.

Ms. Harris said the mural is no longer there. However, if the HSMC did find this to be such an egregious misrepresentation of what was previously submitted, it was altered significantly, she believes the process how they would handle this is to say it is a mural that has not gone through the appropriate approval channels. Therefore, it becomes property maintenance and then they would report it to the City for the property owner to be cited or allow the property owner to correct the problem by removing it.

7. [Commissioner's Items](#)
8. [Next Meeting- Special-Called Meeting- October 3, 2013](#)

Mr. Karatassos said the next meeting will be held on October 3, 2013.

Ms. Harris explained that it is a Special Called Meeting at the request of a petitioner and the chairperson has agreed to the meeting.

Mr. Harper asked who is the petitioner.

Ms. Harris said it is another mural request for a building on Montgomery Street south of Victory Drive. Additionally, she has got some requests for markers not through the Historical Marker Program that did not make the deadline for today's meeting. Therefore, since the HSMC will have the Special Called Meeting, this will be added also. There will be two items on the agenda.

V. Adjournment

9. [Adjourned.](#)

There being no further business to come before the Historic Site and Monument Commission, Mr. Karatassos adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen 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.

