



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  
March 6, 2014 4:00 P.M.  
Meeting Minutes

**March 6, 2014 HSMC Regular Meeting**

**I. Call to Order and Welcome**

1. Order

**Ms. Soule** called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance. She outlined the purpose and role of the Historic Site and Monument Commission.

**II. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

2. Approve November 7, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Attachment: November 7, 2013 Minutes.pdf

**Board Action:**

Approve November 7, 2013 Meeting Minutes. - PASS

**Vote Results**

Motion: Eli Karatassos

Second: Ryan Madson

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Walt Harper - Aye

Eli Karatassos - Aye

Ryan Madson - Aye

Robert Pirro - Not Present

Mary Soule - Aye

**III. Regular Agenda**

3. Petition of Coastal Heritage Society | 14-000765-COA | 315 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. | Relocate Two Historical Markers

Attachment: Staff Report.pdf

Attachment: Submittal Packet.pdf

**Ms. Becki Harkness** was present on behalf of the petition.

**Ms. Leah Michalak** gave the staff report. The petitioner is requesting to relocate two existing historical markers. One commemorates General Casimir Pulaski's and Sergeant William Jasper's deaths on the site during the Revolutionary War. The other describes the "Attack on the British Lines" during the Revolutionary War. They will be moved from their current locations along the north side of the former Central of Georgia Passenger Station at Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Louisville Road to the Battlefield Park site directly to the south of the Passenger Station. The Battlefield Park site was completed in 2008.

**Ms. Michalak** stated that the markers were originally installed when the historical marker program was administered by the State of Georgia. The Georgia Historical Society currently administers the historical marker program. Both the State of Georgia and the Georgia Historical Society support the relocation. The Pulaski/Jasper marker is proposed to be located along the eastern boundary of the park with the text facing Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The British Lines marker is proposed to be located along the northern boundary of the park facing Louisville Road. Both the existing and proposed sites are private property.

**Ms. Michalak** reported that staff recommends approval as submitted and that the petitioner coordinate with City Engineering to ensure that no utilities are damaged during the installation.

#### **PETITIONER COMMENTS**

**Ms. Becki Harkness of the Coastal Heritage Society** came forward and introduced herself. She said she was sure that the HSMC members have seen the damage that was done to the Battlefield Park this weekend. They have crews working to reset the stones. While the crew is there, they will remove these markers, if they are approved.

**Ms. Soule** was not aware of the damage that occurred in the Battlefield Park. She asked Ms. Harkness to tell the HSMC about the damage.

**Ms. Harkness** explained that a vandal drove through Battlefield Park. It appeared that they drove a car onto the memorial stones. She believes the car got stuck and tried to get unstuck by turning on the grass and got stuck on the stones. This is what displaced a lot of the stones; burned rubber marks are on a lot of the stones. This will entail a lot of cleaning. Fortunately, there were no damages to the stones that have inscriptions on them. However, the total damage could cost at least \$25,000.

**Dr. Pirro** asked if they have any leads on who was driving the car.

**Ms. Harkness** answered that she is unsure whether they have any leads yet, but the police are launching an investigation. Coastal Heritage has a reward posted; she is unsure how much the reward is for, but believes it has been on the news. Hopefully, they will get some information on this matter soon.

**Ms. Harris** asked if Battlefield Park is open.

**Ms. Harkness** answered that the park is open. Just the area that was damaged is roped off. It was a hard job to put the stones in and she is sure that this time will be equally as challenging, if not more. But, they will reset the stones. Because of all the rain we have had this week, the crew could not get much work done, but hopefully next week the weather will be better.

**Mr. Harper** asked Ms. Harkness if they plan to put up any kind of restraints to keep the public from driving onto the park.

**Ms. Harkness** answered no. This is an open park; it is for everyone. The Coastal Heritage Society does not want it to be restrictive. This is the first time that something like this has happened. Occasionally, people will park near the parking lot entrance where they just roll upon the grass, but the people do not know that they cannot park there. Therefore, they have put up signage to alleviate them from parking there.

**Mr. Karatassos** agreed with Ms. Harkness about not restraining it, but given some of the problems around there, Coastal Heritage Society might want to look into getting a couple of cameras. It would help if signs were placed there that says "this public space is being recorded." This helps to alleviate problems.

**Ms. Harkness** said she is aware that there is a traffic camera at MLK Jr. Boulevard and Liberty Street. She believes the detectives are looking at this camera to see if there is any footage that they can get and Parker's may have some information, too. However, they are working to get this problem resolved.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**Board Action:**

Approval for the relocation of two markers as submitted because the project meets the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art. - PASS

**Vote Results**

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

Relocate Two Historical Markers

Attachment: [Staff Report.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Submittal Packet.pdf](#)

**Ms. Sherryl Lang** was present on behalf of the petitioner.

**Ms. Leah Michalak** gave the staff report. The petitioner is requesting to relocate two existing historical markers. Both markers are associated with the Wayne/Gordon historic site. One marker commemorates James Moore Wayne who was the original owner of the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace site. The other commemorates the site as the Birthplace of Juliette Gordon Low: Founder of the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. They are currently stored at a state historic site managed by the Historic Preservation Division for the Department of Natural Resources and will be moved to the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace site.

**Ms. Michalak** stated that the "James Moore Wayne" marker is proposed to be located in the Bull Street tree lawn closest to Oglethorpe Avenue, facing the Bull Street sidewalk. The "Birthplace" marker is proposed to be located in the tree lawn, near the front entrance to the Wayne/Gordon house, perpendicular to Oglethorpe Avenue.

**Mr. Karatassos** asked why the other marker is not being placed perpendicular.

**Ms. Michalak** said this was actually decided in coordination with the Traffic Engineering Department in order to get it further away from the corner in order not to block the sight lines of the intersection. The proposal has been evaluated by the Director of the Park and Tree Department and by the Director of Traffic Engineering and they have no concerns.

**Ms. Michalak** reported that staff, the petitioner, the Park and Tree Director, and the Traffic Engineering Director were on site together and these locations were determined by the group.

**Ms. Michalak** reported that staff recommends approval as submitted and that the petitioner coordinate with City Engineering to ensure that no utilities are damaged during the installation.

**Mr. Harper** asked why the markers were removed.

**Ms. Michalak** answered that they were removed out of the median because of sight line issues. Traffic Engineering had some concerns several years ago as well.

**Dr. Pirro** asked why the markers removed from their present location going out into the median.

**Ms. Michalak** answered that she believes it was due to a sight line issue as well. When they all met on site, this was her understanding. Where the markers were located, they blocked the sight line. However, the petitioner probably has some more information regarding this.

**Ms. Harris** explained that there was some confusion about the original location and the

revised location. She said [pointing to a section] that when it was in this location, parking was actually along the street, but parking is no longer there. This is a trolley stop. The marker faced perpendicular and people were bumping their heads when getting out of their cars. Therefore, by moving it as close as possible to the sidewalk and being parallel to the sidewalk eliminates the problem.

**PETITIONER COMMENTS**

**Ms. Sherryl Lang** explained that their understanding is a little spotty about why the markers were originally moved. They understand the removal as Ms. Harris reported. Their understanding is that the James Moore Wayne marker was posing a problem with people getting out of their cars, but they hope that they have rectified this with changing the position of the sign. Also, parking along here has changed.

**Mr. Gensheimer** asked Ms. Lang why was the other marker moved.

**Ms. Lang** answered that she believes it was moved due to a sight line issue.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**Board Action:**

Recommend approval to City Council for the relocation of two markers as submitted because the project meets the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art. The petitioner should coordinate with City Engineering to ensure no utilities are damaged during installation. - PASS

**Vote Results**

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

[5. Petition of Patrick Phelps, AIA - Hansen Architects, PC | 14-000633-HM | 23 East Charlton Street | Historical Marker](#)

Attachment: [Staff Report.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Submittal Packet.pdf](#)

**NOTE: Mr. Madson and Mr. Gensheimer recused from participation in this petition. They are employees of the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD).**

**Mr. Martin Smith of SCAD** was present on behalf of the petition.

**Ms. Leah Michalak** gave the staff report. The petition is requesting to erect one historical marker at SCAD Haymans Hall, 23 East Charlton Street. A similar petition was denied at the November 7, 2013 HSMC Meeting. She said that during that meeting the HSMC and the Public discussed the following:

A representative from the Girl Scouts of America stated that this site was also once the location of "Louisa Porter's Home for the Friendless" where girls and women of all ages could come for help. The Girl Scouts were a long time part of the site's function. This site was the location of the Girl Scout's first Savannah registration. The Girl Scouts asked that the applicant's proposal for this marker include the Girl Scouts. They also revealed that the marker has already be installed with language different than the proposal and different than staff's recommendation.

The petitioner stated that he was not aware that the marker was installed with text that did not correspond with the text proposed in the application and requested to withdraw the application.

The HSMC's discussion included whether or not they should require the applicant to include information regarding the Girl Scouts and/or if they should vote to report the violation to the City for immediate removal.

The HSMC's decision consisted of the following:

The marker must be removed immediately before the applicant can return with another proposal.

In addition, the HSMC asked that the petitioner work with the Girl Scouts to potentially include their involvement with this site on their marker or potentially an additional marker.

**Ms. Michalak** stated that staff was notified by the petitioner that the marker was removed. The petitioner has worked with the Girl Scouts to change the text.

**Ms. Michalak** reported that staff recommends approval with the condition that "and around the world" be eliminated from the proposed text.

**Mr. Karatassos** stated that Ms. Michalak cited the standard pertaining to why staff recommends that "and around the world" be eliminated; but, he did not get a connection between the standard that she cited eliminating "around the world."

**Ms. Michalak** explained that staff feels this building has a connection to the region and the country, but not necessarily the entire world.

**Mr. Karatassos** said, therefore, this is an impression.

**Ms. Michalak** stated that this is staff's assessment of this site.

**Dr. Pirro** said the documented facts are stated that "Haymans Hall will continue to enrich the lives of students, citizens in Savannah and around the world." He believes that factually Haymans Hall will be enriching students in Haymans Hall and citizens in Savannah. However, the relevant point is he does not see how Haynans Hall will be enriching the lives of students and citizens around the world; this is a factual question.

**Ms. Michalak** said this was the understanding that staff based their recommendation on.

**Dr. Pirro** said it appears that this is a building in Savannah that will be enriching students in the Hall and people walking by, but not people in Italy, France, Japan, etc.

**Mr. Karatassos** stated that we have people from Italy, France, Japan, etc. that come here. Maybe this is what is being referenced. The persons who walk by Haymans Halls are not only Savannah citizens, but also people from around the world. SCAD has a school in China, Japan, and Atlanta; therefore, Savannah is not the only city where their school is located. Mr. Karatassos stated that the reason he questioned the standard was because he did not understand the citing of the standard in elimination to the words of "and around the world."

#### **PETITIONER COMMENTS**

**Mr. Smith** said SCAD reviewed the staff's recommendation, but respectfully they are hopeful that they will be able to keep the words "and around the world" because SCAD is a university with students from over 100 nations around the world. He said SCAD has campus locations on three continents. Mr. Smith said after speaking with Katherine Keener of the Girl Scouts, they spoke about the inclusion of the Girl Scouts. The Girl Scouts are also a world organization and an educational organization. Consequently, they believe that people from "around the world" come to see the Girl Scouts and also come to SCAD and Savannah is a world city itself. Therefore, they believe that "around the world" is worthy of inclusion.

**Mr. Smith** said if the HSMC feels that "around the world" must be removed or if the application would be denied, then they would be willing to remove the statement. But, as he has said, they really prefer not to remove the statement "and around the world."

**Dr. Pirro** said that enriching the lives of students, the phrase would capture that SCAD has students from around the world.

**Mr. Smith** answered yes. Savannah is a world city and has tourism coming from all over the world. This is really the thought SCAD had behind this statement.

**Mr. Karatassos** said the text says citizens in Savannah and around the world. Therefore, it is not exclusive to Savannah citizens as it is inclusive of citizens and tourism from around the world. Savannah is a global city and he likes the phrase. Mr. Karatassos said he does not want them to restrict their own perception. To him, the phrase "and around the world" is not a big deal and as he has said, he personally would love to keep the phrase within the text.

**Mr. Harper** said it does not really matter to him, but it is somewhat redundant because the students are from around the world. Therefore, they are saying students and also they are saying around the world when the students are already from around the world. Therefore, why repeat it again?

**Dr. Pirro** said every monument in this city could put the phrase "around the world" because people from around the world walk by every monument. But, he does not believe that it is a huge issue. Haymans Hall is in Savannah and is enriching the people who come to Savannah, but he believes it would be a good idea not to include that statement, but as he said it is not a huge issue for him.

**Ms. Soule** said she took the statement to mean that the students who come here and learn, then they go back out into world. Therefore, what they learn at Haymans Hall is affecting things around the world.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

### HSMC DISCUSSION

**Dr. Pirro** said he believes that Ms. Soule's statement has merit.

**Mr. Karatassos** stated that he had not thought about the Girl Scouts part of it. At the application submittal in November, 2013, they asked the petitioner to include the Girl Scouts. To him, taking out "and around the world" limits it when it is clear that through the Girl Scouts and SCAD's physical and student presence, these people are around the world. He said not everybody can legitimately make that claim, but with this marker, they can. This is a global recognition.

**Dr. Pirro** said the Girl Scouts connection is a point well taken.

**Mr. Harper** said they know the Girl Scouts are global. It talks about World War II which is obviously global. They know that students from around the world go to SCAD. The citizens that live here are from here. Therefore, as he has said in his observation it is redundant in that they are saying they are from around the world, but yet they are listing other entities here that indicate it is from around the world.

### **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: Eli Karatassos  
Second: Robert Pirro



Thomas Gensheimer	- Abstain
Walt Harper	- Nay
Eli Karatassos	- Aye
Ryan Madson	- Abstain
Robert Pirro	- Aye
Mary Soule	- Aye

#### IV. Other Business

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

**Mr. Harper** reported that Turner's Monument has been reinstalled. It was removed during the construction of the Embassy Suites Hotel as they feared that the monument would be damaged. The construction company replaced the monument on a nice base. The monument looks very good.

##### 7. [Next Meeting- Regular Meeting- April 3, 2014](#)

**Ms. Soule stated** that her tenure on the HSMC ends April 1, 2014. She was sent an application to reapply, but has chosen not to due to her husband and she plan to do a lot of traveling. As the HSMC knows, during the summer she is gone about five months.

**Mr. Karatassos** asked Ms. Soule if she wrote City Council. He said that his experience with the Boards, Commissions, and Authorities goes back to the 1970s. The people are appointed and serve until they are replaced, even if it exceeds their term. City Council makes their appointments every quarter and the appointment selections may not match when the vacancy occurs.

**Ms. Soule** said the Clerk of Council sent her a letter advising that her term ends April 1, 2014 and also informed her that an ad would be in the Savannah Morning News on February 28, 2014 advertising the various positions available on the Boards, Commissions, and Authorities.

**Mr. Karatassos** stated that what he was saying is that Ms. Soule may probably serve past April 1, 2014 as there is a possibility that City Council may not have replaced her by her term ending date.

**Ms. Harris** said her understanding is if the person has not been replaced by their term ending date, they may serve until such time that Council notifies them.

**Ms. Soule** said if she has not gotten a letter that she has been replaced by April 1, 2014, this will give her one more meeting.

**Ms. Harris** reported that staff has received an application for the April 3, 2014 meeting. She will be out of town, but Ms. Michalak will be at the meeting. Ms. Harris said she will

call for a nominating committee on the agenda for the April 3, 2014 meeting.

**Mr. Karatassos** said the HSMC may have two vacancies on its Commission as he serves on another board. Therefore, staff needs to ensure that there will be a quorum for the April 3, 2014 meeting. He said he has reapplied to continue on the HSMC, but may not be selected as he serves on another board.

**Mr. Harper** said City Council had a meeting yesterday, March 5, 2014. The next meeting will be March 20, 2014 and then the next meeting will be on April 3, 2014. City Council will probably make the appointments at the April 3, 2014 meeting. Therefore, he believes that Ms. Soule and Mr. Karatassos should come to the April 3, 2014 meeting. They are not off the HSMC until they are told.

## V. Adjournment

### 8. Adjourned

There being no further business to come before the HSMC, Ms. Soule 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.*