



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
January 8, 2015 4:00 P.M.
Meeting Minutes

JANUARY 8, 2015 HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

HDRB Members Present: Eli Karatassos, Chair
Walt Harper, Secretary
Thomas Gensheimer
Kristopher Monroe

HSMC Members Not Present: Ryan Madson
Giselle Rahn

MPC Staff Present: Ellen Harris, Director of Urban Planning and Historic Preservation
Sara Farr, Historic Preservation Planner
Mary E. Mitchell, Administrative Assistant

I. Call to Order and Welcome

1. [Welcome](#)

Mr. Karatassos called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance. He outlined the purpose and role of the Historic Site and Monument Commission.

Mr. Karatassos introduced the new member, Mr. Kristopher Monroe, who replaced Dr. Robert Pirro. The members welcomed Mr. Monroe. Mr. Karatassos said that he sent Dr. Pirro a letter thanking him for his service to the HSMC. May be Dr. Pirro will reapply to be a member of the Commission at later time.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

2. [Approval of December 5, 2014 Meeting Minutes](#)

Attachment: [December 5, 2014 Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)

Board Action:

The Savannah Historic Site and Monument Commission hereby approve the December 5, 2014 meeting minutes. - PASS

Vote Results

Motion: Walt Harper

Second: Thomas Gensheimer

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Walt Harper - Aye

Eli Karatassos - Aye

Ryan Madson - Not Present

Kristopher Monroe - Aye

III. Regular Agenda

3. [Petition of Josh Earhart for Edwards-Pittman Environmental, Inc. | 14-005743-HM | West Bay Street | Historical Markers](#)

Attachment: [Staff Recommendation.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Submittal Packet - West Bay Street Various Locations.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Application - West Bay Street Markers 14-005743-HM.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Photograph 1 - Moses Jackson.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Photograph 2 - Looking North.pdf](#)

Attachment: [Photograph 3 - Approximate location of Marker on Millen St.pdf](#)

Ms. Sara Farr gave the staff report. The petitioner, Edwards-Pittman Environmental, Inc., is requesting to erect five historical markers relating to events and people associated with West Bay Street. The topics include Hudson Hill, Fellwood Homes, the commercial Development of West Savannah, the First Schools in Savannah and Moses J. Jackson. The markers are located on West Bay Street in the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) right-of-way.

Ms. Farr reported that staff recommends approval to City Council for five historical markers, as requested because the proposed project meets the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art.

Ms. Farr stated that it has been brought to staff's attention that the President of the Woodville Neighborhood Association has some concerns about the dates on the records. She said staff is recommending moving forward with the recommendation that the markers be approved and that the date changes be made at the staff level. If more substantial changes are required, then the petition would come back before the HSMC.

PETITIONER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Tommy Crochet of McGee Partners stated Edwards-Pittman Environmental, Inc. is their consultant. Edwards-Pittman did all the environmental and history studies for the

improvements to West Bay Street. Mr. Crochet said they are under contract with Chatham County to design this project.

Mr. Karatassos asked if SHPO has reviewed the markers.

Mr. Crochet answered yes. He said that they coordinated this through the Georgia Department of Transportation Environmental staff and they presented the markers to SHPO. SHPO has indicated that the markers are acceptable and meet the condition of the memorandum of agreement that was signed between SHPO, Federal Highway, Chatham County, City of Savannah and GDOT.

Mr. Karatassos asked who is the ultimate sponsor of these markers.

Mr. Crochet said it is a joint sponsorship and a joint decision to include the markers. The markers are being placed as mitigation to impact to the historic resources along the corridor. Primarily as a part of the document, they have documented some minor impacts that were not adverse to the West Savannah Neighborhood, itself; the West Savannah Neighborhood District; to the Alamo Motel and they adopted an adverse effect to the Marvel Cleaners property.

Mr. Karatassos explained that he has done similar markers for Chatham County and they put the County's seal on them, but the markers before the HSMC today do not have a seal on them. It appears that nobody wants to claim ownership.

Mr. Crochet said again that it is a joint ownership. However, they would be happy to get a suggestion from the HSMC and put some type of identification on the markers. He explained that the agreement states that Chatham County is going to purchase the markers; then turn them over to GDOT who will then install the markers at an appropriate time. The City will maintain the markers.

Mr. Karatassos said he believes the City and County should be asked who wants to put their seal on the markers because without a seal, the markers look "naked." It troubles him that there is no seal on these markers.

Ms. Harris explained that an option could be to do a square marker and on the bottom show "erected in partnership between SHPO, Federal Highway, Chatham County, City of Savannah and GDOT."

Mr. Karatassos said Ms. Harris's suggestion was good. He just does not like the idea that there is nothing on the markers showing ownership.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tyrone Ware, President of Woodville Community Action Organization said that they are not opposed to the markers. The markers will not be placed in the Woodville Community, but will be on Interstate 516. Mr. Ware explained that they are concerned with the marker that recognizes the school. The tract of land was gift deeded for the school in 1873 by Charles James Hull. He gave the HSMC a lot of information relative to Woodville.

Mr. Ware explained that they are seeking historic designation for Woodville and it will be instrumental to put the school as one of the center pieces of education in Woodville.

Mr. Karatassos said that Mr. Ware has given the HSMC a lot of information. Is there specific language that needs to be changed or basically just change the philosophy of the marker? They need to be sure that information is correct. He asked staff what they propose be done to get the information correct.

Ms. Harris said one potential solution would be to eliminate the reference on one of the markers. The Woodville School is located a fairly distance from these markers. The reference could be removed from the marker and in the future a marker could be erected at the Woodville School site.

Mr. Ware said it is their intention in their master plan to recognize the Woodville School along with the historic of Woodville. Their true history is unknown by most people and they want to make it known to everyone.

Mr. Karatassos said the HSMC could recommend to the City of Savannah that a marker be erected giving recognition to the Woodville School.

Mr. Harper said he believes that Ms. Harris's suggestion will serve as a solution to the problem. The HSMC does not want to take a way from Woodville.

Mr. Karatassos asked Mr. Ware if he was in agreement with the suggestion.

Mr. Ware answered yes.

Mr. Karatassos said the motion could be to approve the petitioner's request with the appropriate alteration being made to the marker regarding the school. The staff will review the final change.

Board Action:

The Savannah Site and Monument Commission does hereby recommend approval for the five historical markers, as requested with the following conditions:

1. Eliminate the curved edge on the markers;
2. Incorporate text at the bottom of the markers to indicate the sponsors;
3. Revise the text at the bottom of the markers - PASS to either move the reference to Woodville School or revise the text for accuracy;

because otherwise, the proposed project meets the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for

Markers, Monuments, and Public Art.

Vote Results

Motion: Walt Harper

Second: Thomas Gensheimer

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Walt Harper - Aye

Eli Karatassos - Aye

Ryan Madson - Not Present

Kristopher Monroe - Aye

Board Action:

The Savannah Site and Monument Commission does hereby recommend to City Council that signage be included in the Master Plan that clearly states the impact and the importance of the Woodville Neighborhood to Savannah. - PASS

Vote Results

Motion: Thomas Gensheimer

Second: Kristopher Monroe

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Walt Harper - Aye

Eli Karatassos - Aye

Ryan Madson - Not Present

Kristopher Monroe - Aye

IV. Other Business

4. [Commissioner's Items](#)

Mr. Karatassos said he has brought this up before, but now he wants to be more specific about it. He would like for the Commission to consider a request for staff to look at the developing area on West River Street, the Bay Street area, with the new developments that are being established here. Hopefully, there will be an opportunity to erect a statue to former Mayor John P. Rousakis. He was the mayor of Savannah when River Street was reborn and the plaza is named Rousakis Riverfront Plaza.

Mr. Karatassos said a committee is being formed to raise the necessary capital to fund the statue. They will ask the general public to contribute to it, but will not ask the public bodies to pay for it. They will ask the City and developers that as they develop the common areas that a place be found that is safe and appropriate that would work within the

fabric to erect such a statue. Mr. Karatassos said that monuments must have an area designated by the Commission for a monument to be erected at a location. He was not saying that the monument be erected there as he believes this needs to be determined by the people who will design it and by the City. He was asking staff to help facilitate the discussion between the appropriate parties since they have these discussions anyway. Mr. Karatassos said both developers have been told informally of their plans, but now he will talk more formally with both developers.

Mr. Karatassos asked staff to please pursue this and come up with the different alternatives of where it would be appropriate to erect the statue.

5. [2015 Calendar of Meetings](#)

Attachment: [CALENDAR YEAR 2015.pdf](#)

6. [Next Meeting - Thursday, February 5, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. in the Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room, MPC, 112 E. State St.](#)

V. Adjournment

7. [Adjourned](#)

There being no further business to come before the HSMC, Mr. Karatassos adjourned the meeting at 4:55 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.