



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  
February 4, 2016 4:00 P.M.  
Meeting Minutes

**FEBRUARY 4, 2016 HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING**

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

**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. [Order and Welcome](#)

**Chair Karatassos** called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. He welcomed everyone in attendance and outlined the purpose and role of the Historic Site and Monument Commission.

**II. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

2. [Approval of January 7, 2016 Meeting Minutes](#)

Attachment: [01-07-2016 Minutes.pdf](#)

**Board Action:**

The Savannah-Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission does hereby approve the - PASS Meeting Minutes of January 7, 2016.

**Vote Results**

|                           |       |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Motion: Ryan Madson       |       |
| Second: Thomas Gensheimer |       |
| Thomas Gensheimer         | - Aye |
| Walt Harper               | - Aye |
| Eli Karatassos            | - Aye |
| Ryan Madson               | - Aye |
| Kristopher Monroe         | - Aye |

### III. Regular Agenda

#### 3. [Petition of the Georgia Historical Society | 15-006148-HM | 201 East Broughton Street | Marker](#)

Attachment: [Proposed Location.pdf](#)  
Attachment: [AERIAL MAP.pdf](#)  
Attachment: [Submittal Packet.pdf](#)  
Attachment: [Staff Recommendation.pdf](#)

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

**Ms. Sara Farr** gave the staff report. The Georgia Historical Society, in collaboration with the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) is requesting to erect a historical marker on the Georgia Civil Rights Trail (CRT) at the Jen Library at 201 East Broughton Street commemorating the Savannah Protest Movement. The GHS staff consulted with SCAD and Mayor Edna Jackson to draft the text. The proposed site for the marker is on the wall on the left side of the front door of the Jen Library. This entryway faces Abercorn and Broughton Street. The Azalea Room referenced in the marker was accessible internally through the building via this entrance.

The marker was continued at the December meeting and the January meeting in order to reconsider the location. A variety of locations have been considered for this marker. It was originally proposed to be mounted on the building along Broughton Street. While this location was the closest to the Azalea Room discussed in the marker, the board was concerned about the visibility of the marker in such a low location (below the windows). The public would be unlikely to stop and read the marker due to this lack of visibility and the difficulty of reading it in such a low location.

Two other locations were also proposed at this time. One was on Lincoln Street at Broughton. While this location is also close to the site, it is not a highly trafficked area. This would make the marker less likely to be seen by the public. The other site was on Abercorn at Broughton. While this site would be easily accessible to the public and more visible, it was the farthest of the three from the Azalea Room. Additionally, Traffic Engineering objected to the site given the existing signage and activity at this intersection.

A location across the street on Lincoln Street was proposed at the January meeting, but was found to be too far from the site. This location was across the street in the parking lot for the Kehoe House, so it would also be possible that there could be confusion if something was built in that lot. There were also discussions about placing a freestanding pole marker on Broughton Street itself. While this would provide the greatest visibility while being close to the site, Broughton Street currently does not have any pole markers and staff is

concerned about the precedent. Additionally, there is also a streetscape planning process currently underway that would impact anything placed on Broughton Street.

**Ms. Farr** reported that staff recommends approval of the marker to be located on the wall on the left site of the front door of the Jen Library with the following conditions:

1. The final text has the sponsors names in a smaller font than the main text;
2. Details for the attachment of the marker are provided for staff approval;
3. The text is edited and submitted for staff approval to include more detailed information about the Azalea Room's location;

Because otherwise it meets the Historic Site and Monument Commission Guidelines.

### PETITIONER COMMENTS

**Ms. Crisp** said SCAD has confirmed that there is space on both sides of the area. The marker will not take up the total amount of space.

**Mr. Monroe** stated that after the last meeting, he visited the site. He does not know the exact dimensions, but the area appeared to be wide.

**Mr. Karatassos** asked the petitioner what is the size of the marker.

**Ms. Crisp** answered that it is 42" x 38.5." It is a standard size historical marker.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

**Mr. Richmond Ferguson, Vice-President of the 1960 Class of Beach High School**, stated that the class of 1960 organized the sit-ins. They are appreciative of the marker, but oppose to it being mounted on Lincoln Street. The marker is very significant and should be placed in a highly visible area. They favor the marker being installed on Abercorn Street, but understood that Traffic Engineering may have some issues with traffic interference. Broughton Street would be the ideal location, but the class is aware that presently there are no markers, etc. on Broughton Street. There are many things on Broughton Street that should not be there. But, as he has stated, the class is in favor of installing the marker on Abercorn Street. This area will provide more visibility to the citizens and tourists.

### COMMISSION DISCUSSION

The Commission discussed the suggested changes that staff recommended to the text of the marker. Staff recommended "**here at**" be strike-through and add "**at the northeast corner of**" and "**nearly complete**" be strike-through. They discussed the width of the location space where the marker is being proposed to be placed. The Commission asked the petitioner that before the marker is mounted, that they really measure the space carefully to see if there truly is an ample amount of space to put the marker here.

The Commission agreed with the staff recommendations. They added that a light be installed above the marker to illuminate it. The marker will be covered and sheltered. This means that anybody who wants to read the text will be able to stand there anytime and read

it.

**Ms. Crisp** explained that the marker will be mounted on the building and the Georgia Historical Society will treat it just as all the markers they install across the state. This means that the marker will be on their website and will have GPS coordination and be found on a map. Ms. Crisp said she will recommend to SCAD that a light be added above the marker.

**Board Action:**

The Savannah-Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission does hereby approve the marker to be located on the wall on the left side of the front door of the Jen Library with the following conditions:

1. The final text has the sponsors names in a smaller font than the main text;
2. Details for the attachment of the marker are provided for staff approval; - PASS
3. The text is edited and submitted for staff approval to include more detailed information about the Azalea Room's location;
4. A light is installed above the marker to illuminate it;

Because otherwise it meets the Historic Site and Monument Commission Guidelines.

**Vote Results**

Motion: Walt Harper  
Second: Kristopher Monroe  
Thomas Gensheimer - Aye  
Eli Karatassos - Aye  
Ryan Madson - Aye  
Kristopher Monroe - Aye  
Walt Harper - Aye

4. [Petition of C. Harrison Chandler | 16-000126-PA | 1930 Montgomery Street | Mural](#)

- Attachment: [Staff Recommendation.pdf](#)
- Attachment: [Submittal Packet - 1930 Montgomery Street.pdf](#)
- Attachment: [Image.pdf](#)
- Attachment: [AERIAL MAP.pdf](#)
- Attachment: [TAC Comments.pdf](#)

**Mr. C. Harrison Chandler (petitioner) and Mr. Charlie Crosby (owner)** were present on behalf of the petition.

**Ms. Sara Farr** gave the staff report. The applicant is requesting approval for a mural at 1930 Montgomery Street. The mural will be located on the north face of the building, which houses Welmont Gallery. This building is not located in a local historic district. The mural will be sized 40 feet wide by 25 feet tall with paint as the primary material. The concept of a rotating mural at this site was previously approved at the January 7, 2016 meeting (15-005512-PA). Jack Johnson will be portrayed fighting James J. Jeffries as the main subject for the mural. Jack Johnson was the first African American heavy weight boxing champion in 1910. The petitioner believes that this would fit into a theme for the month of February and follow through to November's Black Heritage Month, as well. This mural will be up until November 2016, at which time a new mural application will be submitted.

**Ms. Farr** stated that three comments were received from members of the Technical Advisory Committee. **Dr. Ella Howard** was in favor of the mural; **Mr. Gordon Denney** stated that he had no issues from a Park & Tree standpoint. **Dr. Peggy Blood** was in opposition to the mural not because of who the image represents, but the aesthetic depiction of the image. She believes the mural needs better or more complete educational representation of Black History Month and its significance to Savannah.

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

1. Paint type and other materials are provided for approval prior to installations;
2. Details about the removal process are provided;
3. Examples of previous works of art are provided to staff;

Because otherwise it meets the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art.

#### **PETITIONER COMMENTS**

**Mr. Crosby** explained that the initiative behind the mural is to encourage and cultivate the flourishing art scene in Savannah. The wall will lend itself, in their opinion, well to the presentation that they have selected. The mural will be placed in a location that has visibility, but is not distracting from transport or any thing else that would be viewed as a distraction.

**Mr. Crosby** stated that the material is a stucco finish and, therefore, blends in well with the covering and recovering of art. He has lived in Savannah for nine years and has followed the progression of some of the initiatives that have been made toward public art. Consequently, they want to continue to encourage this.

**Mr. Karatassos** said he travels along this street almost everyday, but he has not seen the building. He said in the last packet the Commission received showed that the image will be low and there is a lot of open space above it. Therefore, he wonders if it would be obstructed in some way.

**Mr. Crosby** explained that the wall backs up to the lane between 35th and 36th Streets. He said that on the other side of the alley is a parking lot. This location at one time housed Paul and Son Auto Parts store. He clarified that the media type used and the cleanup process will be acrylic paints. They have the appropriate equipment to spray and cover it up. They will lay primers on top of what currently exists to prepare for another mural to be put here.

**Mr. Chandler** stated that the wall will be painted white. Therefore, it will be a white canvas waiting for the next mural to be painted.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Mr. Richmond Ferguson** stated that he appreciates the work that has been done on the building. He is keenly interested in what is happening in this area. Mr. Ferguson stated he thought that at the last meeting, the mural was approved as a mural is already painted here. Also, another mural is painted on the same wall on the south side. A little emblem is painted here and initially he believed this is what they were talking about. However, he saw a painting on the north side; therefore, two murals are here.

**Mr. Ferguson** said he agrees with Dr. Blood. His opposition is not the mural, but he believes that more significant things about Savannah could be painted here. The community is going through a lot of gentrification. He works with Dr. Blood at the Telfair Arts Museum and they are trying to bring African-American art to the community.

**Mr. Ferguson** said he believed this was a proposal, but the mural is already painted on the wall.

**Mr. Karatassos** asked what is presently on the wall.

**Mr. Crosby** stated that they are cleaning up the façade on the outside by preparing the wall for their intended use. They have started to outline the extent of the project.

**Mr. Karatassos** explained that outlining the wall is not a good idea. This makes the Commission look like they are not doing their job. Matt Hebermeltd never did anything like this. He treated the process very respectfully. He informed Mr. Crosby that this is why he is present today. Outlining a mural that has not been approved is unacceptable.

**Mr. Crosby** said there was a little misunderstanding based on the results from the meeting that he was unable to attend. They are present today because they respect what the Historic Site and Monument Commission does. It is not their intention to undermine or circumvent the systems that are in place. However, what happened was their misunderstanding. They intend to uphold what happens here today because they want to see positive change happen in this corridor. This is the project that they are happy with.

**Mr. Karatassos** asked Mr. Ferguson if he was unhappy with the location of the mural.

**Mr. Ferguson** said he likes the mural and he likes Jack Johnson. He has not seen Dr. Blood's objection, but he is saying that the mural should be more historical to the significance of Savannah. He has seen the mural on Habersham Street and it is very nice.

**Mr. Monroe** said he knew that Mr. Ferguson could not speak for Dr. Blood and he regrets that she is not present today. But, the sentence that stands out to him in Dr. Blood's objection is "**it does not fit this community aesthetically and in the spirit of how history is told in this unique and quaint city.**" Mr. Monroe said that the quaint is generous.

**Mr. Ferguson** stated that this is Mr. Monroe's opinion. He objects to this as Mr. Monroe is looking at it from his perspective. However, Savannah is his home; he was reared here.

**Mr. Harper** said he visited the site and saw that the mural was going up. He wondered why the mural was being painted as he knew they were having a meeting today. He would like to hear more about Dr. Blood's objection.

### COMMISSION DISCUSSION

The Commission discussed if this location is in a historic district. Staff explained that it is in the Streetcar District, but not the local Mid-City District. Mr. Karatssos explained that Dr. Blood has submitted her opinion and assessment of the way she views Savannah. They all view Savannah differently. The Historic Site and Monument Commission has approved the location. The staff has brought its report with a couple of recommendations. The mural has met all the criteria for a mural. The Commission will not dictate the theme of what the people want to paint. Dr. Blood's objection has been noted. The Commission's role is to decide whether they want the mural on that wall.

#### **Board Action:**

The Savannah-Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission does hereby approve the mural with the following conditions:

1. Paint type and other materials are provided for approval prior to installations;
2. Details about the removal process are provided; - PASS
3. Examples of previous works of art are provided to staff;

Because otherwise it meets the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art.

#### **Vote Results**

Motion: Ryan Madson

Second: Thomas Gensheimer

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Walt Harper - Nay

Eli Karatassos - Aye

|                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| Ryan Madson       | - Aye |
| Kristopher Monroe | - Aye |

#### IV. Other Business

5. [Commissioner Items](#)

6. [Next Meeting - Thursday, March 3, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. in the Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room, MPC, 112 E. State Street](#)

#### V. Adjournment

7. [Adjourned](#)

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Mr. Karatassos adjourned the meeting at 4:50 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.*