



Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site & Monument Commission

Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room
October 4, 2018 4:00 P.M.
Meeting Minutes

OCTOBER 4, 2018 SAVANNAH -CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC SITE & MONUMENT COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

Members Present: Dr. Nicholas Henry, Chair
Kristopher Monroe, Vice-Chair
Alicia Blakely
Thomas Gensheimer
Eli Karatassos
Ron Melander

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

I. Call to Order and Welcome

[1. Order And Welcome](#)

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

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

[2. Approval of September 6, 2018 Meeting Minutes](#)

[September 6, 2018.pdf](#)

Motion

The Savannah-Chatham County Historic Site & Monument Commission does hereby approve September 6, 2018 Meeting Minutes.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Eli Karatassos

Second: Kristopher Monroe

Thomas Gensheimer - Abstain

Dr. Nicholas Henry - Abstain

Eli Karatassos - Aye

Kristopher Monroe - Aye

Alicia Blakely - Aye

Ron Melander - Aye

III. Regular Agenda

[3. Petition of the City of Savannah | Elder Court and Northwood Road | Naming of Park | 18-005194-HM](#)

📎 [Thomas Fulton Jr Park Naming Petition 9.19.19.pdf](#)

📎 [AERIAL MAP.pdf](#)

📎 [18-005194-HM Staff Recommendation..pdf](#)

Mr. Joseph Shearouse, Jr. was present on behalf of the petition.

Ms. Ellen Harris gave the staff report. The petitioner is requesting approval to name an unnamed park “**Thomas Fulton Jr. Park.**” The park is located in the Windsor Forest neighborhood at the intersection of Norwood Road and Elder Court. Mr. Fulton was instrumental in the creation of the Windsor Forest Neighborhood Association and was an avid activist for tree preservation. He served on the Park and Tree Commission from 1995-2005. He was Chair of the Park and Tree Commission from 1999-2002. Mr. Fulton passed away in 2011.

Ms. Harris explained that as required in the Master Plan and Guidelines, written notice was sent to all property owners, and the neighborhood association, within 200 feet of the subject property. A sign was posted on the property fifteen days prior to the meeting. No comments were received from the public.

Ms. Harris reported that staff recommends approval of the City of Savannah’s request to name the park located at Northwood Road and Elder Court the “Thomas Fulton Jr. Park” because it meets the criteria established in the City of Savannah’s naming policy.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Mr. Shearouse came forward and gave a brief history on Mr. Fulton. He was the chairperson of Park & Tree more than ten years. He said if someone finds a tree more than 30 years old in Savannah, it likely is attributed to Mr. Fulton. He was a true advocate for planting more trees on the southside of Savannah. Because of Mr. Fulton, the southside has a long history of trees and trees canopies. Much of the right-of-way and south of Savannah now have trees planted only because of Mr. Fulton's advocacy. They are seeking that this park be named in honor of Mr. Fulton. In the future, the plan is to put benches here.

Mr. Monroe said he read Mr. Fulton's biography and it appeared that there could not be a more worthy person than Mr. Fulton to get this honor.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Mr. Karatassos stated that the Commission in the last several months has had petitions such as the one before them today. He said this was great and he knows that there are many more individuals in Savannah that are also worthy of this recognition. However, he asked Mr. Shearouse if he knew how many more of these kinds of recognitions would be forthcoming to the Commission. He asked this question to see if Mr. Shearouse could possibly bring a number of these recognitions at the same time instead of bringing just one at a time.

Mr. Shearouse said he will look into this, but he wanted it known that it takes a good bit of time for the petition to be completed. He explained the petition process. Normally, the process takes about three months for completion.

Mr. Shearouse stated that with the petition before the Commission today, Mr. Fulton's wife is alive, but is not doing well, Therefore, they made a strong effort to get this petition to the Commission as fast as possible. The naming ceremony, if approved, will be held at the end of October, 2018 hopeful that Ms. Fulton will be able to attend.

Mr. Karatassos clarified that he was not complaining, but was talking about possibly a better way of utilizing Mr. Shearouse's time. He was not aware that it is approximately a 90 day process.

Mr. Shearouse said presently, they have approximately 15 applications that are pending, which will not come to the Commission. There has been a large increase and interest in the naming recognition.

Dr. Henry asked if there was some way that the Commission could be informed when the ceremony will be held. The Commission would like to attend the naming ceremony.

Ms. Harris said Mr. Shearouse could let her know, and then she would inform the Commission when the ceremony will be held.

Ms. Blakely asked Mr. Shearouse that if she hears of someone who is interested in naming a park, who do they contact?

Mr. Shearouse answered that he works in the City Manager's Office. The application is on the City of Savannah's website, but he advises that the applicant contact the City Manager's Office. The application completion process will be explained and then the application is mailed to the individual. The bulk of the work lies with the petitioner to gather the information. A lot of different agencies within the City provide feedback on the petition. If a park is involved, the Park & Tree provides information such as they did with this present application.

Motion

The Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site & Monument Commission does hereby recommend approval to the Mayor and Aldermen to name the park located at Northwood Road and Elder Court the "Thomas Fulton Jr. Park" because it meets the criteria established in the City of Savannah's naming policy.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Eli Karatassos

Second: Kristopher Monroe

Thomas Gensheimer	- Aye
Dr. Nicholas Henry	- Abstain
Eli Karatassos	- Aye
Kristopher Monroe	- Aye
Alicia Blakely	- Aye
Ron Melander	- Aye

IV. Other Business

[4. Commissioner Items](#)

Ms. Harris explained that at the last meeting, the Historic Site & Monument Commission held a discussion centered around the historical marker that the Georgia Historical Society erected for the Weeping Time Monument on Augusta Avenue. The Commission was concerned because a lot of people do not know about this marker nor where it is located. The Commission brainstormed on how more public information could be given to let the public know the marker is here. With this in mind, the Commission asked Ms. Harris to give them a recommendation.

Ms. Harris reported that she did not have a recommendation to put before the Commission. However, she wanted to get more feedback from the Commission before she starts talking with different people about the matter. Ms. Harris said she has some hesitation about saying that a plaque is here and another one is over there. She believes that the real problem with this particular issue is the lack of knowledge

and lack of information out there about this marker as well as African American markers in general. Ms. Harris believes that there are other ways that the Commission can look at to raise awareness. She explained that Dr. Henry, during their discussion, mentioned looking at the tourism industry and talk with them. The information surrounding these markers can be shared on the walking tours as well as the vehicular tours. They might want to talk with Joseph Marinelli of Visit Savannah and share their ideas and concerns.

Ms. Harris said if the Commission is interested in erecting another plaque in a more visible location, she believes that the African American Monument located on River Street would be the most appropriate location to do so. Her only hesitation is that the African American Monument was a controversial project and took a long time to get it through the approval process. There were many different entities and public figures involved. She is concerned that if they open up this conversation, it will create a controversy all over again. She believes that there are other ways that the Commission could pursue. Ms. Harris asked the Commission for its feedback and thoughts on how they may best proceed with this matter.

Mr. Karatassos said he believed that Ms. Harris made a good point on not opening up "Pandora's Box" about a lot of things. He believes now would be a dangerous time for them to embark on a new policy. Mr. Karatassos said he believes a lot of this goes back to the original plaque being where it should be so that it is visible. A great idea would be to talk with Joseph Marinelli as Ms. Harris as suggested. The people in the tourism industry have wonderful marketing. He is sure that a monument map exists that shows where the monuments are located. Maybe they can have this map included in the website of the CDV and/or the City of Savannah's website. If they are able to find a better way to disseminate the plaques, markers, and monument information that they already know about might facilitate a way for the public to find them. He is concerned about putting up signs that show where markers are located as this might go against the city's décor.

Mr. Monroe said he likes the idea of having a map. He believes the Georgia Historical Society has a list of the markers' location.

The Commission discussed the location where the Weeping Time Marker is located. Mr. Monroe said the site is not easily accessible. Ms. Blakely said she was informed that the Housing Authority of Savannah owns the property. Mr. Monroe said the Housing Authority of Savannah might own a part of the property, but a lumber company is on a part of the property.

Ms. Blakely said the Commission needs to find out who actually owns the property.

Dr. Henry suggested that the Commission needs to meet with Mr. Marinelli and others who may be able to give some information on this project.

Mr. Karatassos stated that he gets a monthly email from Mr. Marinelli's staff showing various information such as where to dine, etc. They might add a section about the historical monuments. A vehicle is already out there, but the Commission needs to tap into it and give them their concerns.

It was the consensus of the Commission that a meeting be setup with Mr. Martinelli and the Ivory Bay organization that Ms. Blakely spoke about and see what they could do so the public will know about this marker and its location.

[5. Next Meeting - Thursday, November 8, 2018 at 4:00 pm in the Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room, MPC, 112 E State Street](#)

V. Adjournment

[6. Adjourned](#)

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Dr. Henry adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris
Director of Urban Planning and Historic Preservation

The Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission provides meeting minutes which are adopted by the respective Board. Verbatim transcripts of minutes are the responsibility of the interested party.