



Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site & Monument Commission

Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room
December 6, 2018 4:00 P.M.
Meeting Minutes

DECEMBER 6, 2018 SAVANNAH - CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC SITE & MONUMENT COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

Members Present:

Dr. Nicholas Henry, Chair
Kristopher Monroe, Vice-Chair
Alicia Blakely
Thomas Gensheimer
Ron Melander

Member Absent:

Eli Karatassos

MPC Staff Present:

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

I. Call to Order and Welcome

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Dr. Henry called the meeting to order at 4:05 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 October 4, 2018 Meeting Minutes

[October 4, 2018 Minutes.pdf](#)

Motion

The Savannah Historic Site and Monument Commission does hereby approve October 4, 2018 Meeting Minutes.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Kristopher Monroe

Second: Alicia Blakely

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

III. Regular Agenda

3. Petition of the Georgia Historical Society | 18-005994-HM | Lafayette Square | Mary Musgrove Historical Marker

- [18-005994-HM Staff Recommendation.pdf](#)
- [Submittal Packet - Lafayette Square 18-005994-HM.pdf](#)
- [AERIAL MAP.pdf](#)

Ms. Christy Crisp was present on behalf of the petition.

Ms. Ellen Harris gave the staff report. The petitioner is requesting approval to erect a historical marker commemorating Mary Musgrove to be located in Lafayette Square. This marker is proposed in partnership with the National Society of the Colonial Dames in the State of Georgia. The proposed site is in the southwest quadrant of Lafayette Square. There are currently no markers within Lafayette Square. The nearest marker is in front of St John the Baptist Cathedral, on private property. The center of Lafayette Square is home to the Semiquincentenary Fountain. The fountain was erected in 1983 in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the colony of Georgia and was spearheaded and funded by the Colonial Dames of America in Georgia.

Ms. Harris stated 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 proposed marker with the following conditions because the marker is otherwise consistent with the Master Plan and Guidelines:

1. Revise "principle" in the fourth line to "principal."
2. Coordinate with all appropriate City departments on the exact location within the southwest quadrant of the square.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Ms. Crisp entertained questions from the Commission.

Mr. Monroe said he appreciates the initiative of telling the story of the native Americans contributions to Savannah.

Mr. Melander questioned what happened to all the "artifacts" that were stored in the basement.

Ms. Crisp answered that she does not know what happened with the artifacts.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

The Commission appreciated that the marker will be in a visible area.

Motion

The Savannah Historic Site and Monument Commission does hereby recommend to City Council approval of the proposed marker with the following conditions because the marker is otherwise consistent with the Master Plan and Guidelines:

Revise "principle" in the fourth line to "principal."

Coordinate with all appropriate City departments on the exact location within the southwest quadrant of the square.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Thomas Gensheimer

Second: Alicia Blakely

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

4. Petition of the Alderman Tony Thomas | 18-006387-HM | Honorary Street Designation | Jackie Haberman Way

[18-006387-HM Staff Recommendation.pdf](#)

[Application Information Honorary Street Designation- Jackie Haberman Way.pdf](#)

[AERIAL MAP.pdf](#)

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

Ms. Ellen Harris gave the staff report. The petitioner is requesting approval to establish an Honorary Street Designation to recognize Jackie Haberman. A portion of Windsor Road, from White Bluff Road west to Juniper Circle, would have the honorary designation of "Jackie Haberman Way."

Ms. Harris explained that City Council adopted provisions for honorary street naming designations in 2017 (Article E-Naming and Renaming of Public Property, Facilities and Streets). These provisions establish the criteria and process for the designation. Honorary street name designations are intended to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions to the city. The designation will be a temporary assignment, no longer than five years, and will be in addition to the official name of an existing right-of-way. In addition to the historic documentation, a supporting petition signed by not less than 51 percent of all property owners abutting the subject right-of-way is required. An endorsement by the current mayor, an at-large alderman or the alderman representing the district in which the property is located is also required. Designations are limited to one approved designation per city council member per calendar year. The proposed designation, endorsed by Alderman Tony Thomas, commemorates Jackie Haberman. Ms. Haberman has been a Savannah resident since 1966 and has been active in many civic organizations including the Windsor Forest Garden Club, Keep Savannah Beautiful Board, and the Cultural Affairs Commission. Ms. Haberman was instrumental in establishing the Windsor Forest Neighborhood Association and has served as president for over 20 years.

Ms. Harris stated 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 request to establish an Honorary Street Designation to recognize Jackie Haberman on Windsor Road, from White Bluff Road west to Juniper Circle, as "Jackie Haberman Way."

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Mr. Shearouse explained that the addressing and data base mapping system contain the street names which are used in a variety of ways which include the same processes that are used by the telephone system, U. S. Postal Services, etc. However, honorary street designations are not put into the mapping system. The honorary street designation sign color is different than the regular street name signs and placed below the regular street name to signify that this is not the official name of the street. The policy does allow permanent street name changing. However, the permanent street name changing has a significant functional and economical factor on the businesses and people who live on that street.

Mr. Shearouse stated that Ms. Haberman was instrumental in the creation the Windsor Forest neighborhood. She has been the neighborhood president for more than 20 years. However, next year she has plans to resign from this position.

Ms. Haberman has done a lot of helpful things for this neighborhood. This will be a surprise as she is unaware that this is being done.

Dr. Henry wanted the Commission to be informed of the date when the ceremony will be held.

Mr. Shearouse said he will be sure to coordinate the ceremony date with the Commission.

Ms. Blakely asked Mr. Shearouse if the application for the honorary street designation should be sent to his office.

Mr. Shearouse explained the application process. The process is outlined in the City of Savannah's ordinance and the applications are on the City's website. The applications are completed and submitted to the City Manager's office where they are reviewed and the process begins. It is typically a two month process, depending on the amount of legwork that is completed by the petitioner.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Ms. Blakely said this type of honorary street designation needs to be advertised more; especially in the African American community. The honorary street designation started in 2017 and all citizens need to take advantage of this.

Mr. Monroe stated that the Commission, in one of its meeting, recommended to the Mayor and Aldermen to approve the naming of the Cultural Center to Savannah Cultural Center. He explained that recently he saw a couple of people on Facebook posting that the City of Savannah was asking for name suggestions for the Cultural Center. Mr. Monroe asked if this was a mistake as the process had already been held or is there still an opening for the naming of the Cultural Center.

Mr. Shearouse said that the Cultural Center naming was closed today, December 6, 2018. He explained that the naming of the Cultural Center began approximately two months ago. The Historic Site and Monument Commission recommended naming the Cultural Center Savannah Cultural Center. City Council at their meeting did not vote on the naming, but continued it to get additional public input. City Council held a workshop today on the input and survey. The name that the Historic Site and Monument Commission recommended for approval to the Mayor and Aldermen, Savannah Cultural Center, was approved by City Council today. Mr. Shearouse explained that typically the recommendation from the Commission is acted upon by City Council at their next meeting, but in the case of the Cultural Center, Council elected not to approve it at the next Council meeting and deferred it to another meeting.

Motion

The Savannah Historic Site and Monument Commission does hereby recommend approval to City Council of the request to establish an Honorary Street Designation to recognize Jackie Haberman on Windsor Road, from White Bluff Road west to Juniper Circle, as "Jackie Haberman Way."

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Kristopher Monroe

Second: Ron Melander

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

IV. Other Business

5. Presentation by Kwesi DeGraft-Hanson | Weeping Time History

Ms. Harris explained that Dr. Kwesi DeGraft-Hanson was present today to provide some valuable Information on the Weeping Time Memorial. The Commission has had some discussion about this memorial and wanted to get more

information. Commission Member Kristopher Monroe was instrumental in contacting Dr. DeGraft-Hanson. The Commission welcomed Dr. DeGraft-Hanson.

Dr. DeGraft-Hanson came forward and thanked the Commission for inviting him to come before them today. He gave the following overview:

In March of 1859, the largest sale of human beings in the history in the United States took place at a racetrack in Savannah, Georgia. During the two days of the sale, raindrops fell unceasingly on the racetrack. It was almost as though the heavens were crying. So, too, fell teardrops from many of the 436 men, women, and children who were auctioned off during the two days. The sale would thereafter be known as "the weeping time." The owner of the slaves, Pierce Butler, had inherited the family's Georgia plantations some twenty years earlier, along with his brother John. But Pierce had squandered away his portion of the inheritance, losing a rumored \$700,000; now he was deeply in debt. Management of Pierce Butler's estate was transferred to trustees. The trustees sold off Butler's once-grand, now-neglected Philadelphia mansion for \$30,000. Other Butler properties were sold as well. But it was not enough to satisfy creditors, much less to ensure that Butler would continue to live in luxury. So the trustees turned to the Georgia plantations and their "moveable" property -- their slaves. At the time, the overall holdings of the Butler family included 900 slaves. These would be divided into two groups of 450. Half would go to the estate of John, who had since died. These slaves would remain on the plantations. The fate of the other 450 -- Pierce's half -- was more precarious. About 20 would continue to live on Butler property. The remainder, some 429 men, women, and children, were boarded onto railway cars and steamboats and brought to the Broeck racetrack, where each would be sold to the highest bidder.

Dr. DeGraft-Hanson said in 2008 the City of Savannah and the Georgia Historical Society placed a marker near the site of the sale. It is located on Augusta Avenue at Dunn Street in West Savannah. The marker reads:

"Largest Slave Sale in Georgia History - the Weeping Time"

One of the largest sales of enslaved persons in U.S. history took place on March 2-3, 1859, at the Ten Broeck Race Course 1/4 mile southwest of here. To satisfy his creditors, Pierce M. Butler sold 436 men, women, and children from his Butler Island and Hampton plantations near Darien, Georgia. The breakup of families and the loss of home became part of African-American heritage remembered as "the weeping time." The event was reported extensively in the northern press and reaction to the sale deepened the nation's growing sectional divide in the years immediately preceding the Civil War.

Erected by the Georgia Historical Society and the City of Savannah

Mr. Monroe stated a picture the Commission was reviewing showed that the Brock Elementary School is on the far side and also a lumber company is located here. Do they know who owns the area in-between?

Dr. DeGraft-Hanson explained that the highway is here which is owned by the Georgia Department of Transportation [GDOT]. Pointing to an area, he said this is private property, this section is owned by the Housing Authority, another section is owned by the school board and this section is owned by Bradley. East Lathrop Avenue curves at the boundary of West Lathrop Avenue. Everything south of here is owned by Bradley Lumber Company and the school board.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Bernetta Lanier, President and CEO of Ivory Bay came forward and explained that several neighborhoods are here. Namely, Hudson Hill, West Savannah, Woodville, Carver Heights, Cloverdale and Rossingol Hill. In 2004, they worked with Ms. Martha Keber of the City of Savannah to write a book called "Low Land and a High Road" documenting the history of West Savannah and the Butler plantation. Many members of these neighborhoods were reared here. She attended Bartow Elementary School. Yet, they did not know about Weeping Time until they started working with Ms. Keber. They are appreciative that Dr. DeGraft-Hanson came here and provided much valuable information. They are now working with the City of Savannah and the Metropolitan Planning Commission so they could develop an area plan. They have talked with the MPC Director, Ms. Melanie Wilson, in hopes of identifying their historical cultural assets. They also want to make this an economical asset.

Ms. Pamela Howard Oglesby said she lives in West Savannah. When they started working with Ms. Keber, she asked where the tract was located as she did not understand why they actually cut a part of this out of the book. They did not want to tell them about the Weeping Tim, but they continued asking the question and they were told the history. Ms. Oglesby said that Ms. Beth Reiter actually told them the story of the Weeping Time. Ms. Oglesby said they all worked together along with the Georgia Historical Society and decided to put the memorial on Augusta Avenue and not on the tract because it is owned by four different owners. The marker displays that the tract is located one-fourth mile south. They decided to put the marker in its present location as they realized that if they put it on the tract no one would see it back there.

Ms. Chris Price said she wonders if the Commission is the appropriate venue to address the issue of Bryan Street and Bryan Parking Garage. This has bothered her for quite some time. As Dr. DeGraft-Hanson mentioned, Mr. Bryan was a slave owner and seller. He orchestrated the auction. Ms. Price believes that everything named "Bryan" in this city needs

to be looked into.

Ms. Bernetta Bryant Anderson came forward. She said her maiden name is "Bryant." Ms. Anderson explained that a "t" was put on the end of her maiden name. However, her family came from the "Bryan plantation" from South Carolina on her paternal side. A lot of people may be upset about this, but what can you do, this is history.

Ms. Linda Wilder Bryant, a concerned citizen of Savannah, came forward and said that her husband is a descendant of the "Bryan Family" from Daufuskie Island, South Carolina. Savannah is called the "Historic City." There are many commemorations for confederacy. They talk about buildings instead of people. Ms. Bryant said she was delighted to be present today and hear Dr. DeGraft-Hanson tell the story. They are now at the crossroad and it is the responsibility of the Historic Site and Monument Commission to ensure that the entire picture is given. Presently, they do not have the entire picture. Ms. Bryant said our children are lost. If they are not told about their past how will they get to their future? She said she was not talking about being proud of slavery, but the people who endured trials and tribulations came to be awesome people. Our children need to be told this part of the history. This is the kind of fact that the entire City needs to be told about.

Dr. Henry thanked Mr. Monroe for a very educational presentation he had in the Savannah Morning News on November 25, 2018 about the Weeping Time.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Ms. Blakely said the presentation that Dr. DeGraft-Hanson gave was very informative. She asked where do they go from here?

Mr. Monroe said he was concerned about how this might fit in with the new proposed canal district. Maybe this is something that the Commission could discuss at a later time.

Ms. Blakely said the Commission will continue to have this kind of dialogue. When they have this discussion, they will invite all who are here today along with others to see what they can come up with.

Dr. Henry said maybe the Commission will have a retreat where they can discuss this further. He thanked everyone for their attendance at today's meeting.

V. Adjournment

6. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Dr. Henry adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris
Director of Urban Planning and Historic Preservation

EIH:mem

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.