



Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site & Monument Commission

Chatham County Commission Chambers (2nd Floor), 124 Bull Street
November 7, 2019 4:00 P.M.
Meeting Minutes

NOVEMBER 7, 2019 SAVANNAH - CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC SITE & MONUMENT COMMISSION

Members Present: Dr. Nicholas Henry, Chair
Kristopher Monroe, Vice-Chairman
Alicia Blakely
Thomas Gensheimer
Sean Mannion
Lisa Watson

MPC Staff Present: Leah Michalak, Director of Historic Preservation
Ryan Jarles, Cultural Resources Planner
Sabrina Finau, Administrative Assistant

I. Call to Order and Welcome

[1. Call to order and Welcome](#)

Dr. Henry called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance. He outlined the role of the Historic Site and Monument Commission.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

[2. Approve October 3, 2019 Meeting Minutes](#)

[📎 October 3, 2019 Minutes.pdf](#)

Motion

The Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site & Monument Commission does hereby approve October 3, 2019 Meeting Minutes.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Kristopher Monroe

Second: Thomas Gensheimer

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Dr. Nicholas Henry - Abstain

Kristopher Monroe - Aye

Alicia Blakely - Aye

Sean Mannion - Aye

Lisa D. Watson - Aye

III. Regular Agenda

3. Petition of Starland Yard | 19-005851-PA | 2411 Desoto Avenue | After-the-Fact Murals

- 📎 [Submittal Packet - 2411 Desoto Avenue 19-005851-COA.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Submittal Packet Signage - 2411 Desoto Avenue 19-005851-PA.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Submittal Packet - Other Works by Artists - 2411 Desoto Avenue 19-005851-PA.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Application - 2411 Desoto Avenue 19-005851-PA.pdf](#)
- 📎 [AERIAL MAP 19-005851-PA.jpg](#)
- 📎 [19-005851-PA Staff Recommendation.pdf](#)

Mr. Pila Sunderland was present on behalf of the petition.

Mr. Ryan Jarles gave the staff report. The applicant is requesting after-the-fact approval for a mural package at 2411 Desoto Avenue. The mural package is located at the "Starland Yard" food truck park and consists of five (5) murals. The murals are located on various structures within the property. The murals are painted on the sides of the shipping containers that create the structures within Starland Yard. The mural titles include:

1. **Low Country for Old Men:** This mural is located on a 20'x8" side panel and an 8'x8' end panel of a shipping container totaling 224 square feet. This mural was created utilizing Benjamin Moore water-based paints.
2. **Happy:** This mural is located on a 25'x8' side panel of a shipping container and totals 200 square feet. This mural was created utilizing hand-mixed latex paints.
3. **Urban Rose:** This mural is located on a 40'x8' side panel of a shipping container and totals 320 square feet. This mural was created utilizing spray-paint.
4. **Zoo Bocce:** The mural is located on a 20'x8' side panel of a shipping container and totals 160 square feet. This mural was created utilizing an undisclosed paint.
5. **Trapper Keeper:** This mural is located on a 16'x12' side panel of a shipping container and totals 192 square feet.

Mr. Jarles stated that the funding for the project was not provided; the murals have already been created. 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.

Mr. Jarles reported that staff recommends after-the-fact approval of the mural package at 2411 Desoto Avenue with the following conditions because otherwise the murals meet the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art;

1. Ensure that all paint types are submitted to staff;
2. Ensure that a weatherproof or vandalism-resistant coating is applied to the murals.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Mr. Sunderland explained that they were unaware that murals painted inside the park require the HSMC's approval. They spent \$30,000 to get the murals installed. They are keeping the murals clean and pretty. They did not ask the artists that the murals be vandalism proof, but they did ask that the murals be weatherproof.

Mr. Sunderland said they have budgeted to redo the murals on an annual basis, but not necessarily redo all of them at the same time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

All members of the Board spoke on their concern with the Historic Site and Monument Commission's purview over murals on private property that are visible from the public right-of-way. Staff explained that if the murals are behind glass within the building, they usually said that it is within the three-foot limitation. However, these murals are within the property, but not inside the building.

The Commission was in agreement with the staff's recommendation, but advised the petitioner that before they do anything else to the murals, to check with staff.

Motion

The Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site & Monument Commission does hereby approve after-the-fact mural package at 2411 Desoto Avenue with the following conditions because otherwise the murals meet the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art;

1. Ensure that all paint types are submitted to staff;
2. Ensure that a weatherproof or vandalism-resistant coating is applied to the murals.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Thomas Gensheimer

Second: Sean Mannion

Thomas Gensheimer	- Aye
Dr. Nicholas Henry	- Abstain
Kristopher Monroe	- Aye
Alicia Blakely	- Aye
Sean Mannion	- Aye
Lisa D. Watson	- Aye

[4. Petition of Sottile & Sottile | 19-002716-HM | 200 Block West River Walk | Monument Relocation](#)

- 📎 [Application - 200 West River Walk 19-002716-HM.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Savannahs Waving Girl Monument Relocation_05-03-2019 reduced 2.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Propeller Club Letter 200 West River Walk 19-002716-HM.pdf](#)
- 📎 [AERIAL MAP 19-002716-HM.jpg](#)
- 📎 [19-002716-HM Staff Recommendation.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Savannah Tree Foundation Comment.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Hugh Osborne Comment.pdf](#)
- 📎 [River Street Marketplace Comment.pdf](#)

Mr. Christian Sottile was present on behalf of petition.

Mr. Ryan Jarles gave the staff report. The applicant is requesting approval for the relocation of the Waving Girl Monument from its current location within Morrell Park to 200 West River Walk. The new location is within the Plant Riverside Development along West River Street and the West River Walk. The placement of the monument is proposed at the start of West River Walk, where the original end to the River Walk meets the new West River Walk. He explained that the location on which the Waving Girl Monument is currently placed was designed for the inclusion of a monument. The relocation of the Waving Girl Monument will leave the original location within Morrell Park empty. The application does not address the future use for the site from which the monument is to be removed. The City's representative indicated that the City does not have any current plans for a replacement monument. Also, City Council will vote on the petition after they receive Historic Site and Monument Commission's recommendation and will provide guidance as to whether permission to move the monument will be granted.

Mr. Jarles said that the funding for the relocation of the monument is fully backed by partners within the Plant Riverside Development team. The resources to mobilize the monument are prepared and exist at the Plant Riverside development already. All maintenance and upkeep for the monument is proposed to be performed by the Propeller Club of Savannah.

Mr. Jarles 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. All required public notice was provided. He said staff received multiple letters on this subject. He believes that many of these persons are present to speak to the Commission. However, the Savannah Tree Foundation said they would not be able to attend today's meeting. Their letter lists some alternatives.

Mr. Jarles reported that staff recommends approval for the relocation of the Waving Girl Monument from its current location within Morrell Park to 200 West River Walk because it meets the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art.

Mr. Joseph Shearouse stated that he understood that there might be a little confusion about the process of relocating the monument. He explained that the process is the City received a request to move a public monument which is publicly owned property. The petition is then submitted to the Historic Site and Monument Commission [HSMC]. The petition is then reviewed by the HSMC and they make a recommendation based upon the Master Plan. The recommendation is then forwarded to City Council. City Council reviews it and then makes a final decision. The petition received by the staff was a request to move the monument. An approval by City Council would grant access to move the monument. A denial of the petition would not grant permission to move the monument.

Mr. Shearouse entertained questions from the Commission.

Mr. Monroe asked if there is a precedent for moving a monument. This monument has been at its present location since 1972.

Mr. Shearouse explained that monuments have been relocated in the history of Savannah. However, there has not been a relocation that they are aware of under the current guidelines which have been in existence for some time. However, in Savannah's history, monuments have been moved without the guidance of a process.

Mr. Monroe asked if this relocation would set a precedent.

Mr. Shearouse asked Mr. Monroe if he was saying "set a negative precedent."

Mr. Monroe said he was asking how long ago a monument was removed. Will this set a precedent?

Mr. Shearouse answered that the nature of a petition is for the governing body to act whether it is moving a monument, renaming a street or renaming a park. The process involves the public issuing a petition to the governing body who reacts to the request. So, without knowing whether a precedent would be set, he is comfortable that the present process protects against items that may come before the Commission that may not be in the best interest of the public. He wanted to remind the Commission that not only will they review this petition and decide based on its merit, but that City Council will also decide. Also, two public hearings will be held on this matter. He is confident that this process will lead to a fair decision because of the two public hearing options and the process is in place to protect that.

Mr. Monroe asked Mr. Shearouse that in addition to the hearing the Commission is having today, will two additional hearings will be held?

Mr. Shearouse answered that one public hearing will be held before City Council.

Ms. Blakely asked if the Commission's hearing today is included in the two public hearings.

Mr. Monroe said the hearing today counts as one and the hearing before City Council counts as another hearing. These hearings makeup the two hearings.

Mr. Gensheimer asked if the monument will be on City owned property.

Mr. Shearouse answered that he believes it is City owned property. However, he believes that the Propeller Club will maintain maintenance. This is a question that the petitioner can answer. He knows the City owns the property.

Ms. Blakely asked staff what is their recommendation.

Mr. Jarles explained that staff recommends approval due to the fact that it meets the Master Plan and Guideline. What the staff reviews is whether the monument fits in the requested location. Is the location appropriate for the monument? Staff is not reviewing the moving process.

Mr. Gensheimer wanted to know what the real reason is for requesting to move the monument.

Mr. Shearouse stated that the petitioner will be able to explain the request.

PETITIONER COMMENTS

Mr. Sotttle explained that he was present on behalf of the Propeller Club US Port of Savannah. He said they have been

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working on this project for ten years and are excited to come before the Board for the final steps for relocating the Waving Girl Monument to the City's new west end River Walk which is the entry to the port of Savannah and nearby is the new Martin Luther King Jr. park. The relocation creates an opportunity for the Waving Girl Monument to be visible from the Savannah River for the first time in 20 years. Mr. Sottile showed the original location of the monument on the monitor. It was designed in the 1960s and was intended to be in Washington Square which is in the Historic District. After much deliberation it was decided that the monument not be in a park, but be on the river. The monument was then located on the banks of the Savannah river on the eastern side of the City. Subsequent to that during the 1996 Olympics, the River Walk was extended in front of the monument, setting it back from the waterfront. In fact, it is setback 95 feet.

Mr. Sottile further explained that with the additional growth of trees and vegetation surrounding the monument, this created and obscured an environment that could no longer be appreciated from the river. The monument is viewed by ships coming into the Savannah port. The Propeller Club, who are stewards of the monument; first it was the City years ago who looked at ways in which you could be located in the new western River Walk being planned. As they developed the plan for the new City owned public River Walk on the west end, a platform was designed projecting out into the river to provide an optimum and safe vantage point for the monument with clear views looking up the channel.

Mr. Sottile said the plan located the successful historical context as it is not only the site of the historic western Power Plant, but it was originally the first port of Savannah. Today, the site serves as the gateway to the modern port of Savannah. Because of these reasons, the proposed location of the Waving Girl monument intrinsically tied to Savannah's port activities would be located more appropriately than ever before. The Waving Girl relocation places this beautiful monument closer to the original port and closer to the modern port. Furthermore, the vantage point for the monument is just a few feet from the river edge and will have permanent views up and down the shipping channel with no opportunity for vegetation to grow and obscure the monument. The site has been fully prepared including its raised elevation and is fully ADA accessible.

Mr. Sottile closed his presentation with excerpts from the HSMC of 1969 in their recommendation for the location of the monument. He said that Jason Ball was present to answer questions as well as provide additional context of their efforts over many years to find an optimum location for the monument.

Mr. Ball came forward and stated his credentials. He said the Propeller Club is the steward of the monument. Mr. Ball said he has been working on this project for the past 12 years in consultation with Mr. Christian Sottile. In 2014, they were able to remove four of the crepe myrtles to try to clear-out the space around the monument. Vagrants were sleeping in the bushes and the low lighting. As a safety issue, they tried to get some of the trees moved. The proposed final phase of the project culminates more than 20 years in discussion and planning to bring the monument closer to their original intent after Morrell Park was altered for the 1996 Olympics. Moving the monument was an early idea but was not feasible due to funding in a then blighted city. As a heavy structural marine engineer, it was presented to him as an alternative to move the monument somewhere else. But because the monument is so big it would cost a half million dollars. The Propeller Club presented their idea to Mr. Sottile.

Mr. Ball said around 2011, he received a call from Mr. Pete Shonka as he was interested in their idea. The Park and Tree Commission was asked to investigate their second phase. The idea was put back on the table to move the monument and look at the new developments they were trying to get in Savannah. The proposed site being presented today is immediately available. The money that it will take to build the structure to support a monument like the Waving Girl right on the river is there and is owned by the City. It is the big concrete platform. The only money that is not there is the money that it would take to move the monument. Similar, to what they did in 1995 in preparation to extend the park, the monument was moved to the roundhouse in a temporary location. They have all the documentation and know what it costs. They have a lot of logistics in place in the Propeller Club and they have a lot of volunteers. The infrastructure is already there. The Propeller Club is the only board fully dedicated to the maritime prosperity of the port of Savannah. The new location is the best opportunity to restore the monument to her original river site intent. The ferry will be able to pass and all the vessels coming in and going out will be able to see the monument.

Mr. Ball said this is the best opportunity and it will set a precedent as it will help them to develop a master plan to put all the maritime artifacts and monuments on the river. This could be done in a selective way that will benefit the City.

Ms. Watson asked who will maintain the monument.

Mr. Shearouse answered that the City is responsible for maintenance of the Waving Girl and will do this through the preservation fee. This is a \$1.00 fee that is for tourism activities in downtown Savannah.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Bethany Campbell said she was reared in Carver Village. From what she has seen, the Waving Girl will not be seen at the proposed new location as only the containers will be seen. Ms. Campbell opposes moving the Waving Girl.

Mr. Thomas Wright said he came to Savannah in 1987. The Waving Girl should not be moved so far down the river.

Mr. Mark Halliday and Dr. Judy Halliday were present. Mr. Halliday is the Property Manager of River Street Land and Development and owns two businesses on the east end of River Street. This monument has been in its present location

for many years. They oppose moving the Waving Girl from its present location.

Mr. Hugh Osborne stated that his grandfather moved to Savannah in 1922 to work in the shipping industry. This is a public monument and one organization cannot lay claim to it. The monument belongs to the citizens of Savannah through City Government. Mr. Osborne believes more public input is needed before moving the monument.

Mr. Richard Kessler said he did not request that the monument be moved but supports the removal. He said if they really want the citizens and visitors to really see and appreciate this monument, the proposed site is really the location.

Mr. Jonathan Cloughton said he is a board member of the Propeller Club. He does not agree that the statue be moved. The east end of River Street has always suffered from low pedestrian traffic. It will definitely be an economic hit to the east end to move the monument. Early a question was raised concerning who maintains the monument and Mr. Shearouse stated that a preservation fee is collected. Mr. Cloughton believed it is beneficial to point out that the tour companies collect this money from the tourists.

Mr. Joseph Sespa agreed that the original problem is the trees. His guests like to see the monument and they want to keep showing it to them.

Mr. Leod Rominger said they met with the Park and Tree Commission and Tree Foundation in 2008. They only advocated that the trees be moved; not just the crepe myrtles, but the six oak trees that were aligned along the path. Mr. Rominger showed the Commission pictures of the area during the Spring and Winter. He said the Tree Foundation was opposed to removing any trees, but they lobbied that a few trees be removed. The only reason two trees were removed was because vagrants were sleeping there. He likes the proposed new location.

Mr. Ed Brennan, Jr. said his father, Ed Brannen, Sr., was distressed with the monument becoming invisible from the river, especially as the crepe myrtles grew. About 13 years ago his father sent a letter to Savannah Morning News editor regarding the monument. His father suggested that the monument be raised so that it could be easily seen from the river, Hutchinson Island, and passing ships as was the intent. Mr. Brennan said he was not concerned about whether the monument remained in its present location or moved to the new proposed location. His only concern is that it be raised; put a light there and make it a landmark.

Mr. Rick Somers stated that his wife Susan and he owns a business in City Market. He believes it is absurd that they cannot eliminate the visibility issue with the monument without moving it to the west end of River Street. He believes the monument should remain at its present location.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Mr. Monroe and Mrs. Blakely expressed concern for the existing businesses along the eastern portion of River Street and the loss of business that the relocation of the monument may cause. All Board members spoke upon the idea of alternatives that should be sought out prior to taking any action on making a vote to recommend the relocation of the monument, specifically the possible removal of/trimming of the trees and other foliage surrounding the monument. One other alternative brought up by Mr. Monroe was the option to raise the monument, or even possibly moving the monument forward towards the river.

.The consensus of the Commission, taking public comment into consideration, was that the monument, remaining in its current location, could be made more visible and more accessible to the public as well as to the passing ships.

Motion

The Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site & Monument Commission does hereby recommend denial to City Council for the petition for the relocation of the Waving Girl Monument from its current location within Morrell Park to the proposed location at 200 West River Walk.

The Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site & Monument Commission further recommends increasing accessibility to the site and visibility of the site in its existing location as the City Council deems appropriate.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Alicia Blakely

Second: Thomas Gensheimer

Thomas Gensheimer

- Aye

Dr. Nicholas Henry

- Abstain

Kristopher Monroe	- Aye
Alicia Blakely	- Aye
Sean Mannion	- Aye
Lisa D. Watson	- Aye

IV. Other Business

[5. 2020 Officer Nominations](#)

The Nominating Committee reported that their nominations for 2020 are: Dr. Nicholas Henry, Chair, Kristopher Monroe, Vice-Chair and Lisa D. Watson. Secretary.

[6. ByLaws Amendments - Second Reading and Vote](#)

📎 [Bylaws - Revised 2019 - For November 7, 2019 HSMC Meeting.pdf](#)

The second reading of the update to the HSMC Bylaws was held and approved.

V. Adjournment

[7. Next Regular Meeting - Thursday, December 5, 2019 at 4:00 p.m. in the Chatham County Commission Chambers \(2nd Floor\), 124 Bull Street](#)

There being no further business to come before the HSMC, Dr. Henry adjourned the meeting at 6:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Leah Michalak, Director of Historic Preservation

LGM: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.