



Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site & Monument Commission

Virtual Special-Called Meeting
June 18, 2020 - 1 P.M.
MINUTES

June 18, 2020: SAVANNAH - CHATHAM HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT COMMISSION - SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

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

Member Absent: Lisa Watson

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

I. Call to Order and Welcome

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

III. Regular Agenda

IV. Other Business

1. Board Discussion on Confederate Monuments

- ☞ [Lisa D Watson Board Comments.pdf](#)
- ☞ [Savannah Pathways Comment update 1.pdf](#)
- ☞ [Savannah Pathways Comment update 2.pdf](#)
- ☞ [Savannah Pathways Comment.pdf](#)
- ☞ [Confederate Memorial Final Report \(2\).pdf](#)
- ☞ [Senate Bill 77 Monuments .pdf](#)

Mr. Henry stated the purpose of this meeting was to discuss preparation of a memorandum to City Council.

Mr. Monroe stated there are eight recommendations for the task force presented in 2017; it should simply state "HSMC support regarding the Civil War busts in Forsyth Park and the Civil War Plaque honoring all dead".

Mr. Mannion stated he is aware of Georgia Law. He states he does not feel any

Confederate should be memorialized in any way, at all. Put them in a museum; it's not in any other country. He does not understand memorializing racist traitors. City Council needs to stand up against antiquated laws; let Savannah be a City upon a hill.

Mr. Henry stated the 2017 recommendations appear to be dated.

Mr. Mannion stated they were never acted upon.

Mr. Monroe stated it may be more advantageous to focus on one letter. The obelisk in the middle of the park is still there; it was not addressed. His thought was to support the task force recommendations. State law prevents the busts from moving to cemeteries and museum, unless for preservation. He feels support for the task force should be sent and narrow the focus.

Mr. Jarles stated the topic should be the focus.

Mr. Gensheimer stated he's not sure what HSMC can do; it is out of the hands of HSMC.

Mr. Henry stated they have not acted upon it; we are requesting action. We have a duty to assert our legitimacy, as a monument commission.

Mr. Mannion stated HSMC should urge the change for Savannah. The monuments make Forsyth the worst park in Savannah. The hand of Georgia Law should be forced.

Mr. Gensheimer stated he would not support getting rid of the monument; it is different than the busts.

Mr. Monroe stated the memorial obelisk differs than the busts. He believes the recommendations of the task force report are timid, but it is a first step.

Ms. Watson (written comments through Mr. Jarles) wants to (1) rename Confederate Monument to Civil War Memorial to reinstate the intent to mourn fallen family members, not worship the confederacy; 4) not to alter the blank panel on the side for future generation additions to the monument, 5) relocate McClaws and Bartow busts to Laurel Grove as they are distracting to the Civil War Memorial, as idolizing confederacy is inappropriate.

Mr. Jarles stated there are citizens that support Ms. Watson's suggestions.

Ms. Wilson stated the study was passed by the past City Council but the funding was lacking. She asked if money should be put aside to implement this as part of the recommendation.

Mr. Henry stated 'funding' should be incorporated as part of the recommendation.

Mr. Monroe stated he supported that and it is a legitimate concern, however moving them is a greater issue.

Mr. Mannion stated funding should be incorporated to implement the recommendations of the task force.

Mr. Gensheimer agreed.

Mr. Mannion asked to find out the cost to remove 'additional artwork' from the busts. It's been done at least twice: moving them can save money from the 'additional artwork' to be removed.

Ms. Wilson stated it could be researched to determine the costs.

Mr. Monroe stated there is a separate preservation fund from hotels, aside from City funds.

Mr. Mannion stated City Council has voted to revoke that tax; it is no longer in effect since early 2020.

Mr. Chase Anderson, citizen, asked that task force findings be supported.

Ms. Wilson suggested that Staff draft a letter for the Board to approve and submit to City Council.

Motion

Write and send letter in support of task force recommendations, including the budget requests, to City Council.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Sean Mannion

Second: Kristopher Monroe

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Dr. Nicholas Henry - Abstain

Kristopher Monroe - Aye

Sean Mannion - Aye

Lisa D. Watson - Not Present

V. Adjournment

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.