



# Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site & Monument Commission

Virtual Meeting  
August 5, 2021 4:00 PM  
MINUTES

## August 5, 2021 Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site & Monument Commission

Members Present: Thomas Gensheimer, Vice - Chairman  
Lisa Watson, Secretary  
Sean Mannion  
Ashley Rainge

Members Absent: Kristopher Monroe, Chairman  
Eileen Baker

Staff Present: Leah Michalak, Director of Historic Preservation  
Bri Morgan, Administrative Assistant  
Pam Everett, Assistant Executive Director  
Julie Yawn, Systems Analyst

### I. Call to Order and Welcome

### II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

#### [1. Approve the July 1, 2021 Historic Site and Monument Commission Meeting Minutes](#)

[📎 07.01.21 MEETING MINUTES.pdf](#)

#### **Motion**

Approve meeting minutes as presented.

#### **Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: Sean Mannion

Second: Lisa D. Watson

Thomas Gensheimer

- Abstain

Kristopher Monroe

- Not Present

Sean Mannion

- Aye

Lisa D. Watson

- Aye

Eileen Baker

- Not Present

Ashley Rainge

- Aye

### III. Regular Agenda

[2. Petition of Ga Sons of the American Revolution, John Trussell | 21-003594-HM | 303 MLK, Jr. Blvd | Memorial](#)

## Bench

📎 [Submittal Packet.pdf](#)

📎 [AERIAL MAP 21-003594-HM.pdf](#)

📎 [Staff Recommendation 21-003594-HM.pdf](#)

**Ms. Leah Michalak** presented the applicant's request of approval from the Historic Site and Monument Commission to install a granite memorial bench within Battlefield Park at 303 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. The text is on the bench is proposed as follows:

Top of the Bench: *"Honoring the soldiers who fought in the battle of Savannah 1779. The British withdrew July 11, 1782"*

Front End of the Bench: *"The Sons of the American Revolution"*

Leg of the Bench: *"GA SAR"*

The proposed location of the bench is between the sidewalk and the ground-embedded donor marker at the east end of the park. It is 4 feet wide, 18 inches deep, and 24 inches high situated on a concrete base which extends to meet the public sidewalk.

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. As of the writing of this report, no comments were received from the public.

The proposed theme of the new marker/other object includes one category listed by the HSMC: Military History. The significance of the proposed marker/other object is illustrated in the text of the bench and in the full text of the event provided by the petitioner. In short, the Battle of Savannah was fought against the British during the Revolutionary War at/near this site. The theme is high enough to warrant a public presence and the event commemorated reflects the community as a whole. There is significant documented evidence of the event and the bench is district and is not similar to the other markers and objects within Battlefield Park.

This is a large historic site with many objects, markers, memorials, etc. There are several other objects in the general area where this bench is proposed. On the east end, some items include: a flag pole, interpretative signage, and ground embedded markers. On the west, north, and south ends there are Georgia Historical Society markers, and several benches. There are also site features such as a Redoubt. The installation of a bench on the east side is consistent with the placement of other objects on the site and is far enough away to allow the visitor proper appreciation of each. They are intended to be appreciated together.

The proposed location of the bench is between (and will face) the sidewalk and the ground-embedded donor marker at the east end of the park. It is situated on a concrete base which extends to meet and enhance the public sidewalk. It would be adjacent to the gravel entrance to the parking lot for the Railroad Museum and is not prone to frequent automobile accidents. The information on whether existing utilities would be affected was not included with the submittal packet. The only vegetation is grass. This site may be considered designated green space; however, the large green space can accommodate the bench. Although the site is used for events, the bench will contribute to the events and will not disrupt the ceremonies and tours. Periodic memorial services are likely; however, the site can accommodate them without causing disruption.

The bench is proposed to be granite which is an enduring, non-corroding material. The budget is \$1800 plus installation and sidewalk expansion and is funded by Georgia Sons of the American Revolution, David Jessel, President.

### **PETITIONER COMMENTS:**

**Mr. John Trussell**, petitioner, stated the bench maker suggested not using a concrete base, as that would cost more than the bench itself; recommended pre-made concrete forms. In addition to the ease of installation, it would still be solid and moveable. It would have something similar to HardiBack underneath. He stated he's already spoken with AT&T for markings; anticipating having that done soon. As an organization, they look to have a ceremony to nationally dedicate the bench in July 2022 and highlight Savannah.

**Mr. Mannion** asked about the base in the visual versus the actual base. **Mr. Trussell** stated the visual was an example that used pebbles; this base will truly be concrete. **Ms. Watson** asked about the depth of the base of the bench, to be sure that is truly secure. **Mr. Trussell** stated there is a firm base that concrete pavers can be set upon that is solid and long. They will ensure it is a solid fixture to maintain the public use anticipated.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

**Mr. Lamar Davis**, a member of SAR and SOR, supported the project. He asked about the ownership of the land - public or private. **Ms. Michalak** stated it was her understanding that it was run by the Coastal Heritage Society. **Mr. Trussell** stated he spoke with the director, whom indicated her support for the project. He stated he would get formal approval if necessary.

**BOARD COMMENTS:**

**Mr. Gensheimer** supports the petition.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

**Approval to install a granite memorial bench within Battlefield Park at 303 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. with the following conditions to be submitted to staff for final approval because the proposed work otherwise meets the Master Plan and Guidelines.**

- 1. Provide information on whether existing utilities will be affected.**
- 2. Provide the text heights and ensure that, except the marker title, the marker text is not more than 1” in height, and not less than 1/2”.**

**Motion**

Approval to install a granite memorial bench within Battlefield Park at 303 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. with the following conditions to be submitted to staff for final approval because the proposed work otherwise meets the Master Plan and Guidelines.

Provide information on whether existing utilities will be affected.

Provide the text heights and ensure that, except the marker title, the marker text is not more than 1"; in height, and not less than 1/2";.

**Vote Results ( Approved )**

Motion: Sean Mannion

Second: Lisa D. Watson

|                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Thomas Gensheimer | - Abstain     |
| Kristopher Monroe | - Not Present |
| Sean Mannion      | - Aye         |
| Lisa D. Watson    | - Aye         |
| Eileen Baker      | - Not Present |
| Ashley Rainge     | - Aye         |

**IV. Other Business**

[3. Item Withdrawn By Petitioner: Petition of City of Savannah, Joe Shearouse Jr. | 21-004138-HM | 1605 Augusta Avenue | Park Naming](#)

**V. Adjournment**

[4. Next HSMC Regular Meeting - September 2, 2021 at 4pm](#)

[5. Adjourn](#)

There being no further business to present before the Board, the August 5, 2021 Historic Site and Monument Commission meeting adjourned at 4:32 p.m.

Respectfully,

Leah G. Michalak  
Director of Historic Preservation

/bm

***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.***