



Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site & Monument Commission

Virtual Meeting
July 1, 2021 4:00 PM
MINUTES

July 1, 2021 Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission

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

Staff Present: Leah Michalak, Director of Historic Preservation
Kiakala Ntemo, Development Services Planner
Bri Morgan, Administrative Assistant
Pam Everett, Assistant Executive Director
Aislinn Droski, Historic Preservation Assistant Planner
Olivia Arfuso, Historic Preservation Assistant Planner
Monica Gann, Historic Preservation Assistant Planner

I. Call to Order and Welcome

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

[1. Approve the June 3, 2021 Meeting Minutes](#)

[📎 06.03.21 MEETING MINUTES.pdf](#)

Motion

Approve as presented.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Sean Mannion

Second: Lisa D. Watson

Thomas Gensheimer - Not Present

Kristopher Monroe - Abstain

Sean Mannion - Aye

Lisa D. Watson - Aye

Eileen Baker - Aye

Ashley Rainge - Aye

III. Regular Agenda

[2. Petition of The City of Savannah | 21-000348-PA | 200 and 300 Blocks of Broughton Street | Public Art](#)

☉ [Staff Recommendation - 21-000348-PA.pdf](#)

☉ [Submittal Packet 21-000348-COA.pdf](#)

☉ [AERIAL MAP 21-000348-PA.pdf](#)

☉ [APP CKLIST 200 & 300 W Broughton.pdf](#)

Ms. Leah Michalak presented the applicant's request of approval for Public Art information displays within kiosks on the 200 and 300 blocks of West Broughton Street. The kiosks are part of a larger project, spanning six (6) blocks, from Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. (400 Block), to Drayton Street (0 block of East Broughton) to revitalize the Broughton streetscape; the project is currently under construction.

Currently under review are public art on four (4) kiosks (the kiosks themselves have already been approved by the Historic District Board of Review), two on the north and two on the south side of the 200 and 200 blocks of West Broughton Street.

200 Block North Kiosk:

The kiosk on the north side of the street will focus on Ellis Square as a public market. The images show Ellis Square throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

200 Block South Kiosk:

The kiosk on the south side of the street will focus on Broughton Street as the “crossroads for changing transportation technology throughout Savannah’s history”. The images show technology such as streetcars, horses and buggies, and modern cars throughout the 20th century.

300 Block North Kiosk:

The kiosk on the north side of the street will focus on the modern changes that occurred on Broughton Street in the mid-20th century in an effort to compete with new businesses and suburban shopping centers. The images show Broughton Street in the 1960-70s as well as later photos of building revitalizations.

300 Block South Kiosk:

The kiosk on the south side of the street will focus on Broughton as Savannah’s “Main Street” and retail center of the city. The images show Broughton Street throughout the 20th century.

At the February 4, 2021 HSMC Meeting, the Commission voted as follows:

The Savannah – Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission hereby recommends approval of the public art located on the 400 block of Broughton Street to the Savannah City Council, because otherwise it meets the standards set forth in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art.

AND

The Savannah – Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission does hereby continue the additional (5) five blocks of future proposed public art, to allow for the public art to be submitted to the Historic Site and Monument Commission at a future date, for review, when the City of Savannah has all required information ready.

The installation of the public art is to be integrated onto kiosks previously approved by the Historic District Board of Review (18-001061-COA); therefore, the addition of the public art onto the kiosks will not cause overcrowding, nor will it damage or disturb existing vegetation or utilities. The kiosks are being constructed with the inclusion of the public art in mind, therefore the site is large enough for the objects.

The kiosks are located a large, redesigned sidewalk area along the north and south sides of Broughton Street. Broughton Street is known as a festival zone, often playing host to parades and other large group gatherings; Broughton Street is also known for frequent automobile accidents occurring on the street itself. Although known for festivities and accidents, the kiosks are to be located within a well-designed buffer zone between the sidewalk and the street, allowing for the kiosks to not become detrimental to the festivities nor prone to possible damage from automobiles. The kiosks and proposed public art will be included on the sidewalks along

Broughton Street and will be easily accessible and will have adequate nearby on-street parking. The public art proposed is included in a larger project to revitalize the Broughton Street corridor and will add to the enhancement of the neighborhood.

The installation of the public art is included in the already approved and ongoing Broughton Street revitalization project the above will not be affected. The site will not play host to memorial services. The inclusion of public art onto the already approved kiosks being installed along Broughton Street respects the Oglethorpe Plan. The proposed public art will be photographic in nature and is a commissioned work. The proposed public art is to be a permanent part of the approved kiosks. The public art will be of superior materials with the intention of being vandalism resistant. The proposed public art is to be designed with materials of a superior quality, will not pose any danger to pedestrians and will be within a newly maintained and landscaped area.

The majority of the public art will utilize historical images of Savannah and other documents from the City Archives. These documents, although not original works, will be utilized in a unique and original way to present them to the public. These images and documents are part of the community and respectful to the community. The proposed work will be of an appropriate scale and will be within a maintained and landscaped portion of the revitalization of Broughton Street.

The artist/designer/fabricator is the City of Savannah and associated contractors and have demonstrated their ability to create said public art and meet proposed timeframes. All funding is part of Phase 1 of the Broughton Street Streetscape Improvement Project. As part of Phase 1 of the Broughton Street Streetscape Improvement Project, the kiosks and public art will be maintained as part of operations of various City departments.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Ms. Rainge asked if there will be interpretative signage. **Ms. Michalak** stated there will be text on the kiosks.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:

There were no petitioner comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Savannah – Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission recommend approval of the public art located on the 200 and 300 blocks of Broughton Street with the following condition because the work meets the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art.

- 1. The remaining three blocks of kiosks (0 West, 100 West, and 0 East blocks) are to return a future HSMC Meeting for review and approval by the Commission.**

Motion

The July 1, 2021 HSMC Savannah Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission motioned to approve the public art located on the 200 and 300 blocks of Broughton Street with the following condition because the work meets the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art:

1. The remaining three blocks of kiosks (0 West, 100 West, and 0 East blocks) are to return a future HSMC Meeting for review and approval by the Commission.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Sean Mannion

Second: Eileen Baker

Thomas Gensheimer

- Not Present

Kristopher Monroe

- Aye

Sean Mannion	- Aye
Lisa D. Watson	- Aye
Eileen Baker	- Aye
Ashley Rainge	- Aye

[3. Petition of Clinton Edminster | 21-003083-PA | 2517 Bull Street and 2517 West 42nd Street | Mural](#)

[☞ Staff Recommendation - 21-003083-PA.pdf](#)

[☞ 2517 Bull St visuals.pdf](#)

[☞ All emails of support.pdf](#)

[☞ Application](#)

[☞ Letter of opposition.pdf](#)

Mr. Kiakala Ntemo presented the applicant's request of approval for the installation of a mural at 2517 Bull Street and 2517 West 42nd Street at C&S Upholstery.

The subject properties are located in the area known as Starland District in the Metropolitan neighborhood. They are in the TC-1, Traditional Commercial zoning district and are separated from each other by DeSoto Avenue but are under the same ownership. The proposal is for a “living wall” mural where the artwork is ever changing. Local artists from the community will have the freedom to paint their artwork within the parameters of the subject property’s exterior walls. The artwork will be continuously painted over and an enforcement of guidelines, which restrict explicit imagery, would be handled by a community of artists. According to the applicant, there are no available spaces for artists to practice large scale murals and this proposal will offer artists the opportunity to hone and develop their skills in a regulated environment.

The theme of the mural is respectful to the socio-cultural, historic and context of the community and complies with the Georgia obscenity laws and does not contain or advertise any lewd imagery or messages. The mural does not advertise any illegal activities under the laws of Georgia or the United States. The mural will not cover the entire facade of the building; it is proposed to be painted on the inner most gable wall. The scale and design of the mural are appropriate for this location.

The mural will complement and enhance the character of the community. The black and white grey scale color scheme may be a better fit for this location since it matches the theme of the surrounding buildings. A full colored mural at this location may serve as a distraction to drivers; particularly being so close to the front of the road right-of-way. The subject property is located in the Neighborhood Business zoning district, a district established to permit small-scale, neighborhood-oriented nonresidential uses and upper story residences. This immediate portion of Waters Avenue consists of restaurants and office uses. The subject property is near Memorial Health University. A residential neighborhood is located 2 blocks east of the subject property.

According to the applicant, there has been support from other businesses and her existing client base. Also, notification for the mural request has been mailed to residents within 200 feet and to the relative neighborhood association of the community.

To Staff’s knowledge, there are no other murals in the immediate vicinity and the mural will not be placed or painted on historic materials. Paint information has not been provided.

The mural artist, Steven Teller, is experienced and has completed numerous projects of similar size and scale. Evidence of his work has been submitted via his website, <https://steventellerarts.com/>. According to the applicant, the estimated cost of the work is \$6,000. 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.

Mr. Mannion asked if there would be posting that no profanity will be allowed on the wall. **Mr. Ntemo** responded that the petitioner stated there would be rules and regulations posted. **Ms. Memory** asked where exactly the mural will be. **Mr. Ntemo** showed where they would be located.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:

Mr. Clinton Edminster explained the area encompasses four walls. The area is already a living mural; the

owners were about to be fined for illegal murals. It will be a safe space for new artists to practice. He stated he wants to steer clear of an official commission to regulate the living mural; it will be self-policing.

Mr. Monroe asked about the location; **Mr. Edminster** stated it is basically in the alley right now. If the projects takes off, it could possibly expand. No need for ladders; low height allowance. **Mr. Mannion** asked about the project design plan, its regulations, and accountability. **Mr. Edminster** stated it is an opportunity for muralists to perfect their craft to be used locally with guidelines, with expectation of them being pushed by some. Those not adhering would have their work painted over. **Mr. Mannion** asked about paint and supplies; safeguards for environmental hazards. **Mr. Edminster** stated they are looking to the HSMC to provide guidance what is acceptable and for practice of varying paints and methods, with as little regulations as possible. **Mr. Mannion** stated the guidelines are on the website; likes the concept but hesitant to allow such freedom. **Mr. Edminster** asked what is the point of using superior paint qualities, but these murals aren't intended to last long. He'd like to return to report the progress of the process. **Ms. Rainge** stated the attitude of the lax regulating concerns her; why not have a formal group. **Mr. Edminster** stated he wants to promote creativity and develop regulations for the project as it goes along. **Ms. Rainge** asked what is the barometer to determine success and sustainability. **Mr. Edminster** stated he would like to return and report the progress and complaints received. **Ms. Rainge** asked has there been a precedent set for this. **Mr. Monroe** state no; it would then be a code violation. **Ms. Michalak** stated that does not preclude the Board from making a condition that requires evaluation. **Ms. Memory** asked about supervision of novice painters; **Mr. Edminster** stated there will be none; that will be a risk that will have to be taken, as there are already people painting ugly things now without permission. **Ms. Watson** stated she has concerns about environmental disasters. **Mr. Gensheimer** stated there is a difference between mural and graffiti; has concerns about no governing of this and a blank slate. **Mr. Edminster** stated that's what he's interested in exploring; this challenges the definition of graffiti and art. **Mr. Mannion** stated the guidelines are already set: it is up to the petitioner to present their plan with criteria already established. Therefore the application submitted is not complete by asking for minimal regulation; this is not a trial and error process as Code Enforcement need to have direction. **Mr. Monroe** stated Staff has deemed the application correct, as Staff recommended approval. However, there are clarifying details that need to be addressed, as it is a precedent. Although this is a new concept to Savannah, they are typically self-policing in areas in which they already exist. **Mr. Monroe** and **Mr. Mannion** agreed it is a good idea for the Savannah area for artists to have a large area to practice on. **Ms. Watson** suggested having a sign up sheet that indicates appropriate paints and to clean. **Mr. Edminster** stated he is against that; he does not want to start any type of system and inhibit freedom. **Ms. Watson** said responsibility needs to be taught to artists. **Mr. Edminster** stated he'd like to see how it goes with minimal rules and policing. **Ms. Watson** stated she had concerns with paint going into the sewer and the mess of varying paints that won't adhere to each other. **Ms. Baker** asked if there is a core group of artists; **Mr. Edminster** stated no, and the owners and management of the building are supportive.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mr. Valerian Sottile, area property owner, stated he is confused about all the murals on decayed buildings. He stated he owns several residential properties in a struggling historic district and this makes it much more difficult. Where does it start and stop; it's too risky. He thinks amateur artists should start inside.

BOARD DISCUSSION:

Ms. Rainge stated she likes the idea but has hesitation. **Mr. Monroe** stated possibly a six-month review of "how it is going" would be helpful. **Mr. Mannion** stated he likes the idea but believes it does not adhere to the HSMC guidelines; he is opposed to no regulation for the project. He suggested a continuance to get petitioner guidelines for such a project. **Mr. Gensheimer** stated accountability is needed, particularly with no oversight. He cannot make an exception to the rules, which is the purpose of this Board.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval because it meets the standards of the Master Plans and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art.

Motion

The July 1, 2021 HSMC motioned to deny petition of the mural at 2517 Bull Street.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Sean Mannion

Second: Thomas Gensheimer

Thomas Gensheimer	- Aye
Kristopher Monroe	- Abstain
Sean Mannion	- Aye
Lisa D. Watson	- Nay
Eileen Baker	- Aye
Ashley Rainge	- Nay

[4. Petition of Marjani Smith | 21-003312-PA | 24 West Henry Street | Mural](#)

[📎 24 West Henry visuals.pdf](#)

[📎 Staff Recommendation - 21-003312-PA.pdf](#)

[📎 24 West Henry Application.pdf](#)

Mr. Kaikala Ntemo presented applicant's request of approval for the installation of a mural at 24 West Henry Street, the location of the wellness center, *The Corner Suite*.

The subject property is located on the corner of West Henry Street and Whitaker Street in the Victorian Historic District and is in the TC-2, Traditional Commercial zoning district. The proposed mural consists of nature inspired artwork made from mesh material that will be installed on all four walls of the building with a specialized grommet system. The area of the facades facing north and south are approximately 960 sq ft each; the area of the east and west facades are approximately 1,488 sq ft each. The intent of the mural is to provide dynamic nature-inspired vistas for pedestrians, cyclists, car commuters, students, workers and neighborhood residents.

The theme of the mural is respectful to the socio-cultural, historic and context of the community. The mural complies with the Georgia obscenity laws and does not contain or advertise any lewd imagery or messages. The mural does not advertise any illegal activities under the laws of Georgia or the United States. The mural's colorways borrow from and relate to the colors of neighboring buildings, foliage and infrastructure (sidewalks, roadways, etc). The foliage presented is native to Southeast Georgia and is reminiscent of nature's role, whether downtown, midtown, on the islands or near the marshes and hammocks of Savannah. The mural itself celebrates nature, architecture, the colors and shapes of the sky, marshes, fields and forest. The human-scale design elements invite individual viewers to engage with and consider their place in these contexts. The location of the mural on the building does not detract from character defining features of the building. The mural will complement and enhance the character of the community. The location of the mural is not likely to serve as a distraction to drivers.

There is a mix of residential and commercial uses within the immediate area of the subject property.

As to date, staff has not received any emails in support or opposition to the proposed mural. To Staff's knowledge, there are no other HSMC approved murals in the immediate vicinity and the mural will not be placed or painted on historic materials. The scale and design of the mural are appropriate for this location. The mural will not be made from paint. It will be made from a mesh material and will have the possibility to be removed if necessary. The artist of the mural, Katherine Sandoz, is an experienced and celebrated Savannah artist who has completed numerous projects of similar size and scale. Evidence of her work has been submitted.

According to the applicant, the estimated cost of the work is \$30,000. 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.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:

Ms. Emily Tesolmasser, petitioner, stated that the mural is sustainable and preservable. It can be removed since the business is a renting tenant of the building. It has masonry anchors and will be professionally installed, but not reusable for another structure.

Ms. Kathryn Sandoz, project artist, volunteered to answer questions. She stated she has not used this method before, but has noticed it in other cities. It's double-seamed and grommetted to the building.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments.

BOARD COMMENTS:

The Board was impressed the project.

STAFF DECISION:

Staff hereby approves the installation of the proposed mural at 24 West Henry Street because it meets the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art.

Motion

The July 1, 2021 HSMC motioned to approve the mural at 24 West Henry Street because it meets the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Sean Mannion

Second: Thomas Gensheimer

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Kristopher Monroe - Abstain

Sean Mannion - Aye

Lisa D. Watson - Aye

Eileen Baker - Aye

Ashley Rainge - Aye

IV. Other Business

[5. Civil War Memorial Memo - Information Only](#)

[05242021 Civil War Memorial Recommended Next Steps Memo.pdf](#)

Mr. Monroe stated **Ms. Melanie Wilson**, Executive Director, spoke with the City Attorney.

Ms. Pamela Everitt, Assistant Executive Director, stated the City Attorney was going to wait to see how the Georgia Court of Appeals ruled on two other cases. Other counties have been sued; although one A Rockdale County judge stated commissioners have sovereign immunity and cannot be sued individually. The process is motion.

V. Adjournment

[6. Next HSMC Regular Meeting - August 5, 2021 at 4pm](#)

[7. Adjourn](#)

6:15 p.m.

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.