



Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site & Monument Commission

112 East State Street - Hearing Room
April 7, 2022 4:00 PM
MINUTES

April 7, 2022 Historic Savannah Site & Monument Commission Meeting

Members Present: Kristopher Monroe, Chairman
Lisa Watson, Secretary
Eileen Baker
Catherine Kostilnik
Sean Mannion
Ashley Rainge

Staff Present: Pamela Everett, Assistant Executive Director
Monica Gann, Assistant Preservation Planner
Bri Morgan, Administrative Assistant
Roger Beall, Systems Analyst

I. Call to Order and Welcome

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

[1. Approve the February 3, 2022 Meeting Minutes](#)

[📎 02.03.22 MEETING MINUTES.pdf](#)

Motion

Approve the February 3, 2022 HSMC Meeting Minutes as presented.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Sean Mannion

Second: Eileen Baker

Kristopher Monroe - Abstain

Sean Mannion - Aye

Lisa D. Watson - Aye

Eileen Baker - Aye

Ashley Rainge - Not Present

Catherine D. Kostilnik, PhD - Aye

III. Regular Agenda

[2. Petition of W Projects, Erin Wessling | 22-000965-PA | 1204 Gwinnett Street | Pedestrian Walkway Mural:](#)[Phases 2 and 3](#)

- ☞ [Staff Recommendation-22-000965-PA.pdf](#)
- ☞ [Submittal Packet - narrative.pdf](#)
- ☞ [Submittal Packet-murals mock-up and overall site plan.pdf](#)
- ☞ [Submittal Packet- app and checklist.pdf](#)

Ms. Monica Gann presented the petitioner's request of approval for Phases 2 and 3 for the pedestrian walkway mural for the city property located along Gwinnett Street and Stiles Avenue. The Water Works Site Pedestrian Walkway mural will be painted directly onto the asphalt and concrete of the Water Works site which is adjacent to the Arena and developing Canal District Trail.

This commissioned artwork of five artist teams will be the largest asphalt mural in Chatham County, with each of the five murals at 120ft x 20ft or approx. 2,400 sq ft.

As per the applicant:

“With the completion of the first approved section of the mural by the McGregor group in February of 2022, the continued work of the following two murals will occur throughout the Spring of 2022. The Adolfo and Hebermehl groups will continue to fuse their designs into the Pedestrian Walkway, installing designs based on the natural environment of the community and the people who have lived throughout it.”

On November 4, 2021, approved the first phase of mural installation [21-005663-PA].

The mural theme standards are met. *Per the applicant, the theme of the mural is:*

“Given its importance to the site and its neighboring communities, the artwork should encompass the theme of Savannah’s Pathways which can be taken from physical pathways such as roads, nature trails, and man-made paths, as well as the structures, natural and/or man-made, that line those physical pathways utilizing familiar landmarks and flora or fauna native to the Savannah Area. The artwork on each section of the mural will consist of flowing gestural lines or “paths” that connect figures and flora into one body, threading a thoroughfare to our collective path, present and future. Visitors and art enthusiasts alike will share the experience of seeing themselves in the works as well as marveling in the colorways, the formal aspects of the art itself, and the flowing shapes and interconnected lines. This work is designed to create an endless number of paths within the pathway.”

The mural is not on the Water Works building; however, it is intended to complement the building’s surrounding site and context. The standards are met. The mural will be respectful to the greater context of the neighborhood and, because it is generally internal to the Water Works site, will not cause undue distraction to drivers. The mural is located within a mixed-use area. The public was notified. No response of opposition was received.

However, per the applicant:

“During the RFP submission period an online Webinar was held for the public to answer any questions and expand on the concepts of both the mural pathway and the entire Water Works site activation. In addition, the Arena Community Task Force which is comprised of several presidents and active members of several West Wise Neighborhood Associations as well as Alderman Lanier, was presented the mural project concept, and chose the theme of the mural itself “Savannah Pathways.” Several of the chosen artist groups will be holding

charettes with neighboring communities to present their designs and gain feedback and engagement.”

The mural is large, which is appropriate as this is a large site. The mural is an original design and is appropriate within the context of the neighborhood.

The proposed materials are:

- Behr Premium Tinted concrete paint with primer
- Behr White concrete base paint and paint tint
- High quality exterior Modern Masters acrylic theme paint
- Exterior Water Based House Paint over top of Exterior Primer
- H&C SHIELDCRETE Acrylic Clear Glaze Coat
- H&C COLORTOP WaterBased Solid Color Concrete Stain

Staff requests additional information regarding weatherproof and vandalism-resistant coating.

There are four artist teams each led by experienced mural artists; the four mural artists are Adolfo, Amiri, Brian McGregor, and Hebermehl. Past work was provided for the selected mural artists; these artists were selected through an RFP (Request for Proposals) process; they were selected by a group of community members and public art enthusiasts within Savannah.

Per the applicant:

Timeframe for Mural 2 will be, upon approval, throughout April 2022, with Mural 3 taking place following the completion of Enmarket Arena parking garage slated for May 2022. The City is funding the project.

PETITIONER'S COMMENTS:

Ms. Erin Wessling, petitioner, stated she is open to additional questions. There is a fourth and fifth phase - around the fall of 2022. This will be the largest asphalt mural in Georgia and public art pieces in the South east.

Mr. Brett Bell, City of Savannah, stated they actively engaged the neighborhood and gained their support. Still in a transitional phase; planned to be complete by May 2022.

Ms. Marsha Beaufort, Chairman of Savannah Arena Task Force, stated they are happy with the process and communicate with the artists.

Mr. Nick Palumbo stated he supports the petition.

Mr. Adolfo Alvarado, artist, has been painting for 20 years.

Mr. Matthew Hebermehl, artist, stated he has worked on this project for ten years to fruition.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There was no public comment.

BOARD COMMENTS:

The Board was in support of the project.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Historic Site and Monument Commission recommend approval to the Savannah City Council for Phases 2 and 3 for the pedestrian walkway mural for the city property located along Gwinnett Street and Stiles Avenue with the following condition to be submitted to staff because otherwise it meets the standards in the Master Plan and Guidelines for Markers, Monuments, and Public Art:

1. Ensure that the mural has a weatherproof or vandalism resistant coating

Motion

The Historic Site and Monument Commission motioned to recommend approval to the Savannah City Council for Phase 2 and 3 for the pedestrian walkway mural for the city property located along Gwinnett Street and Stiles Avenue, as requested, to be docketed on a City Council agenda because the proposed work meets the Master Plan and Guidelines.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Sean Mannion

Second: Catherine D. Kostilnik, PhD

Kristopher Monroe - Abstain

Sean Mannion - Aye

Lisa D. Watson - Aye

Eileen Baker - Aye

Ashley Rainge - Aye

Catherine D. Kostilnik, PhD - Aye

3. Petition of Georgia Historical Society | 22-001027-HM | 1 East Bay Street | Georgia Historical Marker

[☞ Staff Recommendation-22-001027-HM.pdf](#)

[☞ Submittal Packet- application, narrative, and photos.pdf](#)

Ms. Monica Gann presented the petitioner's request.

The applicant is requesting a recommendation for approval from the Historic Site and Monument Commission to install a Georgia Historical Society Historical Marker near 1 East Bay Street in the green space between Bay Street and Factors Walk near the Gamble Building.

The proposed marker is to read as follows:

Southern States Phosphate and Fertilizer
The Fertilizer Industry in the South

The early success of the Southern fertilizer industry is connected to the 1867 discovery of phosphate in South Carolina. Charleston and Savannah became production centers of sulfuric and phosphoric acids, key fertilizer components. Following the emancipation of enslaved laborers and poor agricultural practices, phosphate fertilizer led to a boom in American food production and created a large industry for an economically depressed South. Established in Augusta, Southern States Phosphate and Fertilizer Company (SSPF) relocated to Savannah in 1902 to take advantage of the port and expanding global trade. Following World War I, Savannah was the world's second-largest fertilizer production point with thirteen plants. Investors, including A.D. Strobhar, purchased Southern States Phosphate in 1934, joined by Franklin Reed Dulany in 1940. Today,

Southern States continues as an active subsidiary of Dulany Industries, Inc. MINUTES
Erected by the Georgia Historical Society and Dulany Industries, Inc.

The theme standard is met.

As per the applicant:

“The “Southern States Phosphate and Fertilizer Company: The Fertilizer Industry in the South” historical marker demonstrates the themes of Industry and Commerce, Science and Engineering, and Local History.

Before the Civil War, the only fertilizer plant south of Baltimore, Maryland, was in Charleston, South Carolina, which closed due to the war. Upon the discovery of phosphate in South Carolina in 1867, the port cities of Charleston and Savannah became major participants in chemical phosphate fertilizer production and brought the industry to the Deep South. In Georgia, the state’s soil, specifically red clay, was known for lacking nutrients. Decades of poor agricultural practices, including an overreliance on enslaved labor, led to significantly reduced crop yields for Southern planters in the years after the Civil War. However, those struggles encouraged significant increase in the reliance on chemical fertilizers, ultimately boosting that fledgling industry throughout the economically depressed South.

Southern States Phosphate and Fertilizer Industry was established in 1897 in Augusta and later merged with Augusta Guano in 1901. The company moved to Savannah in 1902 to take advantage of the growing industry and port of Savannah. The company and the industry saw further growth following World War I, as phosphate fertilizer also contains key components used in explosives. Before the war, the United States relied on Germany for chemical fertilizer. As the US could no longer rely on Germany, US production of phosphate-based explosives and fertilizer increased during World War I. By the early 1920s, Southern States emerged as the second-largest fertilizer production point in the world. New Deal-era programs, such as the Tennessee Valley Authority, provided educational demonstrations on the proper use of fertilizer to rural farmers. Through such programs, southern farmers increasingly implemented the use of fertilizer in their agricultural practices, and ultimately contributed to the industry's success. At one point, there were more than fourteen fertilizer plants in Savannah alone.

After nearly 100 years of success in the fertilizer industry, the company, which is today part of the family owned Dulany Industries, ended fertilizer production in 2000 and switched its focus towards the manufacturing of sulfuric acid. Southern States played a key role in the global fertilizer industries and agricultural practices in the United States and is now a leader in the sulfuric acid industry. Dulany Industries, along with its subsidiaries, have contributed to the success and expansion of the ports and Savannah’s economic growth through the creation of countless jobs that brought employment to generations of Savannahians. This local company continues to have a significant economic impact on Savannah, Georgia, and the nation as the largest certified manufacturer and supplier of sulfuric acid for industrial use in the Southeast.

Today, Southern States Chemical remains headquartered in Savannah and has additional locations in Wilmington, NC, and Hopewell, VA. Its sister companies include Seapoint Industrial Terminal Complex in Savannah, which provides industrial services to manufacturing corporations, and Seagate Terminals, providing logistical services and warehousing with two locations and 850 acres in Savannah and an additional location in Norfolk, Virginia.

In recognition of the role of corporate citizens like Dulany Industries in shaping the history of Georgia over the past century, the Georgia Historical Society has made a focused effort in recent years to acknowledge those contributions through the Georgia Business History Initiative. With the installation of this proposed historical marker, Dulany Industries joins other local companies and organizations such as Colonial Group, Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation, and Georgia Ports Authority, as well as iconic Georgia companies across the state such as The Coca-Cola Company, Delta Air Lines, and Chick-fil-A, as part of this Initiative. In this program, companies work with GHS to develop a historical marker that tells the story of that company's contribution to the development of our state and nation while maintaining the high standards of historical accuracy in the Georgia Historical Marker program."

There are markers along East Bay Street that are appropriately spaced to avoid overcrowding. However, the provided aerial photos do not indicate the exact spot that the marker will be installed. Provide Staff with an exact location of the proposed marker.

Staff recommends that the applicant confirm with the City's GreenScapes Department that the marker will not damage or disturb significant tree roots. Staff recommends that the applicant provide confirmation from the appropriate City Departments that the below ground utilities will not require removal or alteration. The proposed site is large enough to accommodate the marker. The proposed site is not utilized for special events. The proposed site is the grassy area off East Bay Street – a significant distance from the street. The proposed site is next to a public sidewalk which is accessible to pedestrian and the physically challenged. The bench is adjacent to an existing sidewalk and is easily accessible. The marker is proposed within a City-owned area with low growing plants which are typically easy to maintain. The marker will enhance an empty portion of the area on East Bay Street.

The installation standard is met.

As per the applicant:

"The historical marker will be located in the green space between Bay Street and Factor's Walk near the Gamble Building. This location is near the former office of Southern States co-owner, A.D. Strobhar, and across the river from where Southern States and several other fertilizer companies were located. The visibility offered at this location will allow for attention to be drawn to the river as a port of industry and the illustrate the growth of Savannah in global commerce. GHS will work with City of Savannah Park Manager Brent Boyd to finalize the exact location." The site in relation to theme standard is met.

As per the applicant:

"This location is near the former office of Southern States co-owner, A.D. Strobhar, and across the river from where Southern States and several other fertilizer companies were located. The visibility offered at this location will allow for attention to be drawn to the river as a port of industry and the illustrate the growth of Savannah in global commerce."

The marker meets all design requirements.

As per the applicant:

The estimated overall cost for a historical marker within the Georgia Historical Marker Program is \$5,000.00. The Georgia Historical Society has secured funds of \$5,000.00 for the total cost of the historical marker. The applicant has accepted and taken on the role of all future maintenance of the marker, relinquishing the requirement of supplying an escrow

payment to the City of Savannah.

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 in opposition were received from the public.](#)

PETITIONER'S COMMENTS:

Ms. Elyse Butler, GHS, availed herself to questions. The second marker is for City Hall.

Mr. Monroe asked why are business industries are doing the majority of the markers on Bay St. **Ms. Butler** stated there are many coming in the future in other areas, such as Tybee. The goal is to bring attention the port, highlighting the area is a working area. **Mr. Monroe** stated many untold stories are not being told. The business history initiative marker program, which shaped the financial history of the area, is different than local history marker program.

Ms. Baker asked why is it placed in front of the Gamble building. **Ms. Butler** responded the original marker is across the river. It ties into the area as the offices were located on Factor's Walk.

Mr. Mannion highlighted the historical timeline: 1867 discovery of fertilizer, the emancipation of slavery in 1865. **Ms. Butler** stated historical maker language does not have to be chronological. However, she offered an amended version to include 1865. This area is underrepresented in the historical marker program.

Ms. Kostilnik asked why was 'enslaved laborers' used. **Ms. Butler** stated that is the choice of the State, based on community preference and continuity.

Ms. Rainge asked what is the intended takeaway for tourists. **Ms. Butler** stated the how the port shaped various industries, as well as a tourist destination.

Ms. Watson asked why was only one fertilizer company being addressed. **Ms. Butler** stated Delany approached them, as it is directly tied to their history, and there is no room to list all companies. **Ms. Watson** stated it sounds like an advertisement; **Ms. Butler** stated there is always 'erected by' language.

Mr. Monroe suggested additional wordsmithing. **Ms. Butler** stated the guidelines states the developer should be identified.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no public comments.

BOARD COMMENTS:

The Board commended the effort of the petitioner, however, there were concerns with the verbiage. The Board requested a rewrite to be presented at a future meeting.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Historic Site and Monument Commission recommend approval to the Savannah City Council to install a Georgia Historical Society Historical Marker near 1 East Bay Street, with the following conditions to be submitted to staff for final review, before the item can be docketed on a City Council agenda, otherwise because the proposed work meets the Master Plan and Guidelines:

1. **Provide Staff with an exact location of the proposed marker.**

- 2. **Confirm with the City’s Greenscapes Department that the marker will not damage or disturb significant tree roots.**
- 3. **Confirm with the appropriate City Departments that the below ground utilities will not require removal or alteration.**

Motion

Continued to the July 7th the Historic Site and Monument Commission meeting, to allow the Petitioner to address the following condition:

- 1. Amend the language on the Georgia Historical Society Historical Marker.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Sean Mannion

Second: Catherine D. Kostilnik, PhD

Kristopher Monroe	- Abstain
Sean Mannion	- Aye
Lisa D. Watson	- Aye
Eileen Baker	- Aye
Ashley Rainge	- Aye
Catherine D. Kostilnik, PhD	- Aye

IV. Other Business

[4. Commissioners Review of Mural Policy](#)

Mr. Monroe is satisfied with current policy.

Ms. Baker stated it states no funding comes from the City - not true. It comes under Budget.

Mr. Mannion stated the issue is the revolving art work from the original mural approval. The question is does that need to return before the Board for approval. **Ms. Watson** stated it states each project should be approved even if it is at the same location. **Ms. Kostilnik** stated changes should be brought before the Board. **Ms. Watson** stated there are many murals that have not come before the Board, but we are not enforcers.

Ms. Rainge stated swapping out historical persons, as long as it follows the guidelines, it is not an issue for her. However, there needs to be verbiage set forth regarding materials.

Mr. Mannion asked how is it handled. There are some nailed to a wall. New projects need to be approved, and whitewashed walls and new murals are not acceptable.

Ms. Baker asked if Code Enforcement could be more involved. The definition of 'Graffiti' was provided.

Mr. Mannion stated this issue is not because of a particular artist. The question is what are the ramifications when the process is not followed comes before the Board.

Motion

Amend Chapter 16, page 18, Mural Policy include an enforcement policy for Code Enforcement for mural changes without approval.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Sean Mannion

Second: Ashley Rainge

Kristopher Monroe - Abstain

Sean Mannion - Aye

Lisa D. Watson - Aye

Eileen Baker - Aye

Ashley Rainge - Aye

Catherine D. Kostilnik, PhD - Aye

5. Vice-Chair Nomination - Ashley Rainge

Mr. Monroe introduced new Board member., **Ms. Catherine Kostilnik.**

Ms. Rainge accepted nomination as Vice Chair.

Motion

Nominate Ms. Ashley Rainge as Vice Chair.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Sean Mannion

Second: Eileen Baker

Kristopher Monroe - Abstain

Sean Mannion - Aye

Lisa D. Watson - Aye

Eileen Baker - Aye

Ashley Rainge - Abstain

Catherine D. Kostilnik, PhD - Aye

6. Westside Mural ribbon cutting-photos

[photo - 1.jpg](#)

[photo - 2.jpg](#)

[photo - 3.jpg](#)

[photo - 4.jpg](#)

[photo - 5.jpg](#)

Pictures were shared that were taken by Ms. Baker from the event.

[7. Liberty Marker photos](#)

📎 [Unveiling photos of the marker.pdf](#)

Photos shared that were taken by Mr. Monroe and Ms. Michalak from the event.

V. Adjournment

[8. Next Meeting: May 5, 2022 at 4pm - 112 East State Street: Mendonsa Hearing Room](#)

[9. Adjourn](#)

There being no further business to present before the Commission, the April 7, 2022 Historic Site and Monument adjourned at 5:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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.