



C H A T H A M C O U N T Y
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room
April 2, 2014 - 2:00 P.M.
Meeting Minutes

April 2, 2014 CCHPC Regular Meeting

I. Call to Order and Welcome

1. [Welcome](#)

Ms. White called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. and welcomed everyone in attendance. She thanked Mr. Pete Nichols for filming today's proceedings which will be aired on Chatham County's Government Channel 16.

II. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

2. [April 4, 2013 Meeting Minutes](#)

Attachment: [April 4, 2013 Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)

Ms. White explained that they did not have a meeting in July 2013. In October 2013, they had a field trip and they did not have a meeting in January, 2014.

Board Action:

Approve the Meeting Minutes of April 4, 2013. - PASS

Vote Results

Motion: George Cohen

Second: Pamela Lossing

George Cohen - Aye

Jane A. Feiler - Aye

Vaughnette Goode-Walker - Aye

Pamela Lossing - Aye

Dr. E. G. Daves Rossell - Aye

Lisa L. White - Aye

III. Posting

IV. Consent Agenda

V. Regular Agenda

3. [Photographs from the Pin Point Heritage Center Tour- Vaughnette Goode-Walker](#)

Ms. Vaughnette Goode-Walker reported that on October 13, 2013, the CCPHC had a very enlightening tour of the Pin Point Heritage Center. As every knows, they approved the Pin Point Heritage Center's historic designation. They also saw the plans of this great museum before it was actually developed.

Ms. Goode-Walker showed the photographs from the Pin Point Heritage Center tour. In attendance were: Ms. Lisa White, Mr. George Cohen, Ms. Ellen Harris, Ms. Pam Lossing, Ms. Vaughnette Goode-Walker and Ms. Gail Smith (Tour Guide).

Ms. Goode-Walker stated that for the last two years, she has been employed with the King-Tisdell Cottage. The cottage will be reopening soon. In November 2014, they will welcome the National Trust to Savannah and more than 2,500 preservationists. Ms. Walker said as they did their proposal write-ups, she was inspired by the work that the CCHPC did with Pin Point. She has submitted the Pin Point site as one of the locations for possible field study when the preservationists visit in November. She is hopeful that they will hear favorably from the National Trust.

Ms. White thanked Ms. Goode-Walker for photographing the tour for the CCHPC. It was very enjoyable.

4. [A History of Savannah at the Cutting Edge- Dr. Robin Williams](#)

Attachment: [Williams_AWellPavedCity.pdf](#)

Ms. White said it was with great pleasure today to have Dr. Robin Williams make a presentation to the CCHPC. Dr. Williams is chair of the Architectural History Department at Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) and he is also a Board member of the Historic District Board of Review.

Ms. White said that today Dr. Williams will share some of his research with the CCHPC. The title of Dr. Williams presentation is "A History of Savannah at the Cutting Edge."

Dr. Williams came forward and thanked the CCHPC for inviting him to share this topic with them. He said this started as a presentation for the Historic Savannah Foundation four years ago. It is a topic that has actually been in his sights for many years. He is originally from Canada and grew up with perceptions of the south; even through graduate school in Philadelphia, there were ways that the south was presented. Savannah conformed to the broader image of a south that was traditional and slow, perhaps resistant to change and conservative. He said in fact Savannah's tourism culture reinforces this stereo-type of Savannah's traditional environment. Dr. Williams said, however, this is not to diminish or take away from the wonderful quality of the historic environment that Savannah has.

Dr. Williams said he believes that people perceive that the old buildings, squares, streets, and monuments of Savannah are somehow a product of the something that is very "old fashion." In fact his research over the years has speculated that maybe Forest Gump is not

perhaps the best ambassador of the city; but perhaps something that is true to the city's character actually might be Gulfstream jets.

Dr. Williams's presentation addressed Savannah's public squares and how the public squares are defined; Savannah's monument to Tomochichi; Savannah's tree plan; Forsyth Park fountain; construction of small and large buildings and many other interesting facets that were apart of Savannah at the cutting edge.

Ms. Goode-Walker said that Dr. Williams made an excellent presentation. She asked him what is the total number of the buildings that SCAD has repurposed?

Dr. Williams answered that he believes SCAD has repurposed 80 buildings. However, this maybe the total number of buildings in Savannah, but SCAD has been opening up many new buildings.

Ms. Goode-Walker asked Dr. Williams what are his thoughts on the many new buildings such as the hotels and how do these buildings fit into the plan.

Dr. Williams pointed out that he believes the Jepson Center is a good example. This a building that is comfortably modern, yet is respectful of its environment based on the way the architect was forced to bridge over the lane and respect Savannah's plan. In fact, he believes this enforced the architect to create one of the most ingenious aspects of the building. When you are experiencing the building, it feels like one building, but it is actually two buildings. He explained that as a member of the Historic District Board of Review, they get many plans of buildings that are trying to look old. Dr. Williams said he believes that these buildings have their place, but some of the members of the Review Board have an appetite that wants some modern buildings that are, nonetheless, compatible. He believes there is greater respect for buildings that are not just brick and stone. He believes the key is the scale, massing, and quality materials.

Mr. Cohen asked Dr. Williams what are his feelings in the direction that the two bookends are going to create on River Street. How does he see this as fitting in the Historic District? Mr. Cohen said he realizes that the petitioners have been through a lot of designations at MPC. He realizes that the developers are entitled to the highest and best use, but they don't want to lose the charm that has been pointed out in Dr. Williams's presentation.

Dr. Williams said he believes that the waterfront is being remarkably well preserved as a landscape. It is not only unique in Savannah, it is north of the Oglethorpe Planned Area, it is the only true organic aspect. He explained that in urban planning terms when streets follow topography and wind this way and that way and are altered by hills and rivers, etc., they call it a medieval city. Boston is a great example. Within Savannah, there are two places where streets wind this way and that way. The gentle curving art of River Street and even the buildings, themselves, are following and paralleling the river. This is a precious area and justifiably, it has to be protected very carefully. The Bohemian Hotel is a successful insertion. Dr. Williams stated that with having something that anchors both ends, he believes a large hotel on the east end is good as the SEPCO building was saved and the Review Board worked very closely with the petitioner to inspire this. This project was reviewed by the Review Board many times. Although, this project is very big, he believes it will be a sensitive insertion. The only parts that are going to be west of the line of East

Broad Street are a part from the SEPCO building and two very low buildings on the north side of River Street.

Ms. White thanked Dr. Williams for a great presentation.

VI. Request for Extensions

VII. Staff Reviews

VIII. Other Business

IX. Notices, Proclamations and Acknowledgements

5. [Next Meeting- Wednesday July 2, 2014 at 2:00](#)

X. Adjournment

6. [Adjourned.](#)

There being no further business to come before the CCHPC, Ms. White adjourned the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ellen Harris
Director of Urban Planning and Historic Preservation

EIH:mem

The Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission provides meeting summary minutes which are adopted by the respective Board. Verbatim transcripts of minutes are the responsibility of the interested party.