



Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site & Monument Commission

Virtual Meeting
January 7, 2021 1:00 PM
MINUTES

January 7, 2021 Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission Meeting

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

I. Call to Order and Welcome

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

[1. December 3, 2020 HSMC Meeting Minutes](#)

[📎 12.03.20 MEETING MINUTES.pdf](#)

Motion

Approve as presented.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Sean Mannion

Second: Lisa D. Watson

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Dr. Nicholas Henry - Abstain

Kristopher Monroe - Aye

Sean Mannion - Aye

Lisa D. Watson - Aye

III. Regular Agenda

[2. Petition of Sons of the Revolution - Georgia | 20-005729-HM | North Side of River Street at Morell Park |](#)

Historical Marker Relocation

- 📎 [Submittal Packet - December 2020 - 20-005729-HM.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Board Decision - December 2020 - 20-005729-HM Signed.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Staff Recommendation - Liberty Marker Relocation - 20-005729-HM.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Submittal Packet - 20-005729-COA.pdf](#)

Mr. Ryan Jarles, HSMC staff member, presented the petitioner's request for a recommendation of approval from the Historic Site and Monument Commission to The Savannah City Council for the relocation of the 'Liberty Marker' from its existing location on the south side of River Street at Morell Park, to the north side of River Street at Morell Park. The applicant is additionally seeking the installation of a pedestal for the marker to be more easily displayed for viewing as well as a granite bench and a flagpole. The bench is proposed to be inscribed with the following:

"To honor the Patriots who served on the 'Liberty' 1775 First Warship of the Georgia State Navy Commissioned by the Georgia Provincial Congress" and "Donated by the Sons of the Revolution Society of Georgia 2020".

On December 3, 2020, The Board made the decision to continue the petition for the relocation of the 'Liberty Marker' from its existing location on the south side of River Street at Morell Park, to the north side of River Street at Morell Park, to the January 7, 2020, Historic Site and Monument Commission Regular Meeting. This decision was based on the Board Discussion about the importance of the new location, since the petitioner was unable to come to a precise location for the marker and a final design for the bench, that they would prefer that the item be continued to the next meeting to allow for the petitioner to provide their final location and design.

The theme of the new Monument includes three of the categories listed by the HSMC: Military History; Maritime History; and Colonial History. The significance of the proposed Monument in all three categories is illustrated by the full text of the existing Marker. The bench and marker are proposed to be located on the River Walk side of the park and will be situated facing each other at an angle with a flagpole acting as the center object. The proposed location for the relocation of the marker and addition of the granite bench poses a situation in which there may be a feeling of overcrowding of objects. The field for which the marker is proposed to be relocated is home to The Waving Girl Monument, The 1996 Olympic Yachting Cauldron, as well as another flagpole.

Although there is a potential for overcrowding, Staff determined that the marker would be sited far enough away from these objects to allow for proper viewing. The proposed addition of the flagpole may cause overcrowding, due to the existing flagpole within the same park and within a visually close distance. Staff determined that the flagpole may need to be omitted from the petition for the site to remain appropriately spaced. It is unknown at this time as to whether existing tree roots could potentially be damaged by the installation of the marker and bench at their proposed location. The information on whether existing utilities would be affected by the relocation of the marker was not included; this information is unknown. This site may be considered designated green space; this information is unknown to Staff; however, large green space could accommodate the historical marker. The applicant has not proposed the use of the site for special events. The site is not prone to frequent automobile accidents. The marker is not required to be easily accessible to pedestrians and the physically challenged; however, the marker and bench are proposed to be within a close distance to the existing sidewalk. The site, within the rendering, shows some form of concrete pad that the marker and bench are to be installed upon. Information

as to whether this concrete pad is to be installed was not included; if the concrete pad is to be installed, the site will be more accessible. Staff recommends the installation of the concrete pad shown within the provided rendering.

The site is accessible by an existing sidewalk and is proposed within an existing maintained park area. The relocation of the marker, as well as the installation of the granite bench, will enhance the empty section of sidewalk bordering the west boundary of Morell Park. The site is home to multiple other objects; however, the relocation of the marker, as well as the installation of the granite bench, will enhance the empty section of sidewalk bordering the west boundary of Morell Park. The site is not proposed to be utilized for memorial services. The relocation of the marker to its proposed location on the north side of River Street places the marker closer to the Savannah River, which is the location for which the 'Liberty' ship would have sailed. The marker itself is a pre-existing marker and meets the above requirements. The decorative pedestal enhances the design of the marker and allows for the marker to be more easily viewed. The granite viewing bench enhances the marker and allows for a location of rest and relaxation on an end of River Street that does not include a lot of resting areas. The applicant has approved a Budget Expenditure for this project of \$2,000, which is believed to be sufficient. However, additional funds will be made available to fully cover the costs once a final design is approved, if necessary. The applicant did not provide information on an escrow payment to cover the future maintenance of the bench and pedestal; ensure that this information is provided prior to being heard by Savannah City Council.

Mr. Mannion asked if the flagpole would meet the Master Plan guidelines if it were on the other end of the park. **Mr. Jarles** stated it would then compete with the Olympic Torch. **Mr. Mannion** stated GreenScapes did go to the site with the petitioner; he was notified by the Director.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:

Mr. Lamar Davis, petitioner, stated the current plan shows the backdrops from various perspectives of reading or sitting on the bench. All was discussed with Mr. Denney so as to not clutter the park.

Mr. Mannion expressed the efforts of the petitioner to make a positive presentation and respect shown for the trees in Morell Park. He asked what type of flag is desired. **Mr. Lamar** stated possibly 3'x5' US and a 3'x5' American Liberty flag to not overwhelm, and at times, a Sons of the Revolution flag, and a Georgia flag on Georgia Day. The proposed marker patio was our decision for bench stabilization. **Mr. Monroe** asked if the plaque would be cleaned. **Mr. Lamar** replied yes, that has been discussed as part of the relocation and installation process. He asked if the proposal can be submitted with the flagpole included. They Board responded yes.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no public comment.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Mr. Monroe stated he supports the current design and sees the sense of the additional flagpole. **Ms. Watson** stated she is excited about the project.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Historic Site and Monument Commission hereby recommend approval to the Savannah City Council for the relocation of the 'Liberty Marker' from its existing location on the south side of River Street at Morell Park, to

the north side of River Street at Morell Park, with the following conditions, because otherwise the petition meets the guidelines set forth within the HSMC Masterplan and Guidelines.

- 1. Ensure that the information for the escrow payment for the bench and pedestal are provided along with the submittal to the future designated Savannah City Council meeting.**
- 2. Omit the flagpole from the overall design.**
- 3. Ensure the installation of the concrete pad shown within the provided rendering.**

Motion

Staff recommends that the Historic Site and Monument Commission hereby recommend approval to the Savannah City Council for the relocation of the ‘Liberty Marker’ from its existing location on the south side of River Street at Morell Park, to the north side of River Street at Morell Park, with the following conditions, because otherwise the petition meets the guidelines set forth within the HSMC Masterplan and Guidelines.

1. Ensure that the information for the escrow payment for the bench and pedestal are provided along with the submittal to the future designated Savannah City Council meeting.
2. Approve the flagpole included in submission; provide the overall design after submitting the HSMC.
3. Ensure the installation of the concrete pad shown within the provided rendering.

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	- Aye

[3. Petition of Chatham Artillery | 20-005743-HM-COA | Emmet Park - East Bay Street | Installation of Tablet at Chatham Artillery Monument](#)

- 📎 [Staff Recommendation - Chatham Artillery - 20-005743.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Submittal Packet - Chatham Artillery App 20-005743.pdf](#)
- 📎 [AERIAL MAP 20-005743-HM.pdf](#)
- 📎 [Staff Research - Images.pdf](#)

Mr. Ryan Jarles, HSMC staff member, presented the petitioner's request for a recommendation of approval to the Savannah City Council to add a 30.5" x 56.5" granite ground slab to the existing Chatham Artillery Monument to commemorate and honor the service of the men and women assigned to the 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery Regiment, Savannah, Georgia Army National Guard for their service in Afghanistan, 2018-2019.

The tablet is to be laid on the east side of the Chatham Artillery Monument. The east side of the monument includes vegetation planted and upkept by the City of Savannah; this vegetation is proposed to be removed to install the tablet. There is a direct local focus. Although the commemorated events occurred less than fifty years ago and the commemorated persons have not been dead for over twenty-five years, the tablet is in keeping with the existing tablets commemorating recent military events and is of an appropriate theme for the existing monument.

The installation of the tablet will not cause overcrowding of the site. Existing vegetation is proposed to be removed; however, this vegetation was planted by the City of Savannah and seemingly does not include the removal of low tree limbs or significant tree roots. All other site requirements are met. The theme of the proposed tablet is adding to the theme of the existing monument and is appropriate. The proposed tablet meets the design requirements and is to match the design of the existing tablets which have been installed at the monument in the past. The funding and escrow payment information was not clearly established in the submittal and will need to be determined prior to a recommendation of approval to the Savannah City Council.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:

Mr. Benjamin Hill, petitioner, stated the names on the north side of the obelisk are of the past presidents of the Chatham Artillery; the plaques on the ground are of the deployments since September 11, 2001 that the 118th has gone on. They just went on a second rotation, which is why three sides are utilized. The fourth side will be of the next deployment. Some plants will have to be removed, some shaped up. The Chatham Artillery are not the planters of the plants. He stated the Chatham Artillery has been financially responsible for the plaques and monument.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments.

BOARD DISCUSSION:

The Board was in support and appreciation of the plaques and monument.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Historic Site and Monument Commission hereby recommend approval to the Savannah City Council for the addition of a 30.5" x 56.5" granite ground slab to the existing Chatham Artillery Monument to commemorate and honor the service of the men and women assigned to the 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery Regiment, Savannah, Georgia Army National Guard for their service in Afghanistan, 2018-2019, with the following conditions, because otherwise the petition meets the guidelines set forth within the HSMC Masterplan and Guidelines.

1. Ensure that the funding and escrow payment requirements are met.

Motion

The Historic Site and Monument Commission hereby recommend approval to the Savannah City Council for the addition of a 30.5"; x 56.5"; granite ground slab to the existing Chatham Artillery Monument to commemorate and honor the service of the men and women assigned to the 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery Regiment, Savannah, Georgia Army National Guard for their service in Afghanistan, 2018-2019, with the following conditions, because otherwise the petition meets the guidelines set forth within the HSMC Masterplan and Guidelines.

1. Ensure that the funding and escrow payment requirements are met.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Thomas Gensheimer

Second: Sean Mannion

Thomas Gensheimer - Aye

Dr. Nicholas Henry - Abstain

Kristopher Monroe - Aye

Sean Mannion - Aye

Lisa D. Watson - Aye

IV. Other Business

[4. Announce 2021 Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary Nominations.](#)

Presented by Thomas Geinsheimer of the Nominating Committee

Kristopher Monroe Chair

Thomas Geinshiemer Vice Chair

Lisa Watson Secretary

V. Adjournment

[5. Next Regular HSMC Meeting: February 4, 2021](#)

[6. Adjourn](#)

Mr. Mannion expressed his concern regarding the City providing funding support to an organization for a mural without going through the application process for murals. The Board agreed. **Ms. Michalak** stated an application for the existing murals was submitted the day of this meeting.

Mr. Henry expressed his appreciation of serving as Chair of the Board.

There being no further business to present before the Board, the January 7, 2021 Historic Site and Monument Commission was adjourned at 5:12 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.