



Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site & Monument Commission

Virtual Meeting
March 4, 2021 4:00 PM
MINUTES

March 4, 2021 Savannah - Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission Meeting

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

Staff Present: Leah Michalak, Director of Historic Preservation
Ryan Jarles, Historic Planner

I. Call to Order and Welcome

[1. Introduce New Commission Members](#)

Eileen Baker introduced herself as a Savannah resident for the past 35 years and employed by the City for 28. She stated she's always worked in the arts.

Ashley Rainge introduced herself as being in Savannah for approximately 5 years. She's worked with the non-profit sector, the Cultural Heritage Society and Museum Heritage Space. She stated she now works with Healthy Savannah.

Sean Mannion stated he's been in Savannah for about 15 years. This is his second year on the Board as an ex officio member.

Kristopher Monroe stated as the Chairman, he is also on the Cultural Affairs Commission.

Lisa D. Watson stated she is an artist and this is her second year on the Board, where she serves as Secretary.

Thomas Gensheimer stated he is a teacher and has been on the Board for 9 years.

[2. Review of Commission Role and Rules](#)

📎 [Masterplan Revised 01-24-13.pdf](#)

📎 [HSMC Bylaws - Revised November 7 2019.pdf](#)

📎 [NAPC Code of Ethics.pdf](#)

📎 [Roberts-Rules-of-Order - cheat sheet.pdf](#)

📎 [HSMC State law.pdf](#)

Mr. Jarles stated the Master Plan & Guidelines were last revised in 2013 and is currently in use. **Ms. Michalak** stated a map of the National Historic Register can be provided to the Board to clarify the jurisdiction of the HSMC. **Mr. Mannion** requested the Conservation Districts as well. There was discussion regarding eligible areas.

Mr. Monroe stated the HSMC has the authority to review all within the county: items on public property are recommendations to City Council. Private property is final decision of the Board. Email exchanges are subject to the Georgia Open Records law. This is discouraged unless decided that staff will send information. **Ms. Michalak** stated it is best to call staff with questions. **Mr. Jarles** stated the Mural policy is within the boundary of City of Savannah, public and private. The renaming ordinance is a recommendation to City Council.

Ms. Watson stated they facilitate for the community. The community will relay their desires to the Board. **Mr. Monroe** reiterated it is not their place to decide whether they like something or not. They are to determine if the desire is in harmony with the guidelines. **Mr. Mannion** stated to be careful of outside conversations: refer public to meeting dates and provide staff contact information. Use the Recusal form if there is a conflict of interest.

3. Discussion: Starland Fence Mural Project

📎 [memo to HSMC regarding construction fencing.pdf](#)

The Board voted to hear this item after the Regular Agenda was heard.

Mr. Jarles reminded the Board that the Starland Mural Project attaches temporary murals on construction fences. Staff has been unable to locate any precedent for this type of project. Staff contacted the prior Director of Preservation, Ellen Harris, for any information/knowledge possibly had on the matter. Ms. Harris stated there was discussion regarding the topic years ago; hotels wanted to do so with decorative banners during construction or renovations. It was determined it would not require review; however, it later evolved into murals. Since they did not meet the intent of permanent or semi-permanent, thus Ms. Harris determined no review needed as a mural. Staff reviewed the Master Plan and the definition of a mural.

Mr. Monroe stated he was incorrect in stating Mr. Edminster had previously come before the Board with such a request. Therefore, he can see Mr. Edminster's reasoning in thinking he did not have to present his temporary mural project before the HSMC. He apologized for his error.

Mr. Gensheimer stated it was still good to bring up, to define temporary murals attached by screws or hanging by canvas. And being certain it does not go into the realm of advertising. Giving someone the purview to do something without oversight is not appropriate, as there are varying degrees of offense to the public.

Ms. Watson stated there is a difference between a attaching canvas to a fence and something adhered to the side of a structure. That poses a dangerous threat because they have flown off of buildings.

Mr. Gensheimer stated its more about appropriateness of the art, even for impermanent artwork. It is part of our purview to make sure the content is publicly appropriate, so it should be viewed prior to installation.

Mr. Mannion stated he agrees with Mr. Gensheimer. He also agrees with Ms. Watson regarding safety of installation; the trees could be damaged. There have been attached murals that have literally been falling off of the structure. It is necessary the standards are met to preserve the beauty of the city and reflect the voices of the residents. All temporary murals should come before HSMC.

Mr. Monroe stated the Board should understand their purview: to make sure art viewable from the public right-of-way is in the confines of the standards.

Ms. Michalak stated the question is whether temporary murals attached to construction fences are appropriate to vote on in the future. Mr. Monroe agreed.

Mr. Mannion stated he believes it should come before the Board, as other cities don't have the historical standards for the city as Savannah does.

Motion

Approval from the HSMC for temporary art murals for construction sites on fences and walls and the like are appropriate.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Sean Mannion

Second: Thomas Gensheimer

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

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

[4. February 4, 2021 Historic Site & Monument Commission Meeting Minutes](#)

[📎 02.10.21 Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)

Motion

Approve February 4, 2021 HSMC Meeting Minutes as presented.

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

III. Regular Agenda

[5. Petition of Mariner Group | 21-000648-PA | 301 Passage Way \(Eastern Wharf\) | Mural](#)

- 🔗 [Staff Recommendation - 301 Passage Way 21-000648-PA.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Submittal Packet - Narrative.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Submittal Packet.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [AERIAL MAP 21-000648-PA.pdf](#)
- 🔗 [Petitioner Response to Conditions.pdf](#)

Mr. Ryan Jarles presented the applicant's request for approval for a large mural to be painted onto a new construction parking garage located on private property at 301 Passage Way (Eastern Wharf). The mural will be executed in a tone on tone manner, including a base coat of masonry primer painted on the entire façade of the parking deck to match the residential façade to the North. The mural will be painted in a slightly Darker Grey Blue acrylic top coat.

The theme of the mural should be respectful of the greater context of the community, including historic and socio-cultural contexts. The guideline is met. The mural is proposed as a historic scene of Savannah's riverfront. The applicant provided the following statement: "In the early 1800s, the area commonly known as the Eastern Wharves District was a thriving hub of industry. Home to businesses such as A.N. Millers Foundry, Hydraulic Cotton Press Company and the Bullock and Winton Steam Saw Mill., the area saw decades of prosperity that played a key role in the state's economic growth. The mural depicts the Savannah riverfront as it appeared in the 1800s, in homage to the historical roots of the site and the City. As the first building to complete on what is now Eastern Wharf Savannah, the team is confident the mural is appropriate to the location and building."

The mural complies with all Georgia Obscenity Laws. Location. The installation of a mural should complement and enhance the building and be incorporated architecturally into the façade. The location of the mural on the building should not cover or detract from significant or character-defining architectural features. The mural is proposed to cover the entirety of the west facing façade of the parking garage, integrating it into the architectural design. The garage is a new construction building and holds no character defining features that would be detracted from by the installation of a mural.

The mural will enhance the large new development on the Eastern wharf by representing Savannah's historic river front. The mural is located in a largely commercial area and is proposed to be painted in a color that is slightly darker than the concrete exterior of the parking garage; Staff does not find that the mural would cause any undue distraction to drivers.

The applicant provided one letter of support from a neighboring property. At the time of the writing of this Staff recommendation there have been no other letters of support or opposition provided to Staff. The mural is proposed to be located in an area that does not play host to any other murals/works of art and will not be located on any historic materials.

The scale of the mural, although large, is to be painted in a light blue color, which is to be slightly darker than the concrete exterior of the parking garage. The immense size of the parking garage will allow for a large-scale mural to be more appropriate and complement the structure. The neighborhood, which is predominantly large-scale new construction, will be enhanced by the mural depicting a historic scene of Savannah's river front. The mural is proposed to be based on a historic birds-eye view of Savannah's riverfront/port in the 1800s. Although this is not technically an original design, this is an original use for the design, and Staff finds it to be appropriate. Sponsor and artist names information was not proposed within the submittal. The mural is proposed to be a long-lasting and permanent fixture of the parking garage; however, the exact materials utilized were not provided to Staff. Once the final materials are determined provide the material specifications to Staff.

The applicant provided the following statement pertaining to their artist selection: "The team looked at multiple muralists within Savannah and around the Southeast, mostly in Atlanta and Nashville. After reaching out to several, the team settled on Eastside Murals out of Nashville, both for the scale and style of their capabilities visible in previous works." Additionally, recent works of art of a similar scale in the public arena were provided within the submittal. The timeframe is proposed to be 3-4 weeks beginning in the month of April 2021.

Although not provided within the submittal, Staff is under the impression that the mural is fully funded.

Mr. Mannion asked if the escrow of mural maintenance is included. **Mr. Jarles** stated since it is on private property, escrow is not required, however, maintenance is required. The budgeting information provided was for installation.

PETITIONER COMMENTS:

Mr. Jamie Germano, introduced himself. **Mr. Mannion** stated he thinks this project is a great idea. He asked if maintenance was considered in the \$70,000. budget. **Mr. Germano** stated he would have to check the timeline when it is projected to fade. He said it will be included with the building maintenance, as it is a permanent fixture. It will take approximately four to five weeks for a more accurate timeline.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There was no public comment.

BOARD DISCUSSION:

Mr. Mannion stated he thinks it is a good idea and would like to see more throughout the city.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval by the Historic Site and Monument Commission for the mural at 301 Passage Way, because the work meets the guidelines set forth in the HSMC Masterplan and Guidelines and the requested information was provided.

Motion

The Historic Site and Monument Commission approves the mural at 301 Passage Way because the work meets the guidelines set forth in the HSMC Masterplan and Guidelines.

Vote Results (Approved)

Motion: Sean Mannion

Second: Lisa D. Watson

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

IV. Other Business

[6. Masterplan and Guidelines - Update](#)

📎 [MasterPlan Update 2021 - Red Line - 03012021.pdf](#)

📎 [MasterPlan Update 2021 - Blue Line - 03042021.pdf](#)

Mr. Jarles stated the Masterplans and Guidelines have been updated: red-line items were removed and blue-line items were additions. Approximately 20 pages of lists and maps were removed; they still exist and are accessible. **Ms. Michalak** suggested the Board read the changes prior to sending to the City Council for approval. **Mr. Jarles** stated some additional definitions were added as well.

V. Adjournment

[7. Next Regular HSMC Meeting: April 1, 2021](#)

[8. Adjourn](#)

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.