



*Savannah's Only Waterfront Shopping,
Dining and Entertainment Destination*

Good Afternoon Council Members,

My name is Mark Halliday, I am the Property Manager for the River Street Market Landing Development, which includes the River Street Market Place, it's Vendors, Joe's Crab Shack, the Market Place Food Court, Parking, and Dockage on the East end of River Street. I also own two small businesses on the East end of River Street.

I stand before you as a representative of 30 small to medium businesses, their owners, employees, and families that all call the East end of River Street our home. Many of whom are here before you, and many that were not able to attend due to the short notice provided us of this meeting. I will attempt to make myself as succinct and short winded as possible but please bear with me as there are many things that need saying during this meeting.

I am going to provide several bullet style comments to support the argument that the Waving Girl Statue and monument should remain in it's current location and all efforts should be placed to ensure it remains thus.

Florence Martus has been an historical monument on the East end of River street for 47 years. While her original purpose was to greet sailors as they entered Savannah, she has grown to so much more. She has grown to be a tourist attraction that draws hundreds of thousands of tourists to Savannah and the east end of River Street. To move the statue will greatly reduce the tourist traffic directed to that area thus reducing tax paying revenues. Quite possibly resulting in the loss of businesses and jobs that already struggle against certain issues on River Street that I won't attempt to address at this venue, but do make doing business on the East end of River Street more difficult than other areas of the street and city.

The Waving Girl Statue is the only solid tourist attraction/monument on the East end of River Street to draw tourists. The West end of River Street already has popular monuments to include the WWII Memorial and the African American Monument. The Olympic cauldron is located near the Waving Girl Statue but does not provide any incentive for tourists to visit Morrell Park like the Waving Girl Monument.

The discussion of removal is based around visibility from the Savannah River, which is somewhat diminished by the placement of 2 Crepe Myrtle trees. I have several comments to bring this into perspective:

- The statue can still be seen from the River just fine as shown by the photographs that are actually provided from the river. The proposed site will not improve her visibility. In fact placing a bronze statue in front of brickwork will lessen her visibility from the river more than the trees. There will be little to no contrast between her and her background.
- The trees were planted, they can be removed. There is no need to spend money to move the statue. Simply remove the problem. Someone planted those trees fully aware that they would grow and partially obstruct visibility of the monument. Removal of the mistake is the logical course.
- Funding can be discussed if that is the opposition to removal of the poorly placed vegetation.
- Florence Martus greeted ships coming into Savannah. Moving her monument past downtown Savannah (River Street) is directly in conflict with her purpose. She should always be located before the city, as she was herself on Elba Island welcoming visitors from afar.
- Florence Martus greeted ships from her and her brother's rustic home with a grassy hill. The current grassy park provides the perfect setting to emulate that rustic feeling. Placing her in an industrial environment as proposed is also in direct conflict with history as it's told and takes away from her meaning.
- In 2014 Jack Novack was able to get 4 of the 8 trees removed to improve visibility. If visibility is such an issue, lets continue that and remove or move the remaining two or four trees.
- Three years ago trees in Morrell Park were blown down and destroyed by Hurricane Michael and subsequently removed. If the trees in Morrell Park are so important, why has no one stepped up and replanted them? The removal or replanting of the self inflicted visual obstacles is by far the best course of action for everyone involved.
- There is mention of the extension of the River Walk as being an obstruction as well. All you have to do is be on the river to know that is not a visual inhibitor to the monument as it's below the level of the monument itself. The ships being referred to can be over 100' tall and are in no way possible looking up at the monument so as to make the river walk an obstruction.

Tours and tourism will be negatively impacted by a move of the monument. Every tour company that lives in and/or visits Savannah drives by, and pauses at, the Waving Girl in its current location and she is a cornerstone in every tour company's tour. Visibility from the street is paramount in her popularity and by simple association Savannah's popularity. The proposed location does not provide any viable visibility from any street, the trolley and tourism companies and their customers, which are our city's tourists. Tourism is what drives downtown Savannah, and this proposal is in direct conflict with that goal. Tour company vehicles will not be able to withstand travel down the entire cobblestone length of River Street.

A monument that has been in place for almost a half a century (or any monument for that matter) should never be considered for movement or removal unless it poses a physical safety hazard. It would set a dangerous precedent for the future should it be allowed.

Tourism is what drives Savannah's downtown businesses. The movement of the Waving Girl monument to a location that is

- Only accessible by foot
- Not visible from the street
- Provides less than optimal visibility itself because of the industrial nature and non-contrasting setting it would be placed in
- Removes a tourist attracting draw from a whole half of River Street adversely effecting many businesses, their families, their employees and their employees' families
- Takes away from the monument's original purpose of greeting at the entrance to Savannah
- Takes away an attraction from all of the local and visiting tour companies

Is simply a bad proposal and should be scrapped in totality.

I am very thankful for your time and your help in making this matter right.