



**SAVANNAH-CHATHAM COUNTY HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT
COMMISSION
HISTORICAL MARKER DECISION**

PETITIONER: SONS OF THE REVOLUTION, Lamar Davis.
728 Wilmington Island Road
Savannah, Ga 31410

FILE No.: 20-005729-HM

LOCATION: EAST RIVER STREET/MORELL PARK

DATE: January 7, 2020.

NATURE OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting 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".

CONTEXT:

On December 3, 2020, The Board made the Decision to continue the petition 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, 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.

FINDINGS:

The following standards from the Historic Site and Monument Commission Guidelines for Markers, Monuments and Public Art apply:

Evaluating Themes for Markers and Monuments. New markers and monuments commemorate and honor people, places, and/or events.

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Proposed themes should fall into one or more of the following categories.

Military History. Includes people, places, or events.

Maritime History.

Colonial History.

The proposed theme should have documented significant, clear and direct local relevance to the history and development of Chatham County. The local focus should be the predominant theme of the monument.

The level of significance should be high enough to warrant a public presence.

The person, place or event commemorated should not have been sufficiently commemorated elsewhere in the County. The theme should be distinct and original, and not be duplicated in other existing markers or monuments.

The theme should reflect a larger connection to the community as a whole, and not only to one distinct group.

There should be significant documented evidence (written or oral) of the commemorated event, person, or place.

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. In short, after the events at Lexington and Concord, the Georgia Provincial Congress, working in concert with Patriots in South Carolina, learned of the imminent arrival of a ship from Great Britain containing armaments intended for delivery to the British Army. The Georgia Patriots quickly repurposed and commissioned a commercial vessel, outfitted her with 10 cannon and named her the "Liberty". In coordination with the South Carolinians, the Liberty seized the British vessel Philippa, confiscated her cargo (including six and one half tons of gunpowder), over half of which was sent to Boston colonial Patriots, commanded by George Washington.

Evaluating Sites for Markers, Monuments, or Public Art. Certain factors should be taken into consideration when evaluating whether a site is the appropriate location for a marker, monument or public art [hereto referred to as "object" to indicate the inclusion of all three types]. These factors include:

The installation of an object should not cause overcrowding of the site, if there are existing objects. Objects should be sited far enough away from other objects as to allow the visitor proper appreciation of each individually.

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 being 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 the 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

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need to be omitted from the petition for the site to remain appropriately spaced. However, the Board determined that the flagpole proposed within the new design is appropriate and would not cause overcrowding of objects on the site.

The proposed object should not damage or disturb existing established vegetation on the site including low tree limbs, or significant tree roots.

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 proposed object should not require the removal or alteration of existing above or below ground utilities.

The proposed site should be large enough to accommodate an object, and should not encroach on other existing object sites, buildings, or designated green space.

The information on whether existing utilities would be affected by the relocation of the marker or not was not included; this information is unknown. This site may be considered designated green space; this information is unknown to Staff; however, the large green space could accommodate the historical marker.

The proposed site should not be utilized for special events (such as sports, festivals, ceremonies, etc) on a regular basis which an object would disrupt.

The proposed site should not be prone to frequent automobile accidents which could damage the proposed object.

The proposed site should be easily accessible to pedestrians and the physically challenged (excluding marker sites).

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 rendering, show 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 proposed site should be visible and accessible from a public right of way.

The proposed site should be easy to maintain.

The site is accessible by an existing sidewalk and is proposed within an existing maintained park area.

The installation of the object should enhance the space and character of the surrounding neighborhood.

The installation of the object should not significantly affect automobile traffic sight lines.

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.

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The installation of the object should enhance the design of the overall site.

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 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. However, the Board determined that the flagpole proposed within the new design is appropriate and would not cause overcrowding of objects on the site.

If periodic memorial services are likely, the site should be able to accommodate them without causing undue disruption to the neighborhood, plantings, etc.

The site is not proposed to be utilized for memorial services.

Site in Relation to Theme for Markers or Monuments. *The relationship between site and theme for a marker or monument is critical in determining the appropriate site for a particular theme.*

Marker. *A marker should be erected in as close proximity to the site to which it is related as possible and be clearly visible from a public right-of-way.*

Markers commemorating an event should be sited within 100 feet of the event site or adjacent to the nearest public right-of-way.

Markers commemorating a person should be sited where that person was born, lived, died, or performed some act of enduring significance or adjacent to the nearest public right-of-way.

A marker commemorating a place, such as a significant piece of architecture, should be located within 100 feet of the place or adjacent to the nearest public right-of-way.

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.

Design. *The design of a marker, monument, or public work of art should be of the highest quality and caliber, and enhance public space. In order to promote the high standards the City of Savannah has historically enjoyed in its markers, monuments, and public art, the following guidelines should be observed.*

Markers. *Markers may be mounted on a freestanding pole, wall-mounted, or embedded in the ground. As the primary purpose is to inform the public about an event, place or person, the aesthetic significance of a marker is generally minimal.*

Markers not erected through the GHS's marker program shall not bear the GHS or state seal.

Except the marker title, the marker text should be not more than 1" in height, and not less than 1/2".

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Marker text should be created in a manner that, to the extent possible, prevents fading and erosion.

Markers should be made of an enduring, non-corroding material.

Markers should be considered permanent and designed accordingly. Temporary markers may be considered provided they serve an educational function, are made of a material designed to last for the proposed life of the marker, and a plan for removal or replacement of the marker at the end of the temporary period is submitted.

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.

Funding.

Budget. *The Mayor and Aldermen do not fund new markers, monuments, or works of art. The applicant is fully responsible for funding the design, construction, installation, and any necessary landscaping, paving, or lighting involved with a new marker, monument, or work of art.*

The applicant must provide a realistic budget in Part II Final Design and Funding. The budget should be based on cost estimates provided by the manufacturer, artist, installer and/or contractor, as appropriate. The budget should include funding goals and deadlines. Should funding goals and deadlines fail to be met, the HSMC may, at its sole discretion, reconsider the application. The applicant must be capable of raising the necessary funding. Construction of the monument or installation of the work of art will not begin until all of the funding has been secured.

Escrow Payment. *All markers, monuments and public art erected on public property become the property of the Mayor and Aldermen. The Mayor and Aldermen assume responsibility for the future maintenance and upkeep of the marker, monument or artwork. Therefore, an initial Escrow Payment is required of the applicant subsequent to approval of the application. The Mayor and Aldermen, or their designee, will determine the appropriate Escrow Payment and will notify the applicant. The Escrow Payment must be paid prior to construction/installation of the monument or public art. Any marker, monument or artwork erected on private property is the responsibility of the property owner.*

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 the future designated Savannah City Council.

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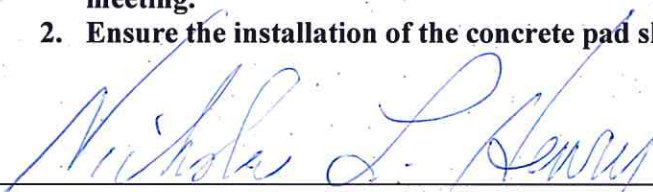
BOARD DISCUSSION:

After further discussion, the Board determined that the flagpole proposed within the new design is appropriate and would not cause overcrowding of objects on the site. The Board also indicated their interest in ensuring that the marker receive cleaning to allow for the marker to become more easily readable.

BOARD DECISION:


The Historic Site and Monument Commission does 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. Ensure the installation of the concrete pad shown within the provided rendering.


 _____ 1-7-2021
Dr. Nicholas Henry, Chairman Date
Historic Site and Monument Commission

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Melanie Wilson, Executive Director Date
Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

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Leah G. Michalak, Director of Historic Preservation Date
Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission

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