



HISTORIC SITE AND MONUMENT COMMISSION (HSMC)

Application for Historical Markers, Monuments, and Public Art **2024**

HSMC reviews all historical markers, monuments, and public art on public property; markers, monuments, and public art visible from the public right-of-way on private property within all local historic districts; murals visible from the public right-of-way.

Applications that do not provide documentation or required materials will be noted as incomplete and may result in delays in the Commission or Staff's review of the application and/or denial of the request. Revisions made to the applications after the submittal deadline

and prior to the Commission hearing may be continued to the following month's hearing. The Commission reserves the right to require additional information if it believes that the submission of such information is necessary to understand the nature of the intended activity.

Submissions will only be accepted when emailed to historic@thempc.org. Ensure the file size does not exceed 10 MB.

For questions, email preservationquestions@thempc.org or call 912-651-1440.

Do not email questions to historic@thempc.org. If email is not available, contact the office for alternate arrangements.

File No.: _____ (staff only)

Applicant Contact Information:

Name: Mayor Van Johnson
Address: 2 East Bay Street
City: Savannah State Georgia Zip 314051
Phone: 912-651-6401 E-Mail Address mayorjohnson@savannahga.gov

Property Owner Contact Information and Consent (Complete only if the marker will be on private property):

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone: _____ E-Mail Address _____

Official Correspondence: Applicant Owner Other _____ (Check all that apply)

Property Information: (PIN information can be found at www.sagis.org)

Public Property Private Property PIN (Property Identification Number): _____
Address: 201 Montgomery St, Savannah, GA 31401

Scope of Work: (Check all that apply.)

HISTORICAL MARKER:	MONUMENT:
<input type="checkbox"/> Freestanding	<input type="checkbox"/> Person
<input type="checkbox"/> Wall-Mounted	<input type="checkbox"/> Place
<input type="checkbox"/> Ground-Embedded	<input type="checkbox"/> Event
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:
PUBLIC ART / MURAL (Commissioned or Existing Work):	NAMING AND RENAMING:
<input type="checkbox"/> Mural	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Property
<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Facilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Streets

Project Description: Describe the proposed project and scope of work in detail. Additional pages may be attached. Submit all supplemental documentation as required in the separate "Instructions: Submittal Criteria Checklist."

Public facility naming- "Dr. Otis S. Johnson Cultural Arts Center" → *Arts Center*

Contact staff to schedule a pre-meeting: preservationquestions@thempc.org or call 912-651-1440.

Pre-meetings must be held a minimum of ONE WEEK before a deadline.

2024 Savannah-Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission Meeting Schedule:

Application Deadline, by 3:00 P.M.	Meeting Date	4:00 P.M.
<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday, December 7, 2023	Thursday, January 4, 2024	
<input type="checkbox"/> January 4	February 1	
<input type="checkbox"/> February 1	March 7	
<input type="checkbox"/> March 7	April 4	
<input type="checkbox"/> April 4	May 2	
<input type="checkbox"/> May 2	June 6	
<input type="checkbox"/> June 6	July 1 MON	
<input type="checkbox"/> July 3 WED	August 1	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> August 1	September 5	
<input type="checkbox"/> September 5	October 3	
<input type="checkbox"/> October 3	November 7	
<input type="checkbox"/> November 7 (December 5)	December 5	(January 9, 2025)

Estimated Cost of the Proposed Work: \$ 500

Filing Fee Schedule:

No filing fee is required for HSMC review.

Public Notice for Historic Site and Monument Commission Meetings:

The applicant is responsible for posting the Board Meeting signs provided by the MPC fifteen (15) days prior to the HSMC Meeting. Refer to *Chapter 9 of the Markers, Monuments, and Public Art Master Plan and Guidelines for the City of Savannah* for additional posting requirements.

Signature of Legal Owner or Authorized Agent:

I have read and understand all the information enclosed in this application form. I understand that an Escrow Payment is required for any historical marker erected on public property. I hereby certify that I am the legal owner or authorized agent for the legal owner of the subject property.

Signature: *[Handwritten Signature]*

Date: *August 1, 2024*

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A complete application submission consists of:

1. Complete, signed application
2. Complete, signed checklist(s) for each request
3. Checklist documentation
4. Payment receipt

Applications that do not provide documentation or required materials will be noted as incomplete and may result in delays in the Commission or Staff's review of the application and/or denial of the request.



Office of the Mayor Savannah, Georgia

Van R. Johnson, II

Mayor

May 6, 2024

Joseph 'Jay' Melder
City of Savannah Manager
2 East Bay Street
Savannah, Georgia 31401

Dear Mr. Melder:

By City Code Section 1103 and all of Article E. – Naming and Renaming Property, Facilities and Streets, 2nd District Alderman Detric Leggett and I propose renaming the Savannah Cultural Arts Center to the Dr. Otis S. Johnson Center, a name that would honor the legacy of Savannah's 64th Mayor and his profound impact on our city.

Mayor Otis Johnson is a Savannah native who graduated from A.E. Beach High School in 1960, Armstrong Junior College in 1964, and the University of Georgia (A.B.) in 1967. Mayor Johnson's impact on the lives of Savannahians, the fabric of our neighborhoods, and his leadership in challenging how we think about and solve problems together is extraordinary and generational.

The Savannah Cultural Arts Center, located at 201 Montgomery Street, is bordered by Martin Luther King Boulevard and Oglethorpe Avenue. This public facility invites and promotes all Savannahians to express themselves freely and openly through artistic expression. This facility's mission mirrors Mayor Johnson's achievements in fostering collaboration and open expression of ideas.

For a more comprehensive understanding of the rationale behind this proposal, I invite you to review the attached exhibit. It outlines Mayor Johnson's significant contributions, which form the basis of this naming request. The exhibit also briefly discusses the history of the Savannah Cultural Arts Center and Alderman Leggett's endorsement, further supporting our case.

Please consider this letter my official endorsement and request to begin the renaming process as required by Article E. Savannah Code of Ordinances.

Sincerely,


Van R. Johnson II
Mayor

Otis Samuel Johnson, Ph.D.

Short Bio

Otis Samuel Johnson is a native of Savannah, Georgia and a 1960 graduate of the Alfred Ely Beach High School. He served two years on active duty in the U.S Navy Reserve (1960-1962). His academic career started at Savannah State University in 1962. In 1963, he transferred to Armstrong State College (Now Georgia Southern University) becoming the first African American to attend that institution. He earned degrees from Armstrong State College (A.A. 1964), University of Georgia A.B. 1967), Clark Atlanta University (M.S.W. 1969) and Brandeis University (Ph.D. 1980).

Dr. Johnson is currently serving as the Chair of the Racial Equity and Leadership (REAL) Task Force appointed by City of Savannah, Georgia Mayor Van R. Johnson, II. The 45-member task force was created in 2020 to study and make recommendations to reduce or eliminate the racial disparities in Savannah Georgia. Dr. Johnson was a Scholar in Residence at Savannah State University from February 2012 to May 2018 after serving eight years as the 64th Mayor of the city of Savannah, Georgia. He was elected to the position of Mayor in 2003 and reelected in 2007. He ended his second term on December 31, 2011. Dr. Johnson was prohibited from running for a third four-year term because of a term limit law. While mayor, Dr. Johnson provided leadership for the creation of Step-Up Savannah, Inc. (2006), a poverty reduction initiative, and Healthy Savannah (2007), an initiative that promotes healthy lifestyles. He is the founder of the Neighborhood Improvement Association (NIA) (1970), a community development corporation.

Dr. Johnson has devoted his professional career to making conditions better for low-wealth families in Savannah and the South. He worked for the Economic Opportunity Authority and the Model Cities Program before he began teaching at Savannah State University in 1971. He organized the undergraduate program in social work at Savannah State University. Dr. Johnson was elected to the Savannah City Council in 1982 and reelected in 1986. He resigned from the City Council and a tenured faculty position at Savannah State University in 1988 to become Executive Director of the Annie E. Casey Foundation supported Chatham Savannah Youth Futures Authority. The Youth Futures Authority was a collaborative of organizations that worked with children and families that needed help. Dr. Johnson returned to Savannah State University in 1998 as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and was elected, without opposition, to a four-year term on the Savannah Chatham County Board of Public Education. Dr. Johnson retired from Savannah State University in 2002 and did not run for reelection to the Board of Education in order to prepare for his campaign for mayor. He returned to Savannah State University in 2012 as a Scholar-in-Residence and held that position until 2018.

Dr. Johnson was a founding member of the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives in 1992 and the National Community Building Network in 1993. He was a member of the founding board of directors of the Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power & Potential (G-CAPP) in 1995. He founded the Neighborhood Improvement Association (NIA), a local community development corporation, in Savannah in 1996. He has served on numerous state and national advisory and study groups on school and social service reform, community building, and youth development.

Dr. Johnson was a member of the National League of Cities Council on Youth, Education and Families during his eight years as mayor and chaired the Council in 2009. He served on the boards of the Georgia Municipal Association, MDC, Inc. in Durham, NC, the Harris Neck Land Trust in McIntosh County, GA, Step Up Savannah, Inc., Healthy Savannah, and George Liele Visions in Savannah. He served on the boards of the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, and the Georgia Foundation for Public Education. Dr. Johnson is a member of the Alpha Lambda Boule' of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity. He is a member of the Central Misionary Baptist Church. He is the author of an autobiography, *From "N Word" to Mr. Mayor: Experiencing The American Dream* (2016). Dr. Johnson is a jazz aficionado and a member of the Savannah Jazz Hall of Fame.