

History Commission Minutes

Tuesday, March 5, 2024 at 6 pm
James Island Arts and Cultural Center
1248 Camp Road, James Island, SC

Call to Order

Present: Mike Williams, Jim Morissette, Inez Brown-Crouch, Wendy Shelton, Mike Hemmer

Changes in the Agenda

1. Appointment of New Chair of the Commission

Discussion: Michael Williams and Jim Morissette both stepped forward as candidates and shared their experience and credentials with the Commission.

Action: Inez made a motion that we elect both candidates as co-chairs to the Commission. Wendy Shelton seconded the Motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes from January 16, February 13 2024

The minutes of January 16 had been approved at the February 13 meeting. The minutes from Feb. 13 were approved with the following amendments:

1. The Historic Marker for June 10 should be defined as the "Skirmish at Grimball's Plantation" for clarity,
2. No action was taken following the discussion of re-interment of Simeon Pinckney.
3. No action was taken regarding the research of James Island and its airports.
4. No action was taken regarding the Mission Statement.
5. No action was following discussion of SC250 Grant Applications and new programming with potential collaborating organizations.
6. No action was taken regarding the First Shot Memorial Event

Old Business

1. Text for Skirmish at Grimball's Plantation

Discussion: Members present reviewed draft text for the marker at the "Skirmish of Grimball's Plantation" as written by Edwin Breeden from the SHPO. Inez noted that she didn't get a chance to read it carefully.

Action: Wendy made a motion to approve the text unless Inez had any edits. Michael seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Seashore Farmers Lodge Marker Tabled

Discussion: None of the members present had any information on the progress of this marker. Wendy read the email from Edwin Breeden which referenced three members who were no longer active on the Commission.

Action: Wendy made a motion to table the project indefinitely, Inez seconded the Motion. No further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. First Shot Re-enactment Plans

Discussion: Jim shared a task chart that he had created identifying all of the steps and details needed for the event. He added that other than an initial contact to a group of re-enactors who were saving the date for us, no other binding action had been taken. In light of the poor attendance from last year's event, the members present agreed that the time frame was too short to put on a high-quality event and there was concern that a poor showing again might damage the relationship with these re-enactors, who prefer a good crowd for their volunteer efforts.

Members discussed maybe offering an alternative event to observe the anniversary, but making it on a smaller scale until we had the time and resources to properly execute and promote the event next year. Wendy suggested that we target the event to students and offer it as a field trip on the actual anniversary, Friday April 12. Michael said that he had some teacher contacts in the James Island Schools and reached out to them earlier to consider the viability of this event.

Motion: Wendy made a motion that we cancel the annual public observance with the re-enactors and instead pursue the field trip idea. Michael seconded the motion.

Discussion: Jim said that he would contact the re-enactors group to cancel. Michael and Jim will determine who exactly we need to contact to get permission for the event on the site. Michael will follow up with teachers. To keep the project manageable, the event is geared to Middle School grades 4-6. Wendy will develop programming to include lessons, extensions, activities, refreshments, scavenger hunts, and possibly local re-enactors but not artillery. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business

1. Audio Driving Tour Proposal (Wendy)

Discussion. Wendy reported that she proceeded with a grant application to SC250, in order to take advantage of the present 30-day application cycle. The application is for \$11,500 to hire the services of a contractor who will produce an audio driving tour of James Island's Revolutionary War sites. The quote for the work is from Regina Ruopoli who runs several programs at the JIACC. Wendy reported that she also had letters of support from Mike Corbo, former Commission member and assistant manager at the Baxter Patrick Library on James Island, Tony Youmans, director of the Old Exchange/Provost Dungeon in Charleston, and an email from Rick Wise, interim Director of the SC Battleground Preservation Trust acknowledging that there was no duplication of the effort. It is the responsibility of the Commission to determine the sites and content to be included and ensure its historic accuracy. Wendy said she could create a draft script and work with the contractor to finalize. Final script to be approved by the Commission.

CORRECTION: Wendy said she had no response from Brett Bennet from SC250 Charleston. Brett did email Wendy directly stating his support for the project, referring us to Rick Wise to ensure no duplication, and to make sure we utilize SC250's statewide inventory of historical markers and sites with corresponding GPS mapping features if we get the grant.

Discussion: Members were supportive of the idea, but also noted that they are also interested in a more inclusive driving tour of all the James Island Historic Sites, not just the Revolutionary. There was also discussion of tours that might include 3D imaging. Wendy made a motion that the Commission pursue the project while awaiting the grant award. Inez seconded the motion. Discussion followed that it might be possible to resubmit in 30 or days or use the research work as a beginning for a more comprehensive driving tour. Jim volunteered to provide a summary of military action on the island identify the sites. Inez volunteered to research the role of enslaved Africans on James Island who fought or otherwise the war effort. Wendy volunteered to research experiences of the woman and children in James Island who were impacted by the War. Members working on this project will provide email updates to the Committee before the next meeting so that meeting time can be used most effectively. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Michael suggested that we create a survey of the James Island citizens to get a better idea of what they want and expect from their Historic Commission. No action taken.

Adjournment : Michael motioned to adjourn at 7:19 pm. Inez seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

Next Meeting: April 2 at 5 pm: ONE HOUR EARLIER THAN PREVIOUS MEETINGS