

**History Commission Minutes**  
Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at 6 pm  
James Island Town Hall  
1122 Dills Bluff Road, James Island, SC

**Call to Order**

Co-Chairman Jim Morrisette called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

**Present:** Commissioners: Jim Morrisette, Michael Williams, Inez Brown Crouch, Tom Robinson, Jay Reese, and Bill Lyon. (Absent: Randy Hilyer)  
Other Attendees: Mayor Brook Lyon, Mike Hemmer (staff liaison), Mr. Vic Williams

**Approval of Minutes from December 10, 2024**

Michael Williams moved to approve minutes as presented, Inez Brown Crouch seconded; approved.

**Old Business**

1. Commission By-laws:  
Michael Williams read the presented by-laws, noting that minor changes were needed in Sections 3 and 4. Inez Brown Crouch moved to approve the by-laws with the changes as discussed, Jim Morrisette seconded; approved.
2. James Island Historic Marker Policy:  
Mike Hemmer summarized the marker policy that was presented, noting changes from the policy reviewed at the recent workshop. Michael Williams moved to approve the policy as presented, Inez Brown Crouch seconded; approved.

AT THIS POINT THE AGENDA WAS CHANGED TO ADDRESS MR. VIC WILLIAMS (ITEM #4)

4. Mr. Vic Williams on behalf of the Masonic Lodge:  
Jim Morrisette addressed Mr. Williams request and noted that, due to the length of time to get the official marker text approved by the state and installation (18 months), and the fact that the Commission already has a priority list of sites for markers, that a marker for the masonic lodge could be well into the future. Mr. Williams indicated he understood, and that next year is the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the lodge, therefore that is his timeframe. The Commission encouraged him that he could contact the state's marker company and create his own marker if funds are available. That should be a significantly quicker process. Bill Lyon indicated he could get Mr. Williams information as to how this was done at the Indian mound in Lighthouse Point. Mr. Williams thanked the Commission and did leave some information regarding a book about the lodge that the Commission may want to research and obtain.
3. Priority List for Markers:  
The Commission discussed this at length. Michael Williams and Mike Hemmer presented a brief email exchange listing the six markers discussed at the workshop and contemplating 3 criteria by which potential markers presented to the commission could be ranked. Inez Brown Crouch indicated she would like to shift the priority of the schools on the existing list lower and instead focus on three churches which she has identified. Michael Williams noted that he would like to reach-out to the community via social media networks and simply ask what sites we should be researching. It was noted that the shift to the churches wouldn't have to remove the schools from the list. The

Commission discussed the ranking criteria and it was generally indicated that the criteria of Range of Impact, Local Renown, and Availability of Source Materials was a good starting point for our rankings. Bill Lyon stated that an application would have to be in-hand for us to be able to rank them.

The Commission generally agreed that there could be no approval of a list at this time. However, as applications are completed that the Commission wants to pursue, the information should be provided prior to a meeting and then the group could rank and vote to add sites to the list. This procedure will also be used for external requests and may, or may not, jump ahead of existing plans.

Ms. Inez indicated that she would work with the churches and have completed applications before the next meeting if possible. The churches are St. James Episcopal Church, 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church of James Island, and St. James Presbyterian Church.

The list of potential markers then, in no order, is:

- Fort Johnson
- St. James Episcopal
- 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist
- St. James Presbyterian
- Society Corner School
- Cut Bridge School
- Sol Legare School
- Orphanage

The Commission noted that Three Trees School has been submitted.

Michael Williams moved to table the priority list, Jay Reese seconded; the list was tabled to a future meeting.

5. First Shot Field Trip:

The event was discussed briefly. Inez Brown Crouch moved to cancel the event for this year, Michael Williams seconded; all approved. Inez Brown Crouch noted that she still feels strongly that the Commission should work with youth and, just because we have canceled this year, it doesn't mean the event can't be re-started later. Mayor Lyon noted that she just came from a meeting with Scouts and maybe there is a way to involve the local troops. The Commission also discussed the ideas of getting into the schools to develop an essay contest.

6. Fort Johnson Open House:

The event will be held at Fort Johnson from 10 am to 4 pm on Saturday, March 22nd. The Commission discussed that this was a long day that should be broken into two, 3-hour shifts. Bill Lyon noted that the Town is getting a tent for the Commission. Jay Reese noted that the Commission tent would likely be next to the May Forest booth, but he would have to man the May Forest booth. Mr. Reese suggested that we make our exhibits as interactive as possible.

7. First Friday Town Market:

The next market is from 6 pm to 8 pm on Friday, February 7<sup>th</sup>. The Commission will have a tent, a table, and a heater. Inez Brown Crouch is organizing the display and will have help from Bill Lyon that evening. This event would be a bit of a trial run for the Fort Johnson Open House.

New Business:

- Bill Lyon noted that there is a poster and other display items regarding the Indian mound that the Commission could use for the booths and reminded the Commission about the James Island Neighborhood Council meeting on January 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00 pm where Mr. Welch, the previous owner of the Mill Point property will speak.
- There was a brief discussion of the 2025 Goals and Objectives that were developed at the workshop. Discussed in more detail were YouTube videos, artifact collection/solicitation, and other outreach activities. The Goals were not approved at this time.
- Jay Reese reported on recent discussions with SCDNR regarding the use of Fort Johnson and noted that our audio tour needs to be changed to indicate that Fort Johnson is only accessible Monday through Friday during working hours. Although pedestrian access will not change, we can't promote that access. Perhaps the development plan will allow for increased visitation in the future, but that will bring other questions such as parking availability and security.
- Mayor Lyon noted the work occurring on a new James Island Arts and Cultural Center (JIACC). The new building may have an area that could be a historical display/meeting space, like the old building. Mayor Lyon also noted there is a survey whereby the Town is soliciting input for the building programming and use.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Inez Brown Crouch moved to adjourn at 7:37 pm, Bill Lyon seconded; meeting was adjourned.

Minutes provided by:

Mike Hemmer, staff liaison