

City of Franklin Battlefield Preservation Commission
Regular Meeting
Thursday, October 11, 2018—8:00 AM
Meeting Minutes

Present: Steve Bacon, Thomas Cartwright, David Eagan, Rachael Finch, Sam Gant, Sam Huffman, Eric Jacobson, Pam Lewis, Alma McLemore, Alderman Scott Speedy, Tim Stillings

Staff Present: Amanda Rose, Eric Stuckey, Jim Svoboda, Brian Walker

Call to Order:

Chairwoman Lewis called the meeting to order at 8:07 a.m.

Minutes: September 13, 2018

Mr. Stillings moved to approve the September 13, 2018 meeting minutes. Mr. Eagan seconded the motion, and the motion passed 11-0.

Consideration of Proposed Additional Historic Markers on City Square:

Mr. Stuckey stated that the City is a formal court decision on which entity—the City of Franklin or the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC)—owns the center of the Public Square. Mr. Stuckey stated that the City has offered a settlement to the UDC that would define the monument and the land underneath the monument as UDC property and all over land around the monument has City property. Mr. Stuckey stated that the City has yet to receive a response.

Mr. Stuckey stated that it is appropriate to move forward with a sign proposal to be prepared once a decision about ownership is made.

Ms. Lewis asked if a sign material has been chosen.

Mr. Stuckey stated no, but he stated that he would like to use some of the other citizen commissions for input and then bring the item back to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

Ms. Lewis stated that she believes that more information and more graphics would enhance the visitor's experience, so she would prefer to use a two-sided sign. Ms. Lewis inquired about funds for the signs.

Mr. Jacobson confirmed that all proposed signs were funded.

Ms. Lewis asked the commission to weigh in on the sign copy.

Mr. Eagan inquired about the base of the monument, in reference to Mr. Stuckey's comments, and Mr. Stuckey clarified and passed around a photograph.

Ms. Lewis asked Mr. Gant if he would like to share his comments.

Mr. Gant stated that he, as an individual, believes that it is more effective to place the signs where the action took place—near the Courthouse and Mellow Mushroom. Mr. Gant stated that placing the markers on the grassy area of the center of the Square would only make a statement but would not receive as much of the general public.

Ms. Lewis stated that Mr. Gant made a good point.

Mr. Cartwright stated that he agrees with Mr. Gant.

A commissioner made a brief comment about traffic.

Ms. Rose stated that she notices folks visit the center of the Square all the time.

Ms. Finch stated that the closer that the markers are placed to the actual spot, the better the history is. Ms. Finch stated that there is validity in placing them near the Courthouse and using text to provide history about the Courthouse, the Market House, and the Freedman's Bureau.

Mr. Stillings stated that he agrees with Ms. Finch. Mr. Stillings also added that we should be as specific as possible with the text and not use ambiguities. Mr. Stillings asked specific questions about the proposed text.

Mr. Jacobson and Ms. Rose commented on Mr. Stillings' specific questions about numbers and data.

Ms. Lewis shared an experience that she had at a museum in France and stated that interpreting in place makes the experience more visceral.

Ms. Rose asked if it is appropriate to have the UDC marker at the center of the Square.

Mr. Svoboda stated that we are specifically seeking feedback on the verbiage for the markers today, though the comments on placement will be shared with the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

Mr. Jacobson discussed the proposed verbiage and stated that the UDC marker may be best served in front of the Courthouse, with perhaps an additional marker placed on the center of the Square to discuss the Confederate monument itself. Mr. Jacobson stated that placement does matter, and that people will cross the street to view markers. Mr. Jacobson stated that the center of the Square was important for the monument when it was installed in 1899, and it is important now. He stated that the first Courthouse was located on the center of the Square and saw more "action" than the second Courthouse. Mr. Jacobson stated that the stories complement one another and that pastors sought additional signage to do something positive and preserve one story while offering another.

Mr. Gant asked a question about the UDC marker, and Mr. Jacobson commented. Mr. Jacobson stated that the verbiage has been vetted through several hands, including the State Historian and a college African American history professor.

Mr. Huffman stated that there may be additional African American history markers added to the Square and that he believes that the Courthouse and Market House markers should be on the center, as that is where the buildings were historically. Mr. Huffman added that information should be considered to be added about the county census information.

Ms. Lewis stated that she agreed and believes that most visitors would appreciate census information to help them visualize the experience about which they are reading.

Ms. McLemore added that there are opportunities all around the Square to provide a balanced history and provide more than just four stories. Ms. McLemore stated that there should be information provided to explain why the Confederate statue is here.

Ms. Finch stated that she supports a marker that explains the history of the Confederate monument.

Ms. Rose stated that we should keep in mind that there are an extraordinary number of signs along the perimeter of the Square and that we should be mindful of existing conditions when proposing locations for new signs.

Ms. Finch asked a question about zoning and sign placement on the sides of buildings.

Ms. Rose explained that the buildings are privately owned, but if it is consented by the property owners and it is the will of the City to place signs onto buildings, that the City can explore that. Ms. Rose stated that it is important that the signs are accessible and easily editable in the case that the subject matter is still research driven.

Mr. Jacobson stated that he is proposing Civil War Trails style signs because they are accessible, easily editable, and they do not detract from the center of the Square.

Mr. Jacobson explained that this is an opportunity in which we can show other communities how we can save a monument—which is a form of memory to people—and still grapple with their respective histories. He explained that by separating the histories, it is doing a disservice. Mr. Jacobson stated that the history can teach folks who will never visit the historic sites.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Finch suggested adding a historic map to one of the markers. Mr. Jacobson agreed.

Discussion ensued on the 1899 monument unveiling.

Mr. Huffman suggested implementing QR codes to connect folks to online text.

Ms. McLemore agreed that engaging younger generations is important.

Mr. Stuckey stated that the City is seeking input on edits and that we will bring a more final draft for consideration by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

Mr. Jacobson asked if the census information should go onto the Courthouse marker. All agreed.

Alderman Speedy asked Mr. Jacobson if he would plan to start proposed language for the Confederate monument interpretative marker. Mr. Jacobson agreed.

Mr. Stuckey added that we want to be sensitive to the UDC but that working out language would be appropriate to get started.

Ms. Rose summarized the proposed edits as follows:

- Census information should be added to the Courthouse and Market House marker;
- Provost office information should be added to the United States Colored Troops sign;
- Information on the 14th USCT should be added;

- A map should be added to the Franklin Riot marker; and
- Freedman's Bureau information should be added to the Reconstruction marker.

Discussion ensued on the Civil War Trails style signs.

Mr. Jacobson made a motion to approve the marker text with the proposed edits. Ms. Finch seconded the motion, and the motion passed 9-0 (Mr. Bacon and Mr. Huffman left before the vote took place).

Mr. Cartwright added that he believes that a USCT monument would be wonderful.

Discussion ensued on USCT monuments.

Subcommittee Updates:

Ms. Rose stated that she needs a couple of the subcommittees to meet during the "off" months of the full commission meetings, as previously agreed upon by the commission. She read the subcommittee membership lists.

Ms. McLemore stated that she would like her subcommittee to meet after the full commission meetings.

Ms. Rose stated that meeting during the "off" months would allow the subcommittees to be more effective.

Parks Department Update:

Ms. Rose stated that Mr. Walker did not have any reports to share.

Organization Announcements:

Mr. Jacobson stated that we are in the process of fabricating the last of the Carter Hill markers.

Mr. Svoboda asked if the language would be taken to the commission for consideration.

Mr. Jacobson stated that the signs are in fabrication.

Mr. Svoboda stated that we will be establishing a formal process to review proposed signage within the public right-of-way.

Ms. Lewis and Ms. Finch stated that the Masonic Hall will have a lecture on World War I.

Ms. Finch commented on some of the work taking place at the Masonic Hall.

Ms. Lewis stated that the Descendants' Reunion took place the previous weekend and that the State Museum is now open. She also mentioned that Grave Matters takes place for Halloween.

Adjournment:

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:11 a.m.

Acting Secretary