

North Augusta



South Carolina's Riverfront

MINUTES OF MAY 13, 2019

Robert A. Pettit, Mayor

Charles Allen, Committee member

Pat C. Carpenter, Committee member

Tony Carr, Committee member

John Felak, Committee member

Trina Mackie, Committee member

David W. McGhee, Committee member

Milledge Murray, Committee member

Mandy Nelson, Committee ex officio member, non-voting

Mark Newell, Committee member

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The John C. Calhoun Park Committee meeting of the City of North Augusta of May 13, 2019, having been duly publicized, was called to order by Mayor Pettit at 7:02 p.m. in the Council Conference room on the third floor of the Municipal Center and adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Per Section 30-4-80(e) notice of the meeting was posted on the outside doors of the Municipal Center, the main bulletin board of the Municipal Center located on the first floor, and the City of North Augusta website.

Members present were Mayor Pettit and Committee members Allen, Carpenter, Carr, Felak, Mackie, McGhee, Murray, and Nelson. Committee member Newell as absent. Also in attendance was Sharon Lamar, City Clerk.

ITEM 1. Call to Order

Mayor Pettit opened the meeting by reviewing the background of the "Report to the City Council of North Augusta: Recommendations Regarding the Meriwether Monument in J.C. Calhoun Park" that he submitted to City Council and citizens of the City of North Augusta in November 2018. An informal group gave input and guidance when the information for that report was gathered; however, Council having approved Resolution 2019-10 appointed this assembled committee to conduct further work.

See [ATTACHMENT #1](#) for the resolution text.

ITEM 2. Introduction of Members:

Each committee member introduced themselves to the group sharing their current occupation and personal connection to the City of North Augusta. Mayor Pettit also stated the strength and background of each member that merited his or her appointment to the committee. He informed the committee that all meetings will be open to the public.

ITEM 3. Review of Resolution 2019-10:

a. Council Conclusions- With the approval of Resolution 2019-10 on March 18, 2019, Council concluded that Thomas McKie Meriwether died during a confrontation between an armed African-American militia and a large group of armed white citizens in and around the Town of Hamburg, South Carolina on July 8th, 1876. Seven African-American men died in the confrontation, five of whom were murdered. The monument to Thomas McKie Meriwether was unveiled on February 16, 1916 and located prominently in John C. Calhoun Park. The monument was paid for with an authorization for \$400 from the South Carolina Legislature and local contributions. There is no recognition in the park of the seven African-American men who died. Both John C. Calhoun Park and the now abandoned Town of Hamburg are within the City of North Augusta. The Thomas McKie Meriwether Monument should remain in its present location, its text and structure should not be altered. The monument to Thomas McKie Meriwether contains text offensive to, and inconsistent with the beliefs of, current day North Augusta citizens. A defined area surrounding the monument should be created providing educational opportunities for visitors as a counterpoint to the viewpoint expressed by the text on the monument.

b. Committee Establishment- This committee was appointed to develop a plan for an addition at John C. Calhoun Park necessary to fulfill the items listed above. Committee recommendations will be presented to Council for approval and implementation.

c. Committee Purpose- An educational display having permanently installed features (e.g., sculptures, kiosks, plaques, etc.) should present the information and should include, as a minimum, a summary of the events which transpired at Hamburg on July 8th and 9th, and the names of the African-American men killed during the events of July 8th and 9th. The committee is authorized and encouraged to utilize local, county, and state resources and experts to insure information is factual or is consistent with current historical understanding or interpretation.

ITEM 4. Review of Meriwether Monument History and Background:

Each member of the committee has been provided a copy of the "Report to the City Council of North Augusta: Recommendations Regarding the Meriwether Monument in J.C. Calhoun Park." It is the committee's consensus that it is the City's obligation and responsibility to provide a factually correct display in context

with current historical beliefs to overshadow a prominently located monument with offensive text placed in 1916.

ITEM 5. General Discussion:

Committee member Milledge Murray discussed, and provided photographs, of both sides of the existing “Hamburg” marker located in the Carrsville area of the city. He also provided a photograph of the headstone containing the names of all eight men who died in the Hamburg incident. Mr. Murray expressed his belief relocation of the “Hamburg” marker to the area adjacent to Hwy. 1 where two other markers are currently positioned. He stated this would provide a more fitting location. He also expressed the observation that the headstone could be relocated to Calhoun Park, and this location would be more appropriate. See **ATTACHMENT #5** for copies of the photographs.

Each of the committee members voiced their thoughts and opinions of what they perceived should be criteria for the educational display, as well as, their personal reflections of the current monument.

Committee member and Lookaway Inn Innkeeper, John Felak, volunteered to host the next committee meeting at Lookaway Inn whose property is adjacent to John C. Calhoun Park. Committee members will be able to walk the grounds and see “in person” the monument and surroundings.

Mayor Pettit charged the group to “think big” before the next meeting. Each member should come prepared to answer “What significant points and/or information should be included in the display; i.e., what is the message that should be presented?” “How broad should the message reach?” and “How can we creatively display that message?”

Committee member Mackie shared the quote, “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.” by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, from *Strength to Love* 1963.

The next John C. Calhoun Park Committee meeting will be Tuesday, June 18, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. at Lookaway Inn at 103 W. Forest Avenue, North Augusta.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

APPROVED THIS _____ DAY OF
JUNE, 2019.

Robert A. Pettit, Mayor

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Lamar

Sharon Lamar
City Clerk

ATTACHMENT #1

RESOLUTION NO. 2019-10

A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FINDINGS ABOUT THE HAMBURG INCIDENT OF 1876 AND APPOINTING MEMBERS OF A COMMITTEE TO EVALUATE OPTIONS FOR AN ADDITIONAL DISPLAY IN JOHN C. CALHOUN PARK

WHEREAS, Thomas McKie Meriwether died during a confrontation between an armed African-American militia positioned in the second story of the Sibley Building and a large group of armed white citizens in and around the Town of Hamburg, South Carolina on July 8th, 1876 and

WHEREAS, seven African-American men died in the confrontation, five of whom were murdered, and

WHEREAS, the Monument to Thomas McKie Meriwether was unveiled on February 16, 1916 and located prominently in John C. Calhoun Park, and

WHEREAS, the monument was paid for with an authorization of \$400 from the South Carolina Legislature and local contributions, and

WHEREAS, there is no recognition in John C. Calhoun Park of the seven African-American men who died during the Hamburg incident, and

WHEREAS, both John C. Calhoun Park and the now abandoned Town of Hamburg are within the City of North Augusta, and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and City Council of the City of North Augusta, in meeting duly assembled and by the authority thereof, reach these conclusions:

The Thomas McKie Meriwether Monument should remain in its present location, its text and structure should not be altered, and

The Monument to Thomas McKie Meriwether contains text offensive to, and inconsistent with the beliefs of, current day North Augusta citizens, and

A defined, distinct area surrounding the monument should be created providing educational opportunities for visitors as a counterpoint to the viewpoint expressed by the text on the monument, and

The educational display having permanently installed features (e.g., sculptures, kiosks, plaques, etc.) should present the information and should include, as a minimum,

A summary of the events which transpired at Hamburg on July 8th and 9th, and

The names of the African-American men killed during the events of July 8th and 9th, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a committee comprised of the following individuals is hereby established for the purpose of developing a plan for the additions at John C. Calhoun Park necessary to fulfill the items listed above in this section:

Mayor Bob Pettit, Chair

Mr. John Felak

Council member Pat Carpenter

Dr. Mark Newell

Council member David McGhee

Mr. Tony Carr

Mr. Charles Allen

Ms. Mandy Nelson, ex-officio,
non-voting

Mr. Milledge Murray

Ms. Trina Mackie

The Committee, at its discretion, is authorized and encouraged to utilize local, county, and state resources and experts to insure information is factual or is consistent with current historical understanding or interpretation.

A design competition for the overall layout and specific elements should be considered by the Committee. Should this be the recommended approach, the Committee is authorized to develop the overall guidelines for such competition, including a recommended selection procedure and the criteria.

Committee recommendations shall be presented to Council for approval and implementation.

The City Administrator is authorized to approve funds to cover travel and other expenses from General Fund City Council Contingency Account totaling not more than \$500.

DONE, RATIFIED AND ADOPTED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTH AUGUSTA, SOUTH CAROLINA, ON THIS 18th DAY OF March 2019.



Robert A. Pettit, Mayor

ATTEST:



Sharon Lamar, City Clerk

IN MEMORY OF THOSE KILLED
IN THE HAMBURG INCIDENT
JULY 4-9, 1876

ALLEN ATTAWAY

JIM COOK

THOMAS MERIWETHER

ALBERT MYNIART

NEIDER PARKER

MOSES PARKS

DAVID PHILLIPS

HAMPTON STEPHENS

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THE HAMBURG MASSACRE

The Hamburg Massacre, which occurred nearby on July 8, 1876, was one of the most notable incidents of racial and political violence in S.C. during Reconstruction. White Democrats across the state organized "rifle clubs" to intimidate black and white Republicans during the gubernatorial election of 1876. Clashes between groups of armed men were frequent, in some cases even including the militia.

(Continued on other side)

ERECTED BY THE HERITAGE COUNCIL OF NORTH AUGUSTA, 2010

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THE HAMBURG MASSACRE

(Continued from other side)

After a dispute between whites and a black militia company, about 200 men from local rifle clubs tried to disarm 38 black militiamen and others barricaded in a warehouse. One white was killed and men on each side were wounded before the blacks fled. Two blacks were killed trying to escape. Whites captured 25-30 blacks and executed four of them. 87 whites were charged in the massacre but were never tried for it.

ERECTED BY THE HERITAGE COUNCIL OF NORTH AUGUSTA, 2010



THE HERITAGE COUNCIL OF NORTH AUGUSTA
1000 W. BROADWAY
NORTH AUGUSTA, SC 29831
TEL: 803.785.1234
WWW.NAHERITAGECOUNCIL.ORG