

Final Minutes
CHATTAHOOCHEE BRICK COMPANY MEMORIAL, GREENSPACE, AND PARK BOARD
March 25, 2026
1:00 pm
Northwest Library at Scotts Crossing -- Large Meeting Room

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 PM by Board Chair David Getachew-Smith. A quorum was present.

2. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was approved without modification.

3. Adoption of Minutes (December 10, 2025)

Board member Ola Reynolds recommended that acronyms be spelled out in future minutes for clarity.

The minutes were approved with this request noted for future minutes.

4. Public Comment

No public comments were received.

5. New Business

a) Board Membership Update

Anthony Knight reported that there are no updates on the pending board appointment. The board remains in a holding pattern pending confirmation of a new member.

b) Project Updates and Public Memory Workshop (SCAPE / New South Associates / MASS)

Project Status and Schedule

The SCAPE team (Rikerrious Geter) provided a schedule update, noting the project is approximately midway through the planning process. Recent activities included Community Meeting #2 and the public memory workshop. The next milestone is Community Meeting #3 on April 25 at Young Middle School, which will include an open house and information session.

Board members requested that presentation materials be shared following meetings to support ongoing review.

Public Memory and Community Engagement Discussion

Board members engaged in a detailed discussion regarding community engagement strategy:

- Peggy Dobbins raised the importance of ensuring participation from elders and long-time community members.
- Donna Stephens emphasized that seniors may hold direct memories or generational knowledge of the site and should be intentionally included.

- Erik Wilder acknowledged strong engagement efforts to date but requested clearer documentation, suggesting that engagement activities and outcomes be compiled and made publicly accessible (e.g., via the project website).
- Kanata Herring asked whether focus groups could be more formalized, prompting broader discussion on structure and transparency.
- David Getachew-Smith asked whether board members could participate in small group conversations, including virtually.

The consulting team (Rikerrious/SCAPE) clarified that:

- Small-group conversations are intentionally designed to remain limited in size to encourage candid dialogue
- To avoid Open Meetings Act concerns, board participation in these sessions would be restricted
- The team will provide summaries and thematic feedback from these conversations to the board

Grace Dials (SCAPE) reinforced that the process is designed to prioritize authentic community dialogue first, with structured reporting back to the board.

Outcome:

The board generally agreed with the approach, with the expectation that clear summaries and themes from engagement activities will be regularly reported back.

Archaeological Update (Joe Joseph, New South Associates)

Joe Joseph presented on ongoing archaeological investigations, including:

- Visual surveys
- Shovel testing
- Ground penetrating radar (GPR)
- Mechanical stripping to expose building footings and kiln floors

Key findings and discussion:

- No confirmed burial sites have been identified to date
- No evidence of stone grave markers or soil disturbance near the railroad embankment
- Proctor Creek historically ran through the site but was relocated (visible in historic aerials; moved during I-285 construction)
- Additional investigation for burials will include use of human remains detection dogs

Joe noted that:

- Some remains of laborers were historically removed and sent to local medical schools for dissection

- Some may have been returned to the State of Georgia
- Others may remain buried, potentially outside the currently defined project area, as the original site was significantly larger
- Cremation of remains in the kilns is considered unlikely

Board discussion:

- Erik Wilder expressed concern about the archaeological work and digging at the site and emphasized the need for community participation, including possible agreements with descendants and local stakeholders
- Ola Reynolds asked directly whether burials had been identified; the response was no
- Keith Sharp referenced prior legislative testimony suggesting possible burials; Joe indicated no documentation supports those claims
- Donald Rooney referenced the location of the former overseer's house (Hedgerows, now part of Whittier Mill)
- Donna Stephens noted that the Chattahoochee Church may have been constructed using bricks from the site

Site Features and Design Considerations

Keith Sharp suggested that kiln floors uncovered through investigation could be further excavated and incorporated into the final design.

Joe Joseph clarified that decisions regarding incorporation of archaeological features will be determined through the SCAPE design process, not through the archaeological scope alone.

Public Memory Framework (MASS Workshop)

Jah D Amazi (Model of Architecture Serving Society – MASS) facilitated a workshop with the board focused on defining goals for memorialization and how memory could be spatialized within the site.

Through a structured exercise centered on four topics, board members identified key themes:

Mission

- Truth-telling and acknowledgment of history
- Memorializing victims and recognizing contributions
- Community dialogue and engagement
- Healing and stewardship
- Education, empathy, and public awareness
- Building a lasting community legacy

Method

- Develop a strong interpretive framework
- Support community-led storytelling

- Create a “living memorial” shaped by ongoing input
- Use multiple media and formats to convey a comprehensive narrative

Impact

- Measure success through visitor engagement, surveys, and feedback
- Track broader recognition (media, academic, institutional)
- Influence institutional practices and public understanding

Systemic Change

- Connect the site to broader historic and contemporary issues
- Highlight the legacy of forced labor
- Contribute to reducing inequities and building shared understanding

Board members discussed the importance of ensuring that the memorial is not only reflective but also forward-looking and impactful.

c) June 2026 Meeting Schedule/ Board Process Discussion

The board discussed meeting structure and its role in the project moving forward.

Meeting cadence:

- David Getachew-Smith noted flexibility to increase meeting frequency if needed
- Grace (SCAPE) recommended maintaining a quarterly cadence aligned with key project milestones, particularly ahead of public engagement events

Board role discussion:

- Erik Wilder raised a substantive concern that the board’s role appeared primarily reactive—responding to consultant proposals rather than shaping direction
- He expressed a desire for:
 - Greater transparency in the process
 - More time to reflect and provide meaningful input
 - Opportunities to influence project vision and identify gaps

This prompted broader discussion among board members regarding expectations and responsibilities.

Outcome:

- General agreement that the board’s primary role is to review and respond to consultant work, though members expressed interest in maintaining a meaningful advisory role
- Decision to maintain quarterly meetings, with extended duration (approximately two hours) to allow for deeper discussion

SCAPE confirmed that feedback from the public memory exercise will be synthesized and presented back to the board at the June meeting.

6. Other Business

No additional items were raised.

7. Announcements

- Donna **Stephens announced an April 19 Earth Day event featuring a storytelling focus and participation from the Chattahoochee Brick Descendants Coalition**
- **A recent Atlanta Journal-Constitution video** on the CBC site is available online

Additional note (Chair):

David Getachew-Smith noted a potential historical connection between the Chattahoochee Brick Company and the proposed White House ballroom project, through a descendant of James English serving in a federal design oversight role.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:00 PM.