

**Historic Preservation Consultation Meeting  
Nuclear Ship *SAVANNAH* National Historic Landmark  
November 19, 2024, 2:30-4pm EDT  
(Hybrid on-board NS *Savannah* and MS Teams)**

**Participants:**

- Erhard W. Koehler, Manager, N.S. *Savannah* Programs, MARAD
- Gail Marcus, past president, ANS
- Jed Porter, Architect, NPS Region 1, North Atlantic - Appalachian
- Bob Adams, President, NSSA
- Anne Jennings, Cultural Resource Specialist, Tidewater, Inc.
- Ed Tupin, Health Physics Society
- Dan O'Rourke, ANL
- Michael Moan, NSSA
- Paul Johnston, Curator of Maritime History, SI
- Anna Holloway, Supervisory Historian, MARAD
- Tanya Hood, Project Manager, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, NRC
- Betsy Merritt, Deputy General Counsel, National Trust
- Diana Diaz Toro, Project Manager, Environmental Review Materials Branch, NRC
- Matthew Schulte, Executive Director, SSHSA
- Fred Blonder, NSSA
- Jean Trefethen, Environmental Program Manager, NMSS, NRC
- Wendy Coble, Historian and Acting FPO, MARAD
- Cathy Green President and Executive Director, NMHS
- Neil Sheehan, Public Affairs, NRC
- Liz Casso, Preservation Officer, Project Review and Compliance, MHT; SHPO

See Acronym List at the end of the document

**Agenda:**

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Minutes Review (September 17, 2024)
- III. Program Update
- IV. Status of PA Stipulations
- V. Other Business / Adjourn
- VI. Next Meeting: January 21, 2025

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Erhard opened the meeting and noted that he wanted to have a moment of silence for John Kelly, who passed away last September, and went on the deck to ring the bell for him. Erhard and Gail said a few words about John, who was a longtime and valued member of the PRG. Gail also noted that she recently sent a video to Anne and Erhard which was about the future of nuclear ships and had some *Savannah* footage in it, and Anne will share that with the group. Gail said that it's not just the history of the ship that is important, but also its applicability to the future. Erhard also said that Peter Knego, a cruise ship aficionado who does videos of ships, visited *Savannah* and did a video which Anne will also share with the group.

Erhard noted that since we have a new person joining us, Cathy Green, Executive Director of the NMHS, we should introduce ourselves, starting with Cathy. Cathy noted that she had just visited the ship which helps her to have a better understanding of it. Erhard introduced the people in the room: Anne, Bob, Ed, and Fred, and then we introduced those online. During the introductions, Matt noted that there was a lot of discussion about the *United States* and the *Savannah* at the SSHSA's annual meeting on the *Queen Mary*. He also noted that he recently was at Peter Knego's house, and attested to his interest in ships, noting his extensive collection.

## **Minutes Review**

The September 17<sup>th</sup> minutes were shared via e-mail prior to the meeting; Matt had some comments, and the revised minutes were emailed. No additional comments were received. Erhard also noted that we are behind with posting minutes and agendas on the docket as Caleb transitioned from his role as a MARAD employee to contractor, but we expect to update soon.

## **Program Update**

Erhard provided updates on the decommissioning efforts and said that the final shipment of low-level rad waste was received at Clive, Utah last week and Phase II industrial dismantlement is complete. The LTP is under review by the NRC and is nearing completion. Final status surveys are underway and are also nearing completion. Now that the waste has been removed, cargo holds 3 and 4 are able to be surveyed. We continue to maintain and increase public access to the ship, and there is high demand for visits and training. This week there is a multi-agency law enforcement training effort on *Savannah*, the pier and *John W. Brown*.

There was a public site visit last Saturday with 274 visitors to the ship. Erhard presented at three sessions and there was a lot of local interest as well as from all over. Erhard anticipates having quarterly site visits next year, likely in February, May (for Maritime Day), August, and November.

Erhard indicted that MARAD is working on an 18-month extension to the layberth contract, which will take the period of performance out to December 2026, although the ship may not require all of that time. At a minimum, MARAD expects the ship to be at Pier 13 in May 2026 for Maritime Day and through June 2026 for Fleet Week.

## **Status of PA Stipulations**

Erhard noted that he and Anne continue to do outreach to port cities, and recently met with the Rhode Historical Society, SHPO, and Providence Preservation Society, in support of Michael Moan's efforts in that state. Michael Moan noted that he had spoken to Senator Whitehouse, who indicated that he needed to get local support, which Michael continues to work on. Michael also noted that now that the fate of the *United States* has been determined, maybe there will be more awareness of *Savannah* and hopes that the public sees how important it is as a piece of US history and that it too doesn't get reefed or scrapped.

We also continue to work with Hudson County in New Jersey to look at Bayonne and are also looking into redevelopment plans in North Camden. To that end, we met with the Vice Chancellor for Governmental and External Affairs at the Rutgers Camden campus and toured the area where we think the ship could potentially go. We also met virtually with the New Jersey SHPO and Historic Trust.

There is local interest in Baltimore – a group is looking to acquire a retired SL-7 Fast Sealift Ship from MARAD, with the goal of turning the ship into a transformative experience, including an exhibit on containerization. The group would look to create an entity including the SL-7, *John W. Brown* and *Savannah*, and berth them together in South Baltimore. Erhard and Bob are also trying to cultivate local interest and have been doing outreach.

Erhard noted that a developer and historic preservation enthusiast in Savannah, who will be instrumental in the effort to bring the ship to its homeport, visited the ship last week and was very impressed. He plans to assist with organizing a committee that will be able to respond to the RFP when it is issued next year. We will also be remotely briefing the U.S. Coast Guard and Army Corps of Engineers units in Savannah in early December.

Despite initial interest, we haven't had any additional feedback from Mobile, Tampa, or Wilmington.

Erhard stated that we have also been getting the word out about the ship in publications. We had articles in the ANS magazine *Nuclear News* in September and November – and he acknowledged how important it was to have John and Gail's assistance in making this possible. We are also looking at an article in a future issue of *Sea History* and will work with Cathy Green on that. Though initially it was thought it may be part of the ships on a lee shore series, it may expand into something different.

We are submitting proposals to conferences, including CAMM, HNSA/NMHS, SIA, Preserving the Recent Past, and the NJ Historic Preservation Conference. If anyone has any additional conferences or thoughts on outreach efforts, we ask you please share them with us.

Erhard noted that Christofer Nelson shared information about the ship at the ASTC meeting this fall and will put us on touch with a museum in Milwaukee (despite the tight squeeze through the Welland Canal).

We met last week with the Atomic Museum and were made aware of the Atomic Energy Preservation Network, formed by the DOE and includes a group of museums associated with atomic energy. We hope to speak to this group at a future meeting.

Erhard also noted we continue to work on the mitigation stipulations, and Anna said that the Collections Management Plan, with an appendix for the Architectural Salvage Plan is underway, and expects to have a draft soon.

## Other Business/Adjourn

Anne noted that we still need to send out the meeting invites for 2025 and will do that. Erhard indicated that we will also need to do a federal register announcement for these dates, which will also include the quarterly site visits. Erhard also invited the group to the holiday party to be held on the ship the evening of December 10<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:26PM EST.

## Action Items:

- Anne to send meeting minutes
- Anne to send invites for dates in 2025
- Anne to send video links
- Everyone: please send suggestions or ideas for outreach (conferences, publications, etc.)

## Acronyms:

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ADAMS	Agencywide Documents Access and Management System
ANL	Argonne National Lab (DOE)
ANS	American Nuclear Society
ASTC	Association of Science and Technology Centers
CAMM	Council of American Maritime Museums
CV	Containment Vessel
DOE	(US) Department of Energy
DOI	(US) Department of Interior
DOT	(US) Department of Transportation
ESC	Executive Steering Committee
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FPO	Federal Preservation Officer
FRN	Federal Register Notice
HNSA	Historic Naval Ships Association
HPS	Health Physics Society
LTP	License Termination Plan
MARAD	Maritime Administration (DOT)
MHT	Maryland Historical Trust
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NARA	National Archives and Record Administration
NMHS	National Maritime Historical Society
NMSS	Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NRC)
NPS	National Park Service (DOI)
NRC	(US) Nuclear Regulatory Commission
PA	Programmatic Agreement
PCB	polychlorinated biphenyls
PRG	Peer Review Group
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer

SI	Smithsonian Institution
SIA	Society for Industrial Archaeology
SOI	Secretary of the Interior
SSHSA	Steamship Historical Society of America
TSCA	Toxic Substances Control Act