

August 21, 2006 Draft

Board Meeting Minutes

STONE MOUNTAIN MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

August 21, 2006

A meeting of the Stone Mountain Memorial Association was held at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, August 21, 2006, at Evergreen Conference Center, Stone Mountain Park, Stone Mountain, Georgia.

**ASSOCIATION MEMBERS PRESENT**

Tom Gilliland, Chairman

Greer Johnson, Vice Chair

Mark Baxter

Brent Brown (by telephone)

Bill Chappell

Mike Pentecost

Ray S. Smith, III

Joan Thomas

**ASSOCIATION MEMBERS ABSENT**

Noel Holcomb

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Curtis Branscome, C.E.O.

Bob Cowhig, Director of Planning & Construction

Gail Durham, Director of Finance

Jerry Spicer, Director of Administration & Public Safety

Gerald Rakestraw, HFEC

Alison Spencer, Assistant Attorney General

Dr. Romeo Stockett, MPA, PhD.

Members of the Public

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Tom Gilliland, Chairman, called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Bill Chappell, seconded by Greer Johnson, and unanimously approved to waive the reading of the minutes of the June 19, 2006 meeting and to adopt the minutes as printed. A draft copy of the minutes was sent to each Board Member prior to the meeting.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dr. Romeo P. Stockett, MPA, PhD. stated that he represents a group that is concerned about the circumstances surrounding the Stone Mountain Olympic Tennis Center. The facility is deteriorating and his group understands that there is a potential the facility may close. His group has formed to do whatever they can to prevent the closing of the facility. They would also like to contribute their help in order to stop the current decay.

The group is attending meetings of SMMA to try and understand current operations and who is responsible for maintenance and repairs. Once his group is clear on that then they will contribute their assistance as a community group.

Items for immediate concern are mulch, screens on courts and pavilions, and general landscape maintenance. Remedial maintenance is cheaper than renovations.

His group is concerned with the survival of the tennis center and they wanted to convey their interest and commit to helping where they can to insure the survival. They are willing to do some sweat equity and are volunteering as a group to help with general maintenance. Free mulch is available in both counties. Dr. Stockett left a summary of his discussion for the minutes.

Mr. Branscome stated that he will provide Dr. Stockett with a letter detailing the responsibilities of SMMA and Georgia Tennis Foundation with respect to the operation of the tennis facility.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

Ms. Durham stated that for the seven months ending July 31, 2006 total revenues were almost \$6.4 million and \$360,000 better than budget. The 2006 interest rates have been higher than forecasted and resulted in a favorable interest income variance.

Total operating expenses were \$3 million and about \$294,000 better than budget.

Net operating income before depreciation is \$3.4 million compared to the budget of \$2.7 million and about \$650,000 better than budget.

After depreciation expense of \$2.4 million, the excess of revenues over expense is \$940,000 or \$721,000 better than budget.

Cash provided from operating activities year-to-date is approximately \$3.2 million. The

investment and cash balance at the end of July was \$24.1 million and the total increase in cash is \$1.3 million through the first seven months.

Ray Smith moved to accept the Finance Committee report, Mike Pentecost seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

## **STONE MOUNTAIN PARK REPORT – HFEC**

Gerald Rakestraw updated the Board on the HFEC operations. He stated that they had a good summer, but knew that it would be a tough battle considering the opening of the Georgia Aquarium and a new roller coaster introduced at Six Flags this year. There is room in the market place for all three attractions and Stone Mountain Park serves a different niche. The Aquarium has introduced about 800,000 new people to the marketplace this year and Stone Mountain Park has been able to capture some of this audience. HFEC has launched a partnership with the Aquarium on some ticketing programs. They are now a part of the “Georgia on My Mind” segment of the laser show and Stone Mountain is featured at the Aquarium.

The Extreme Summer Adventure was successful and Camp Highlands was the big winner and very popular with the guests. We are making a transition into a busy time of the year with Labor Day events and concert. Yellow Daisy Festival follows next, then Japanfest, and Pumpkin Festival.

### **RENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF STONE MOUNTAIN**

Mr. Branscome stated that back in the 1980’s SMMA purchased right of way outside of the Park property in order to construct a connector between Stone Mountain Railroad around the mountain and the main line railroad in the City of Stone Mountain. The purpose of this was to service the dinner train offered by the Georgia Railroad that would travel from downtown Atlanta to Stone Mountain as a final destination. When this venture failed, the right of way was of no benefit to the Park and became a maintenance issue.

The Park leased a building to the City of Stone Mountain to be used in their public works operation. This lease was amended in 1993 to add a parcel that fronts on Main Street of Stone Mountain for the City to utilize as a Visitor’s Center.

Today we are proposing to lease them two other pieces of vacant property between Third and Fourth Streets because they wish to construct a dog park. This would be a place where dogs run free in a fenced controlled area. SMMA has no current use for this property. This would be an amenity for people who have dogs and would serve a dual purpose of keeping some dog traffic out of Stone Mountain Park. There is a potential for conflict in the Park, especially in walking areas.

A draft of the amended agreement was included in the agenda material and authorization is requested to execute this agreement subject to final review and approval by the Law Department.

Mr. Smith inquired if these parcels were outside the Park boundary. Mr. Branscome stated that was correct.

A motion was made by Mike Pentecost, seconded by Bill Chappell and unanimously approved to execute the amended lease with the City of Stone Mountain to allow construction of a dog park.

#### REQUEST FOR NAMING OF NATURE GARDEN

Mr. Gilliland stated that a request has been receive to name the Nature Garden in honor of Harold Cox who was the Park horticulturist for 22 years. This request comes from his daughter, Dr. Rosemary Cox, a professor at Emory University.

Mr. Branscome stated that the basic horticultural infrastructure of the Park was developed by Mr. Cox. The master plan advisor has offered an opinion that the landscape work done in the early years was excellent. Mr. Branscome stated that he recommends naming the Nature Garden and not the Nature Trail because so many other people have been involved with the development of the trail.

A motion was made by Joan Thomas, seconded by Ray Smith, and unanimously approved to name the Nature Garden in honor of Harold Cox.

#### OLD BUSINESS

None.

#### NEW BUSINESS

None.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

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Tom Gilliland, Chairman

Submitted by

Gail Durham, Secretary