

STONE MOUNTAIN MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION  
DEVELOPMENT AND FINANCE COMMITTEES MEETING  
May 18, 2009

A joint meeting of the Development and Finance Committees of the Stone Mountain Memorial Association was held at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, May 18, 2009, at the Evergreen Conference Center at Stone Mountain Park.

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Bill Chappell, Chairman Finance Committee  
Brent Brown  
Mike Pentecost

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Ray S. Smith III, Chairman Development Committee  
Mark Baxter, SMMA Chairman

MEMBERS ABSENT

Chris Clark  
Greer Johnson  
Carolyn Meadows  
Joan Thomas

OTHERS PRESENT

Curtis Branscome, C.E.O.  
Bob Cowhig, Director of Planning and Construction  
Gail Durham, Director of Finance and Secretary

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Finance Committee Chairman Bill Chappell.

**Review of Tennis Lease**

Mr. Branscome reviewed the terms and conditions of intergovernmental rental agreement between SMMA and Gwinnett County for the tennis facility. Mr. Pentecost made a motion to recommend the approval of the lease from the committee to the full Board, Mr. Smith seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

**Discussion on Gate Fee Increase**

Mr. Branscome stated that HFEC has requested that the parking fee be increased from \$8 to \$10. He said the Board had approved the increase for certain holidays last year, but there has been no other increase in the parking fee in almost five years. Mr. Pentecost stated that some other parks have increased their fees. Mr. Baxter asked if there was any concern that attendance may decrease because of a fee increase. Mr. Branscome said that

the HFEC management did not think a \$2 increase in the parking fee would impact attendance.

Mr. Branscome said this will go to the Board without recommendation at the afternoon meeting. Mr. Smith said that out of town visitors would probably not object, but the local guest may have some complaints about the increase. With the tough economic situation this year, a lot of visitors may be staying in town and vacationing locally.

The market analysis presented in the agenda materials indicates that even with a \$2 increase Stone Mountain Park's gate fee is at or below most other attractions in the Atlanta area. Mr. Pentecost stated that Lake Lanier Islands is still \$8, but that Atlanta attractions are higher. Mr. Branscome stated that Lake Lanier did not offer as many events and attractions as Stone Mountain Park.

### **Memorial Lawn Restoration**

Mr. Branscome said that the approved capital program budget includes the restoration of Memorial Lawn. Mr. Branscome said that the SMMA staff wanted to keep the Board informed of progress all the way through this project. He stated that our goal was to recapture the design and layout of the original and that no additional development was included in this project. This project will be completed by April of 2011 in time for the 150 years recognition of the Civil War.

Mr. Branscome presented a slide show with visuals of cracked walkways, overgrown terraces, damaged concrete and missing stones from retaining walls. He said that the idea was to restore the state terraces to their original functionality as a place to view the memorial. The sound towers will be relocated and the concession stands will be set back somewhat. Some of the large rocks serve a purpose as a retaining wall, but others that are a hazard or serve no apparent purpose will be removed. Drainage issues in areas that are showing erosion will be addressed. Camouflage will be addressed for equipment, buildings, lighting and other paraphernalia used in the laser show production.

The Valor memorial and the Sacrifice memorial areas will be cleaned up as well. Mr. Smith wanted to know if we were going to add signage to try and draw attention to these little visited areas. Mr. Branscome said the staff was looking at some proper method to draw attention to these memorials.

Mr. Brown asked if we were working with HFEC on the design concept for the lawn. In September of 2008, HFEC proposed some changes to the lawn design for revenue production. Mr. Branscome stated that SMMA staff has communicated that this will be a restoration project and no revenue producing elements are included in the design. Our goal is to restore the lawn to its original condition. If the terraces are opened up with better viewing potential then HFEC may be able to sell functions on the terraces. However, the primary goal of restoring the lawn is not revenue oriented.

Mr. Baxter said that the monument areas at the base were impressive and it would be nice if people knew they were there. He also said it was important for guests to understand the significance of the state terraces. Mr. Cowhig said that signage and methods to draw attention to these are being reviewed. Mr. Brown asked if traffic studies and pedestrian flow were being examined. Mr. Cowhig stated that HFEC has good information on this that we will use. The concession revenue from the laser show is substantial and it will take a good plan to relocate these stands.

Mr. Cowhig stated that the basic scope of the work should be ready by the end of August if all parties involved stay on task. The work should begin in October. Snow Mountain will begin in November, but would not impact work on the east side of the lawn.

The aggregate material on the walkways is worn out and the final product to be used has not been decided. Lighting along the walkways is an important element for safety and impact during the laser show.

Mr. Branscome said that Snow Mountain made an impact on the lawn, but one that is recoverable. New sod has been planted and the lawn is looking better.

### **Year-to-Date Financial Statements**

Ms. Durham reviewed the year-to-date financial statements for the four month period ending April 30, 2009. Total revenues are \$3.8 million compared to the budget of \$3.7 million. Total operating expenses are \$1.9 million and the budget is \$1.7 million. The net operating profit before depreciation is \$2.1 million and after depreciation the net profit year-to-date is \$841,000.

The statement of cash flows indicates that SMMA has generated about \$1.9 million in cash for the first four months of operation and has used about \$1.1 million for capital additions. The net increase in cash year-to-date is \$819,000 and the cash balance at the end of April was \$20 million.

Capital project expenditures were reviewed. Mr. Branscome explained the work to be performed on Indian Island and the parking area there. Erosion is the biggest issue in this area. Mr. Pentecost asked if there was still a fence there and Mr. Cowhig affirmed that it would remain in place.

Mr. Brown asked about the rebuild at the railroad depot. Mr. Cowhig explained that there was some structural work in the clerestory and the new facility is more of a self-service food and drink store. Mr. Pentecost said it was a nicely done renovation.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Notes taken by  
Gail Durham, Secretary