

STONE MOUNTAIN MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION
May 19, 2015

A meeting of the Stone Mountain Memorial Association was held at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 19, 2015, at Evergreen Conference Center, Stone Mountain Park, Stone Mountain, Georgia.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS PRESENT

Carolyn Meadows, Chairman
Greer Johnson, Vice Chairman
Ray S. Smith, III
Dick Childers
Perry Tindol
Roy Roberts

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS ABSENT

Becky Kelley, Director State Parks & Historic Sites
Scott Johnson
Joan Thomas

OTHERS PRESENT

Bill Stephens, C.E.O.
Bob Cowhig, Director of Planning and Development
Chief Chuck Kelley, Director of Public Safety
Michael Dombrowski, General Manager, Silver Dollar City/Stone Mountain Park
Connie Rifkind, Finance Manager
Debbie Blihovde, Benefits Administrator
Duane Studdard, Administration Manager
Naomi Thompson, Education Supervisor

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Meadows, SMMA Chairman, called the meeting to order and stated that a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Johnson, and unanimously approved to waive the reading of the minutes of the April 21, 2015 Board 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

None

SILVER DOLLAR CITY/STONE MOUNTAIN PARK REPORT

Mr. Dombrowski stated that HFEC is trying to embrace the uniqueness of the park. They are piloting a yurts program in the campground. They want to be open by Memorial Day. The cost of the yurts are \$99 a night and \$139 a night on holidays. This has been the hot trend in camping. People want the experience of camping without any of the discomfort. When HFEC rolled out the program on Facebook, they got the most likes they have ever gotten on any program. Thousands of people liked it, and HFEC has received hundreds of comments. They have sold out for June, July and August on the weekends.

FINANCE REPORT – YEAR-TO-DATE

Ms. Rifkind reported that the Finance Committee met earlier and discussed the financial statements through April 30, 2015. Total revenue year-to-date was \$3.9 million compared to a budget of \$3.4 million. Total operating expenses were about \$2.3 million compared to the budget of \$2.5 million. SMMA is favorable in almost every category of overhead. After depreciation the net income year-to-date is a loss of \$440,000 compared to a budgeted loss of \$1.1 million.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO SMMA ORDINANCE

Ms. Meadows stated that today was the first reading of the proposed ordinance revision of Ordinance 8-106. Mr. Kelley stated that SMMA changed some of the verbiage because it was a very old ordinance. The original ordinance stated that dogs were not allowed anywhere on the mountain. That section was changed to state dogs can walk on the Cherokee Trail and cross the walk up trail and continue on the Cherokee Trail. A section was added stating that any animal or pet found at large may be seized and disposed of as provided by State Law and local ordinances covering disposal of stray animals on highways or public property with the Animal Control Unit of the county in which the animal was seized. That covers both Dekalb and Gwinnett County. Also was added that Law enforcement could remove any animal in a locked car between the dates of April 1 and October 31 if the animal appears to be in distress.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Chief Kelley said we were able to catch a suspect in the parking lot car burglaries by tracking their cell phones. The person has been arrested and named the others in the group. This group has committed burglaries in other locations.

Memorial Day is a big weekend for the park. The natural district is usually crowded. Chief Kelley watched testing of the new flame cannons for the laser show. The yurts have been given a certificate of occupancy and are in compliance with all the safety codes. One of the yurts is handicap accessible.

Chief Kelley said we are in the process of changing some of the signs in the park. We are using icons will be used on the signs. For example for “no camp fire” there will be a picture of a campfire with a circle and a line through the campfire.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Thompson discussed classroom programs for 2015. Ms. Thompson said they have two new snakes for class. They have a black rat snake and a king snake. Tomorrow is the last class for the school year. Ms. Thompson said she tried to keep the classes at about 15,000 students total for the school year. They had over that number this year. They teach school groups, do outreach and check out science kits to teachers for class. They have programs for the public. An example is rock and mineral day. Fernbank Science Center brings classes to the park. Ms. Thompson said her staff does a really good job of teaching and ensuring the success of all the programs.

They have three programs for the summer. They will run from June 1st through the end of July. On Tuesdays there is an informal tour of Georgia's native plants at the Nature Garden. On Wednesdays there is an insect puppet show at the Children's Playground. Then there is a nature walk in the meadow, forest and wetland. On Fridays there is a class on reptiles and amphibians at Confederate Hall. They also have teacher quality workshops. They give the teachers journals, help them to create better lesson plans and teach them ways to help kids learn about science.

Ms. Thompson stated that they send out evaluations to the teachers after the classes. They want to know if the teachers feel the material was covered in the class. They want to know if the teachers feel the classes in the park are unique. They ask the teachers what resources they would want or need after coming to this class. They ask how the teachers are going to use the information they received in the class. If they do not get a form back they follow up with the teacher and school.

OLD BUSINESS

None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Carolyn Meadows, Chairman

Submitted by Debbie Blihovde