

STONE MOUNTAIN MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION
February 18, 2008

A meeting of the Stone Mountain Memorial Association was held at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, February 18, 2008, at Evergreen Conference Center, Stone Mountain Park, Stone Mountain, Georgia.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS PRESENT

Mark Baxter, Chairman
Greer Johnson, Vice Chairman
Bill Chappell
Noel Holcomb
Mike Pentecost
Ray S. Smith, III
Joan Thomas

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS ABSENT

Brent Brown

OTHERS PRESENT

Curtis Branscome, C.E.O.
Bob Cowhig, Director of Planning & Construction
Gail Durham, Director of Finance
Gerald Rakestraw, HFEC V.P. General Manager
Other SMMA Staff

CALL TO ORDER

Mark Baxter, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Joan Thomas, seconded by Bill Chappell, and unanimously approved to waive the reading of the minutes of the December 3, 2007 teleconference 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.

AMENDMENT TO THE CAPITAL BUDGET

Mr. Branscome stated that the five year capital budget had been revised for the period 2008-2012. The revisions were reviewed extensively in the Finance Committee meeting held earlier today and approval was recommended. There have been no new projects added to the budget. The timing of certain projects has shifted and the removal of lake siltation has been deleted from the budget because this is not economically feasible. The new Services Complex project has been moved forward to 2008 and will consolidate Mr. Cowhig's operation in one physical location. Primary road access to the facility will be from the City of Stone Mountain. This will eliminate some of the traffic that now enters through the Park gate access. We will demolish the other facilities which are located in the Natural District. Mr. Branscome asked for the Board to approve the amended 2008-2012 capital program.

Mike Pentecost moved for the Board to approve the revised capital budget. Mr. Chappell seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

STONE MOUNTAIN PARK REPORT – HFEC

Mr. Rakestraw extended his congratulations to Mr. Baxter on his reappointment to the Board and service as Chairman.

The Snow Mountain project did not go forward as planned due to the drought situation in Georgia. Mr. Rakestraw said that in the aftermath they had begun to focus on their business and how it fits into the bigger picture of the environment. He thanked Curtis Branscome and his team for their ongoing efforts to protect the environment and natural resources at Stone Mountain Park. Mr. Rakestraw said that the primary focus is on water conservation for the present, but they are beginning to look at other environmental opportunities as well.

Stone Mountain Park is still Georgia's most visited attraction each year and hosts about 4 million visitors each year. All Georgians are customers and utilize the green space that Stone Mountain Park offers. This Park can be the leader in eco-friendly practices. We want to be water neutral with conservation and best practices as the property grows. We still have the desire to do Snow Mountain as well as a water park. Mr. Rakestraw will brief the SMMA Board at a later date on how they intend to accomplish this without using the municipal water supply. There will come a time when sustainability and caretaking of natural resources will be a requirement for development in the Atlanta area. HFEC intends to balance the need to grow and the need to protect our beautiful green space.

In the Park HFEC and SMMA manage the water system. There are a lot of sewer mains, manholes, and pump stations within the Park. The biggest problem is that the systems are over 40 years old. A 40 year-old system becomes inefficient. The Park management has taken a proactive approach to attack the infrastructure issues. Modern standards and a plan for growth have been incorporated in system upgrades and replacements. As a part of this, an agreement is in place to invest approximately \$300,000 in updating the Park infrastructure and irrigation methods to save roughly 17 million gallons of water each year. As a whole, all entities in the Park use 70 million gallons of water each year which does not place us in the top users in DeKalb County. However, the Park draws a lot more attention than the average water user. Some ideas to conserve water include recycling water at the laundry facility and installing waterless urinals. On the average a waterless urinal saves 250,000 to 300,000 gallons of water per year, based on the number of flushes. Converting irrigation from domestic water supply to irrigation from the lake is another opportunity for water savings. SMMA currently uses lake irrigation, but Marriott uses the domestic water supply.

Education opportunities at Confederate Hall and with Park collateral can help to enlighten the public and increase everyone's awareness regarding water conservation. All these programs will help reduce the Park's water usage by 20% which is impressive. We hope to have many of these upgrades in place by Memorial Day.

Mr. Rakestraw said that he and Mr. Branscome had visited with the Department of Natural Resources Environments Protection Department's Director, Carol Couch, to share the plans for Stone Mountain Park's water conservation program. She was impressed with the plans and the thought that went into these improvements. These plans have also been shared with several water experts at EPD who think that we are on the right track. The plans were reviewed by the largest water user in Georgia, Coca Cola Beverages. They have a lot of experience in water conservation and stated that we are on the right track with these plans.

Finally, as we get the water issues resolved, we will also develop plans for sustainability issues, such as recycling and reducing electrical use. HFEC has always maintained a tree policy and is now looking at the sustainability issues for all properties. Stone Mountain Park would like to be a poster child for water conservation, but will be happy with a reduction in domestic water usage.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Thomas asked if there were any plans for a SMMA Board retreat. Mr. Branscome said that there were no immediate plans, but that he would take a look at possibilities for one later in the year.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Branscome said that several years ago SMMA launched the environmental and historical education program. Kerrie Anne Loyd was hired to startup that program. Last year Ms. Loyd had the opportunity to return to the University of Georgia where she obtained her Master's degree and be a research assistant while working on her PhD. She remains with SMMA on a part-time basis. Naomi Thompson was working under Ms. Loyd's leadership and has taken over as head of the Education Department. Ms. Thompson has produced a brochure on the Stone Mountain Park Natural District to help people locate areas and enjoy these natural areas of the Park. In addition to the fact that Ms. Loyd is part-time, Sara Nichols who was a full-time educator decided to move to Portland, Oregon. SMMA has hired two new educators, Brian McKnight and Alina Ruiz.

Mr. McKnight and Ms. Ruiz introduced themselves to the Board and reviewed their backgrounds and qualifications. They both expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work at the Park and to be involved with nature and wildlife.

Ms. Thompson discussed the development of the brochure and how trail information, history, and exhibit information had been incorporated in this print brochure. She also discussed programs that were being offered to the public on Saturdays and Sundays in April called "Meet the Mountain Month." These programs are being offered by SMMA educators, outside educators and other groups such as the Georgia Native Plant Society. Ms. Thompson stated that two part-time educators, Susan Meyers and Beth Rothermel, have also been a great help in developing programs that make us proud. Mr. Branscome stated that evaluations he reviews typically have a rating of 4.5 or better on a 5 point scale.

Mr. Smith asked Ms. Thompson to send the Board members a packet of information on the programs offered. He stated that he personally had contacts with schools that would be interested in the programs offered.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Mark Baxter, Chairman

Submitted by
Gail Durham, Secretary