

STONE MOUNTAIN MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION  
May 16, 2011

A meeting of the Stone Mountain Memorial Association was held at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, May 16, 2011, at Evergreen Conference Center, Stone Mountain Park, Stone Mountain, Georgia.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS PRESENT

Mark Baxter, Chairman  
Greer Johnson, Vice Chairman  
Carolyn Meadows  
Ray S. Smith, III  
Joan Thomas

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS ABSENT

Brent Brown  
Mike Pentecost  
Becky Kelley, Director State Parks & Historic Sites - representing Mark Williams,  
Commissioner of Department of Natural Resources

OTHERS PRESENT

Curtis Branscome, C.E.O.  
Bob Cowhig, Director of Planning & Construction  
Gail Durham, Director of Finance  
Bill Stephens, Director of Administration  
Gerald Rakestraw, V.P. – Silver Dollar City Stone Mountain Park  
Other SMMA staff

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None

CALL TO ORDER

Mark Baxter, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Ray Smith, seconded by Joan Thomas, and unanimously approved to waive the reading of the minutes of the March 21, 2011 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. Rakestraw updated the Board on events planned for the summer at Stone Mountain Park. The Yogi Bear 4-D movie is new this year as well as the Laser Show Spectacular. The new Mountain Vision technology featured in the laser show is going to be promoted through billboards, television and radio spots. The second half of the summer includes a magic show and begins June 30.

Park cleanup efforts have progressed and HFEC has removed nearly 40,000 pounds of scrap metal from the Park for recycling. Some of the highly visible areas are greatly improved, but work remains to be done.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Durham stated that total revenues for the period ending March 31, 2011 were \$2.6 million compared to the budget of \$2.5 million. Total operating expenses were about \$1.4 million compared to the budget of \$1.7 million. Depreciation expense was \$1.2 million and the budget was \$1 million. The timing of projects closed in 2010 resulted in an unfavorable budget variance in depreciation expense for 2011. The excess of revenues over expenses was about \$50,000 compared to a budget deficit of about \$200,000.

## REPORT ON THE SMMA EDUCATION PROGRAM

Naomi Thompson, Supervisor of the SMMA Education Department, presented an update on programs and efforts by the Education staff. Ms. Thompson reviewed the objectives of the educational programs at Stone Mountain Park. The teacher surveys based on the programs offered have been very favorable. Ms. Thompson displayed slides that indicated high scores for the SMMA programs.

The newsletter has been published and includes a trail map, a feature article about the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War, basic information about the school field trips offered, land management efforts, plant and wildlife offerings, historical articles, and other exhibit information.

Ms. Thompson introduced Brian McKnight who is one of the educators. Mr. McKnight discussed several partnerships. Some of these include Georgia Perimeter College (GPC). One project they are assisting with is controlling invasive species. Another project called "Discovering Life" involves investigating and photographing insects. In turn, SMMA is using GPC to host an environmental conference. An on-going partnership with the Boys and Girls Club has been successful in expanding these children's exposure to wildlife. Another effort is the Naturalist Rally to be held September 24, 2011. This event is hosted by SMMA in partnership with the Environmental Education Alliance.

Ms. Thompson said that her staff has been trying to learn more about the people who attend their programs and visit the Park. The goal is to educate visitors on the different areas of the Park based on the Master Plan and to determine the types of programs of interest.

Over 15,000 students attended educational programs with SMMA this year. The goal was 12,000 for the 2010-2011 school year and we are pleased with the attendance. Ms. Thompson said that her staff has done an excellent job and she wanted the Board to be aware of their accomplishments. She shared comments from program attendees and presented certificates for Board signature to give to her staff.

Mr. Branscome echoed Ms. Thompson's positive comments about the education programs. He said that the surveys are shared on a regular basis with him and Bob Cowhig and that on a 4.0 scale the marks are usually right at the 4.0 mark. This staff not only works

with groups who attend a class at Stone Mountain Park, but they have taken the initiative to do outreach classes and pack up their materials and visit schools. Budget and other concerns limit the field trip experiences for many schools and our staff eliminates some of these barriers. The impact of our programs has been broadened and we are rendering a valuable service. We are supplementing the classroom lectures by giving a hands on learning experience. These children represent the constituency of Stone Mountain Park for the future. We are educating and teaching the value and significance of Stone Mountain Park to the people who will one day be responsible for sustaining, protecting, and enhancing this wonderful resource. Mr. Branscome presented Ms. Thompson and Mr. McKnight with certificates signed by Mark Baxter, Chairman of Stone Mountain Memorial Association.

Ms. Thompson displayed a book written by Alina Ruiz which uses animals to demonstrate bullying and teach about character development. Ms. Ruiz will be leaving SMMA at the end of July to pursue the final step in obtaining her counseling requirements.

Ms. Thompson recognized Frank Davis and Dennis Gresham for their help in offering members of their staff to help with the Earth Day event. Janet Black, Patricia Boulis, and Lynn Jenkins from the administrative team also helped. Bill Stephens graciously assisted as well.

#### OLD BUSINESS

None.

#### NEW BUSINESS

None.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

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Mark Baxter, Chairman

Submitted by  
Gail Durham, Secretary