

STONE MOUNTAIN MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

Board Meeting Minutes

**DECEMBER 13, 2004**

**LOCATION:** Evergreen Conference Center and Resort

Salon EFG

**TIME:** 5:00 P.M. – SMMA Board Meeting

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS PRESENT

Greer Johnson, Vice Chair

Mark Baxter

Bill Chappell

Walter Gordon

Noel Holcomb

Mike Pentecost

Ray S. Smith, III

**ASSOCIATION MEMBERS ABSENT**

Wayne Garner, Chairman

Tom Gilliland

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

Other SMMA Staff

Cindy Presto, Senior Assistant Attorney General

Members of the Public

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chairman Greer Johnson called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Mark Baxter, seconded by Walter Gordon, and unanimously approved to waive the reading of the minutes of the November 15, 2004 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**

Ms. Anne Hall of Stone Mountain and a lecturer at Emory University in environmental studies addressed the SMMA Board. She stated that she has been a Stone Mountain resident for a period of years and loves the mountain. She is happy that the facility is available and has been heartened by many of the changes that have come to pass in the last few years. She enjoys the quarry exhibit.

The purpose for her attendance today is to voice a disappointment about the “Ride the Ducks” attraction. Recently during a hike around the mountain where she enjoys the quite and serenity of the Park she heard the music, the “quacking” and the motor and was disappointed. Not only did the noise disturb her, but the attraction is not environmentally friendly from an air and water quality perspective. She thinks the attractions in the developed area of the Park are necessary to help the Park economically, but the Duck ride is a big disappointment.

Ms. Hall also expressed that it was amazing the number of people that come to Stone Mountain for exercise. She stated that nothing appears on the SMMA website or has been discussed in the Board minutes to her knowledge recognizing this fact. She said the number of people exercising at the Park seems to have increased rapidly in the last ten years. She said the management should tap into that fact. Obesity in America is a huge issue right now and there could be ways to use the Park constructively to encourage people to get out and exercise rather than sit in a vehicle to be transported around.

She enjoys the Historical and Environmental Education Center at Confederate Hall and thinks the trails and hiking are wonderful. But, she would like to see some kind of action on the part of the Park management to emphasize the options for exercise at the Park.

Ms. Johnson thanked Ms. Hall for the comments.

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

Mr. Branscome stated that there would not be a report from HFEC presented at this meeting.

## **EXTENSION OF AGREEMENT FOR MANAGEMENT OF TOP OF MOUNTAIN COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Branscome said that in 1995 the buildings at the top of the mountain were reconstructed to

reduce the profile of the structures and eliminate the porcupine appearance of the array of antennas. These antennas were placed underneath a fiberglass roof and there are about 55 antennas housed under this roof. This site has been managed for SMMA. Initially Motorola held the management contract and subsequently sold that portion of their business to Pinnacle. Pinnacle has since sold this business to Global Signal. SMMA has been pleased with the management of the facility and we have negotiated a five year extension to the management contract. The first year yields \$300,000 with 3% increases in subsequent years. The current year payment is \$289,000. Mr. Branscome stated that since this is a multi-year contract, the SMMA bylaws require approval from the Board. A single year contract can be approved by the CEO.

Mr. Branscome said he is requesting the Board to approve the amendment to the contract for five years to allow Global Signal to continue to manage the communications at the top of the mountain. Ms. Presto stated that the draft of the legal document has been reviewed and approved by the legal counsel.

Ms. Johnson stated that the new Board members should be aware of how this communication equipment benefits SMMA. Mr. Branscome stated that SMMA's communications originate from this facility and that prior to this installation Public Safety personnel could not communicate from one side of the mountain to the other. This system is essential to SMMA and the Public Safety Department. Mr. Smith asked if there was a requirement that the contract be re-let at any time. Mr. Branscome stated that as an Authority we are not required to bid this contract. SMMA originally bid this out years ago and Motorola was by far the highest bidder. We have a consultant with expertise in this area that represents the telecommunications industry who has given us assurance that we have negotiated an equitable arrangement with Global.

Mr. Gordon said that it was good that the contract was five years with another five year renewal. Mr. Branscome stated that we renegotiate at the end of each renewal period and that the contract does not automatically renew. Mr. Gordon said he wanted to be sure that the terms of the agreement were such that it did require renegotiation before a renewal took effect. Mr. Branscome stated that the contract comes down to the right of first refusal. If SMMA does not reach agreement on the terms of the renewal then we can reach agreement with another party and Global has the right to match that offer. Mr. Gordon recalls that this was a lucrative arrangement from the beginning and that SMMA had received long term benefits in addition to communication equipment.

Mr. Gordon moved that the extension of the management of the top of the mountain communications be approved. Mark Baxter seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

## 2005 STRATEGIC PLAN

Mr. Branscome reviewed the mission and vision statements and the goals of SMMA with the Board. He explained that the previous seven goals had been distilled down to five. He said that the separate goal of adding green space had been consolidated with the first goal of enhancing the natural area of the Park as both a recreational and educational experience for the guests. He reviewed the remaining goals and asked the Board to offer any input or changes.

Mr. Branscome said that one goal was to provide first-rate public safety services, maintaining a real and perceived sense of safety for the guests in an environment that allows them to both feel safe and welcome. Mr. Gordon stated that he thought Jerry Spicer, Chief Kelley and his staff do a great job of this. Mr. Branscome said that through Jerry Spicer's leadership our personnel have been able to make the guests feel welcome and safe.

Mr. Baxter suggested that the vision statement be corrected to capitalize "Southern" in referring to heritage. Mr. Branscome stated that this would be corrected.

The internal and external environmental influences were reviewed and discussed. Mr. Branscome stated that the population and cultural diversity among the guests had changed dramatically and would continue to impact the Park. The aging infrastructure which includes a water and sewer system that will need to be evaluated and maintained or replaced in the next several years. The senior management of SMMA is maturing and we will be continuing to develop the existing workforce to fill the supervisory and management needs of the Association. Mr. Branscome recognized that Bob Cowhig had just completed 20 years of service with Stone Mountain Memorial Association.

Mr. Branscome stated that the revision of the Master Plan would be completed in the next few months and the traffic study would be incorporated as a part of the plan.

Mr. Branscome reviewed the highlights of specific goals, strategic outcomes, objectives, critical success factors, and success inhibitors for these goals.

Mr. Branscome asked the Board if there were any questions or comments regarding the 2005 Strategic Plan. Mr. Holcomb said that he thought the Plan was on target and he is encouraged by the dynamics and cooperation between Stone Mountain Park, Panola Mountain and Fernbank with regards to a consistent theme and message regarding wildlife.

#### OLD BUSINESS

None.

#### NEW BUSINESS

None.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

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Greer Johnson, Vice Chairman

Submitted by Gail Durham, Secretary