

STONE MOUNTAIN MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION
June 15, 2009

A meeting of the Stone Mountain Memorial Association was held at 1:00 p.m. on Monday, June 15, 2009, at Evergreen Conference Center, Stone Mountain Park, Stone Mountain, Georgia.

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS PRESENT

Mark Baxter, Chairman
Brent Brown
Bill Chappell
Greer Johnson, Vice Chairman
Mike Pentecost
Joan Thomas

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS ABSENT

Chris Clark
Carolyn Meadows
Ray S. Smith, III

OTHERS PRESENT

Lee Baker, Executive Director, Gwinnett Sports Council
Kenny King, Evermore CID Director
Curtis Branscome, C.E.O.
Bob Cowhig, Director of Planning & Construction
Gail Durham, Director of Finance
Gerald Rakestraw, V.P. – Silver Dollar City Stone Mountain Park
Other SMMA staff

CALL TO ORDER

Mark Baxter, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mike Pentecost, seconded by Bill Chappell, and unanimously approved to waive the reading of the minutes of the March 16, 2009 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

Mr. Lee Baker addressed his concerns regarding the demolition of the Tennis Stadium. He requested that the SMMA Board reconsider the decision to demolish the stadium. Mr. Baker understands that SMMA has not had any success in utilizing the Stadium over the past years. His belief is that the facility must be transitioned to a multi purpose facility with a roof or a bubble to remove the weather element in order to market it effectively. Mr. Baker listed many events that could take place at the venue if it had a roof. This facility could serve crowds that would not be accommodated by a 2,000 seat high school gymnasium.

He has reviewed the structural assessment report prepared by Rosser international which notes deterioration that has occurred but poses no immediate threat to the continued operation of the facility. The report was dated two years ago. To spend \$2 million to demolish the stadium is hard to accept.

He asked if SMMA had done a feasibility study on putting a roof on the stadium and what benefits this would have for the area. SMMA's response has been that this would be pouring good money after bad. Would it be worth verifying with a study, that would cost less than \$50,000, to either confirm the decision to demolish or find that a multi-purpose facility could not only sustain itself but bring thousands of new visitors to the Park each year? The Stadium is positioned at the Gateway to the Evermore CID, which would welcome the visitors to the shops, restaurants and hotels in the area. By partnering with the Evermore CID, it could serve as a catalyst for a rebirth of the area.

Mr. Baker understands that an agreement has been signed with Gwinnett County to demolish the Stadium and turn the remaining tennis courts over to them. He is sure the county would reconsider its position on the conversion if an economic impact study shows that benefits would be substantially greater for all than using the area as a tennis park.

Mr. Baker asked the Board to reconsider its actions or to share additional documentation that supports the decision. He requested the Board to allow a group led by him to inspect the facility. He has checked with Gwinnett County and they have told him any inspection would be SMMA's decision.

Mr. Baker requested a reasonable amount of time to follow through with this discovery and make it as public as possible so no one can question what would be in the best interest of the citizens and taxpayers of the area.

Mr. Baker thanked the SMMA Board for allowing him to make the proposal.

Mr. Branscome stated that the SMMA Board and the Gwinnett County Commission has approved and executed a fifty year lease on the tennis property with the stipulation that the Stadium be demolished. If Gwinnett County comes to the SMMA Board and requests that the agreement be amended to delete the requirement to demolish the Stadium, then SMMA would consider not spending monies on demolition. The agreement is legally binding and the fate of the facility is solely in the hands of Gwinnett County.

Mr. Baker inquired as to whether a study had been done to determine the feasibility of putting a roof on the stadium. Mr. Branscome replied that to his knowledge no study had been performed. Mr. Branscome said that he envisioned that a roof would cost millions of dollars and that if the Evermore CID had funds for this they should present them to Gwinnett County along with their proposal.

Mr. Baker also asked who would need to decide to perform a feasibility study. Mr. Branscome stated that the binding agreement was with Gwinnett County and any study would need to come from them.

SILVER DOLLAR CITY/STONE MOUNTAIN PARK REPORT

Mr. Rakestraw said the Park shuttle service has been integrated with the Evergreen shuttle service to provide one transportation system in the Park. An exclusive Duck ride is offered on weekends to resort guests as well as special seating on the lawn. The Evergreen lobby coffee shop has been renovated to service the weekend traveler with foods appropriate for the laser show. The bad economic climate has provided proof that guests travel close to home in a weak economy.

Mr. Branscome stated that he had toured Crossroads recently and complimented Mr. Rakestraw on his employees. Mr. Branscome said that every employee greeted him and had a smile to share. This goes a long way to improve the guest experience.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Durham recapped the financial statements for the period ending May 31, 2009. Year-to-date revenues were \$4.6 million and the budget was \$4.5 million. Total operating expenses were \$2.3 million compared to the budget of \$2.5 million. Net profit before depreciation was \$2.5 million and the excess of revenue over expense was \$918,000 compared to the budget of \$734,000.

BOATING HOURS ORDINANCE

Mr. Branscome stated that this is the second reading of the ordinance. Currently boats with 10 or less horsepower are allowed on Stone Mountain Lake between June 1 and August 31 during daylight hours on weekdays. On weekends and holidays they are only allowed from 6 a.m. until noon. This restriction was put in place many years ago when there was a lot of commercial rental boating activity. Currently there is very little activity of that nature and we would like to open up the lake for recreational enjoyment during daylight hours.

Mr. Pentecost made a motion to approve the revised boating ordinance, Mr. Brown seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

OPEN FIRES ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

Mr. Branscome stated that this is the second reading of the ordinance. The open fires ordinance amendment grants authority to the Public Safety Department to ban all outside fires if weather and ground moisture conditions are such that these fires could present a danger. This ordinance is recommended for approval.

Ms. Thomas made a motion to approve the open fires ordinance and Ms. Johnson seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mark Baxter, Chairman

Submitted by
Gail Durham, Secretary

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