

**STATEMENT BY SMMA BOARD CHAIRMAN RAY S. SMITH III**

Friday November 13, 2020

(Atlanta, Georgia)- Over the past several weeks the SMMA Board has received all kinds of ideas and proposals related to Stone Mountain Park, its monuments, its mission and the future of the Park. We truly appreciate all of the varied opinions and concern.

At the board meeting this coming Monday, November 16th, I will charge our CEO, Bill Stephens, with leading an effort with the responsibility of reviewing the various proposals, meeting with state and community leaders, consulting with experts and historians and other parties regarding a 21st century perspective on Stone Mountain Park.

I anticipate this work will take months, not years. I anticipate this work will be inclusive, not exclusive. And I anticipate this work will address both the economic and cultural importance this park has to the local communities and the entire state.

I have said for some time that Stone Mountain Park needs to be positioned to meet the needs and challenges of Georgians in the 21st century.

None of the current board members or staff were involved with the acquisition of the park in 1958 nor the completion of the carving and monuments in the 1960's, but the responsibility does fall to us here in the present to listen and hear the thoughts and opinions of Georgians in regards to our state's most visited tourist attraction."

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