



Cumming Country Fair & Festival Advisory Board Meeting

*Thursday August 2, 2018
Cumming City Hall
100 E Main Street – Cumming GA 30040
6:00 p.m.*

The mission of the Cumming Fair Advisory Board is to serve in an advisory capacity to the governing authority of the City of Cumming.

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: The inaugural meeting of the Cumming Country Fair & Festival Advisory Board was called to order by Interim-President Michelle Daniels at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 2, 2018, with the following board members present: Michelle Daniels, Mary Helen McGruder, Catherine Amos, Connie May, Rupert Sexton, Shakeeb Ali, Steve Bennett, Quincy Holton, Ralph Perry, Russ Sorrells, Eric Bennett, Kelly Lamb and Julie Tressler; Carrie Patterson was absent. Mayor Troy Brumbalow, City Administrator Phil Higgins, Fairgrounds Director Tracy Helms, Fairgrounds Event Coordinator Donna Cruse, and Public Information Assistant Crystal Ledford were also in attendance.

Advisory Board Introductions: Interim-President Michelle Daniels asked everyone to state their names and give a little information about themselves.

Welcome & Board Overview: Mayor Troy Brumbalow thanked all of the advisory board members for volunteering their time to serve. He explained that the role of the board is to make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council regarding the Cumming Country Fair & Festival.

Fair & Festival Overview: Fairgrounds Director Tracy Helms briefly discussed the history of the Fair, noting that the event began in 1995 with a five-day run. In 1996, a five-day fall and spring fair were held, and from 1997 to 2000, one 10-day fair was held in the fall only. Since 2001, the fair has followed the current 11-day format, held each October. He noted that the Fairgrounds has been its own separate department within

the City of Cumming since 1998. Prior to 1998, the Fairgrounds fell under the Cumming Recreation Department. The Fairgrounds operates under its own departmental budget, and the Fair operates under that budget.

Regarding the Fair set-up, Helms noted that there are two distinct areas: The “midway” and “independent midway.” The midway - which includes carnival rides, games and some food vendors - is handled by the James H. Drew Exposition, which has had a contract with the City since the Fair began. The current contract expires in 2020. The independent midway is handled by the City, and includes most of the vendor spaces. Helms noted that James Drew is a “good community partner” who gives back to the community by working with non-profits, hiring local people, and paying half of the costs associated with the Fair’s ground acts each year.

Helms said during every night of the Fair there are about 55 people working, many of those being City employees. The City receives 20 percent of the gross sales of the ride ticket sales and a \$5-per-square-foot rental fee for carnival games. Typically there are three to four concerts throughout the course of the Fair; this year there will be two concerts - Confederate Railroad and Trace Adkins - and a Marvel Super Heroes Show on Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta Night.

Mayor Brumbalow also made note of some future capital projects at the Fairgrounds, which include: A pedestrian covered bridge; revamped ticket booth area with separate lines for individuals paying with cash or credit card; and a 400-foot retaining wall in front of the covered arena, which will allow for an additional 40 to 50 feet of width in the walkway area in front of the arena. The wall will be decorated with painted murals done by members of the Sawnee Association of the Arts.

2018 Goals & Focus: Interim-President Daniels explained that the Advisory Board will focus on improving the guest experience. As such, each board member will be provided with two complimentary admission tickets and one complimentary parking pass. Each board member is asked to attend the Fair at least one night to identify ways to create a seamless event experience for guests.

The board will meet again on Oct. 24, 2018 at 6 p.m. to discuss members’ observations from the Fair and suggestions for changes or improvements. The group will then determine a list of suggestions to present to the Mayor and City Council for 2019.

A few board members asked to see revenues and expenditures from the Fair, and Fairgrounds staff said they would provide those numbers to all board members within the next couple of weeks.

Election of Officers: Eric Bennett made a motion to elect Michelle Daniels as President and Mary Helen McGruder as Secretary. The motion was seconded by Quincy Holton and approved unanimously.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m.