



Cumming Country Fair & Festival Advisory Board Meeting

*Monday, January 27, 2020
Cumming City Hall
100 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 meeting of the Cumming Country Fair & Festival Advisory Board was called to order by President Michelle Daniels at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, January 27, 2020, with the following board members present: Board President Michelle Daniels, Board Secretary Mary Helen McGruder, Catherine Mashburn, Eric Bennett, Steve Bennett, Rupert Sexton, Kelly Lamb, and Julie Tressler. Mayor Troy Brumbalow, City Administrator Phil Higgins, Fairgrounds Director Tracy Helms, Fairgrounds Event Coordinator Donna Cruse, were also in attendance. Several Advisory Board members were absent.

Welcome: Mayor Troy Brumbalow briefly welcomed everyone and thanked the Fairgrounds staff for a “remarkable job” during the Oct. 3-13, 2019 fair, calling the fair a “successful, great event”.

2019 Fair & Festival Event Overview: Fairgrounds Director Tracy Helms presented an overview of the 2019 fair, noting that it was “the highest attended on record.” The fair’s success is heavily determined by weather conditions and Helms noted that every night, except the last Sunday of the fair, experienced great weather. He said four of the 11 days were record-setting days, based on revenue amounts. Previous records were set in 2018, and he noted several comparisons between the 2018 fair and the 2019 event: Overall revenue from the 2019 fair was \$1.33 million which is an increase of approximately 1% with expenses down \$50,000 from 2018. Sponsorships were up 26% which is an all-time record at \$244,746. Food gross was increased 6% which set a new

record with revenue at \$92,005. Gate, midway, and parking totaled \$896,410. Attendance was not officially counted this year; however, based on a formula derived using various revenue totals as variables, it is estimated that approximate 227,000 people attended the fair this year (up from 219,000 in 2018).

2019 Event Feedback & Discussion: Several board members presented input they had received from select vendors and volunteers or observations they themselves made while attending the fair. Some members inquired if having two concerts had any negative feedback – which we learned it's a big win from both sides as it allows larger acts to be brought in and eliminates the competition with Friday night football; others commented about the handicap parking situation and the complaints they received for some attendees that didn't want to cross the pedestrian bridge – which led to a conversation amongst board members about compliance vs. convenience as the bridge is ADA compliant; additional feedback regarded the new layout of the midway rides which appeared more open and easier to access, more clean looking and in better condition this year than some past years. One board member brought up vendor parking passes and “grumbles about that” – this led into a discussion from the Fairgrounds team that the parking pass policy had not changed and the issues typically come from the vendors who do not want to share passes. More passes are available at a discounted rate. Board members also said they loved the additional social media presence and promotions offered and enjoyed seeing the engagement online from visitors who enjoyed the fair.

The advisory board also took a moment to thank the fairgrounds team for graciously providing tickets to the 2019 fair and overall had a lot of positive feedback regarding the 2019 event.

2020 Updates: Tracy Helms, Mayor Troy Brumbalow provided an update regarding the future updates to the 2020 Fair & Festival, which will be hosted from October 8-18th, 2020:

- Scare Fair a huge success and they are in discussions with the Relay for Life team about hosting the haunted house during the entire fair run (only open at night).
- Shifting the Gate A archway towards Castleberry Road & building a small ticket booth which will increase the efficiency of onsite ticket sales.
- The parking fee will be eliminated and gate fees will increase from \$7 to \$10 (purchased onsite, online advanced purchase tickets will still be \$7). Tracy Helms shared the research the team has compiled. Other fair events located around the state have similar or more expensive fees for entry. Gwinnett charges \$10, Perry \$10 with additional \$20 to attend their concerts. The nominal increase in the Cumming Fair & Festival entry fees puts our fair on par with ticket pricing.
- Concert acts are currently being negotiated with no one finalized as of the date of the meeting.
- There are three ground acts confirmed with a circus being the newest addition to the fair which includes a 40-minute show under the big top circus tent. The Robo cars show will return as well as a wolf show and alligator show.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:00 p.m.