

News from the Helotes Heritage Association

Dear Readers,

Too often we find ourselves asking why the Texas Legislature did not take care of business when their 140-day session comes to a close. This year we can thank our legislators for one very important action. The Texas Legislature voted to provide \$1,125,000 to establish a memorial park in the name of Sen. Frank Madla in Helotes at the 33-acre parcel on Scenic Loop.

For this we need to extend sincere appreciation to Rep. David Liebowitz for championing this effort during this past legislative session. Without his efforts and those of staff member Rob Borja and other members of his staff, this amazing achievement would not have happened. We would also like to recognize Rep. Harvey Hildebran, Rep. Randy Chisum, and Vic Hildebran for their efforts to help shepherd this legislative action through a very difficult maze of legal and political challenges.

But foremost, HHA wants to congratulate past Mayor Jon Allan for his vision to secure this incredibly precious parcel of land for the future generations of our community. He courageously stepped forward and claimed this parcel for Helotes in the face of stiff opposition. It is difficult for us to comprehend the grounds on which this opposition was based. But, it was there. Sadly, it is possible that this courageous act may have led to Jon Allan's defeat for re-election, but that very well may be the case.

HHA also congratulates the Helotes City Council who demonstrated the courage and vision to take the actions to acquire this land. It is difficult to imagine better actions that could have been taken by a governing body to plan for the future of a community than what they did. They have our sincere appreciation.

The \$1,125,000 allocated by the State requires matching funds. In other words, every dollar from the state requires one matching dollar from Helotes. Helotes has set aside \$225,000 from developer contributions (i.e., not paid with tax dollars). Therefore, an additional \$118,000 needs to be raised to complete the purchase of the 33-acre parcel on Scenic Loop with a purchase price of \$686,000.

Fortunately, the Helotes Mayor and City Council established a Parks Foundation in early 2007. This action is critical because many other foundations in San Antonio, Texas, and elsewhere provide funds that could be used to complete the purchase of the park land. And while they won't give these funds to municipalities, they will give these funds to a (park) foundation. The Helotes Park and Open Spaces Committee is actively pursuing these funds to complete the purchase of the 33-acre parcel.

When completed, the 33-acre Sen. Frank Madla Memorial Park will be purchased without City of Helotes tax dollars. The remaining matching funds from the State can be applied to the development of the Sen. Frank Madla Memorial Park. This will truly be Helotes's Crown Jewel and a fitting memorial for Sen. Frank Madla.

This is a very proud day for Helotes and certainly a reason for celebration. Thank you to all who made this wonderful action happen.

Sincerely,
Ron Green
HHA, President