

## *News from the Helotes Heritage Association*

Dear Readers,

There is some really, really great park news. Last week we asked the community to step up and help raise the remaining \$118,000 needed in matching funds to complete the purchase of the 33-acre Sen. Frank Madla Memorial Park. The 33-acre parcel designated for the Sen. Frank Madla Memorial Park is an incredibly beautiful piece of land on Scenic Loop about 2 miles from the Center of Helotes. We are extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to set aside this parcel as a park for the future of the community. The chance that another parcel as great as this as a park land would become available is simply not realistic. We need to make sure we don't miss this opportunity and have to hope another comes along.

With this in mind, it gives us the greatest joy imaginable to inform you that in one week, our community raised \$120,000 needed to complete the purchase of the 33-acre Sen. Frank Madla Memorial Park. When added to the \$225,000 developer funds earmarked for this park, the City of Helotes now has the \$343,000 necessary for its half of the \$686,000 sale price for the 33 acres. The remaining \$343,000 will come from the \$1,125,000 appropriated for the Sen. Frank Madla Memorial Park by the Texas Legislature and signed into law on Friday by Gov Perry. The state allows us to take over four years to design and construct the Memorial Park. It does not have to be designed at this time.

But all is not well. We still need the Helotes City Council to ratify the purchase. This simple action is proving much more challenging than it should be. The new mayor of Helotes, Tom Schoolcraft, is thwarting the wishes of the Helotes City Council to complete the purchase. He has done this by refusing to allow Helotes City Council members to place this item on a City Council meeting agenda.

And he may succeed. The option to buy by the City of Helotes expired on June 1, 2007. Although the seller would like to see the property remain intact for perpetuity, and a park would certainly serve that purpose, we can't expect the seller to wait forever. The longer the mayor successfully stalls the purchase of the property, the closer he gets to killing the project. If the 33-acre parcel on Scenic Loop is not purchased, the State will revoke the \$1,125,000 appropriation. And there will be no Sen. Frank Madla Memorial Park.

We really don't know how to overcome this stalling action. Mayor Schoolcraft has not indicated a willingness to consider the park purchase or to let it the Helotes City Council even discuss the issue. Please contact Mayor Schoolcraft if you think you can make a difference. In the meantime, we can only hope the seller doesn't give up on our efforts to realize our dreams for the 33-acre Sen. Frank Madla Memorial Park.

This note was submitted as a letter to the editor to the Echo.

Ron Green, President  
Helotes Heritage Association