

GREENWOOD CEMETERY ADVISORY BOARD
--

AGENDA

Friday, January 8, 2021, 10 A.M.

VIRTUAL MEETING

Meeting ID: 989 8385 6041

The Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board provides the recommendations to the City Commission:

- 1. Modifications: As to modifications of the rules and regulations governing Greenwood Cemetery.*
- 2. Capital Improvements: As to what capital improvements should be made to the cemetery.*
- 3. Future Demands: As to how to respond to future demands for cemetery services.*

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson, Linda Buchanan

II. ROLL CALL

City Clerk, Alexandria Bingham

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- A. Approval of meeting minutes of November 6, 2020

IV. Unfinished Business

- A. Clarification on Ground Penetrating Radar
B. Recommendations to the City Commission for Grave Release

V. New Business

None

VI. REPORTS

- A. Financial Reports
B. Cemetery Sales & Activity

VII. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA
--

VIII. BOARD COMMENTS

IX. ADJOURN

Next Meeting: February 5, 2021

NOTICE: Individuals requiring accommodations, such as mobility, visual, hearing, interpreter or other assistance, for effective participation in this meeting should contact the City Clerk's Office at (248) 530-1880 (voice), or (248) 644-5115 (TDD) at least one day in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.

Las personas que requieren alojamiento, tales como servicios de interpretación, la participación efectiva en esta reunión deben ponerse en contacto con la Oficina del Secretario Municipal al (248) 530-1880 por lo menos el día antes de la reunión pública. (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964).

GREENWOOD CEMETERY ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2020, 10 A.M.
VIRTUAL MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Linda Buchanan, Interim Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:20 A.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Linda Buchanan, Chair
Pam DeWeese, Linda Peterson, Margaret Suter, George Stern
Joseph Vercellone

Absent: Laura Schreiner

Administration: City Clerk Designee Alex Bingham; Museum Director Leslie Pielack

Guests: None

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Approval of meeting minutes of April 15, 2020

MOTION: by Suter, seconded by Peterson:

To approve the minutes of April 15, 2020.

VOTE: Yeas, 3
Nays, 1
Recused, 2

B. Approval of meeting minutes of September 18, 2020

MOTION: by DeWeese, seconded by Suter:

To approve the minutes of September 18, 2020, as amended.

VOTE: Yeas, 5
Nays, 0
Recused, 1

IV. NEW BUSINESS

-
- Members discussed a meeting schedule for calendar year 2021 and agreed by consensus to schedule meetings for the first Friday of the month at 8:30 AM if in person, at 10:00 AM if virtual.

Members reviewed the proposed 2019-2020 Annual Report.

- Burial and inurnment services will be added to the report.
- Priority items will continue from the current action list, and two items will be added;
 - 5) conduct a study and inventory of markers in the historic area of the cemetery to assess condition and need for training, cleaning or restoration;
 - 6) Develop a long-term plan for cemetery care and preservation.
- Members agreed to recommend to the City Commission that an additional 50 graves be released for sale in Sections B & C.

MOTION: by Suter, seconded by Peterson:

To make noted changes to the report and submit it to the City Commission.

VOTE: Yeas, 5
Nays, 1

- Members discussed budget items for FY 2021/22, and agreed by consensus to request \$20,000 for Ground Penetrating Radar and \$5,000 for the historic marker study/training/restoration plan.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

VI. REPORTS

- A.** Members reviewed reports provided by city's Finance Department for March and June, 2020 for sales and . There was one sale and two burials in July, 2020 and no sales or burials in August, 2020. September and October data is not yet available.
- B.** Museum Director Pielack provided an update on the Taylor monument project, which has received over \$15,000 for the installation of their monument and additional cemetery preservation projects, to be held in a dedicated account by the Friends of the Birmingham Museum.

VII. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

There were no public comments.

VIII. BOARD COMMENTS

Ms. DeWeese thanked Museum Director Pielack and the Friends of the Birmingham Museum for their efforts on the Taylor Monument Project. Mr. Vercellone was welcomed and notified members that he is on call as house physician on Fridays at a local hospital, and will plan to attend meetings but may be called away from time to time during a GCAB meeting. He added that virtual meetings, which are provided for by MDHHS through December 31, 2020, may be continued due to current and expected coronavirus pandemic conditions.

IX. ADJOURN

Ms. Buchanan noted that the next meeting will be January 8, 2021, at 8:30 AM if in person or at 10:00 AM if virtual, and adjourned the meeting at 12:05 PM.

Next Meeting: January 8, 2020, 8:30 AM (in-person), 10:00 AM (virtual).

DATE: January 4, 2021

TO: Thomas M. Markus, City Manager

FROM: Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk

SUBJECT: Greenwood Cemetery - Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR)

INTRODUCTION:

Ground-penetrating radar is a geophysical method that uses radar pulses to image the subsurface. It is a non-intrusive method of surveying the sub-surface to investigate underground utilities such as concrete, asphalt, metals, pipes, cables or masonry.

It was believed that GPR would provide beneficial information in Greenwood Cemetery.

BACKGROUND:

In 2015 GPR was done in all of the proposed new areas in B, C K, L O prior to the release of those graves. It was paid for by Elmwood and approved by the City Manager at that time.

GPR shows shifts in soil for various reasons:

- From digging
- Changes in temperature
- Installation of foundation or structures
- Pressure from above such as driving a vehicle on the surface being surveyed

The information from GPR can only be deciphered by experienced professionals.

Once the work was completed the general consensus was that the GPR information was expensive and not as reliable or useful as compared to having a Field Test completed by trained cemetery professionals who are qualified to assess the ground and soil.

In 2019 to early 2020 the Greenwood Cemetery Advisory board considered the idea of completing a GPR survey on the rest of the cemetery.

LEGAL REVIEW:

- none

FISCAL IMPACT:

- GPR is expensive, time consuming and the information is not as reliable as other methods. Spending money on GPR will not help Greenwood Cemetery reach their fiscal goals.

SUMMARY

- Often at City Commission meetings when a Greenwood Cemetery item is being presented questions arise about GPR. It would be helpful to prepare a report explaining the pros,

cons and costs related with GPR for a future City Commission agenda to clarify any misconceptions.

ATTACHMENTS:

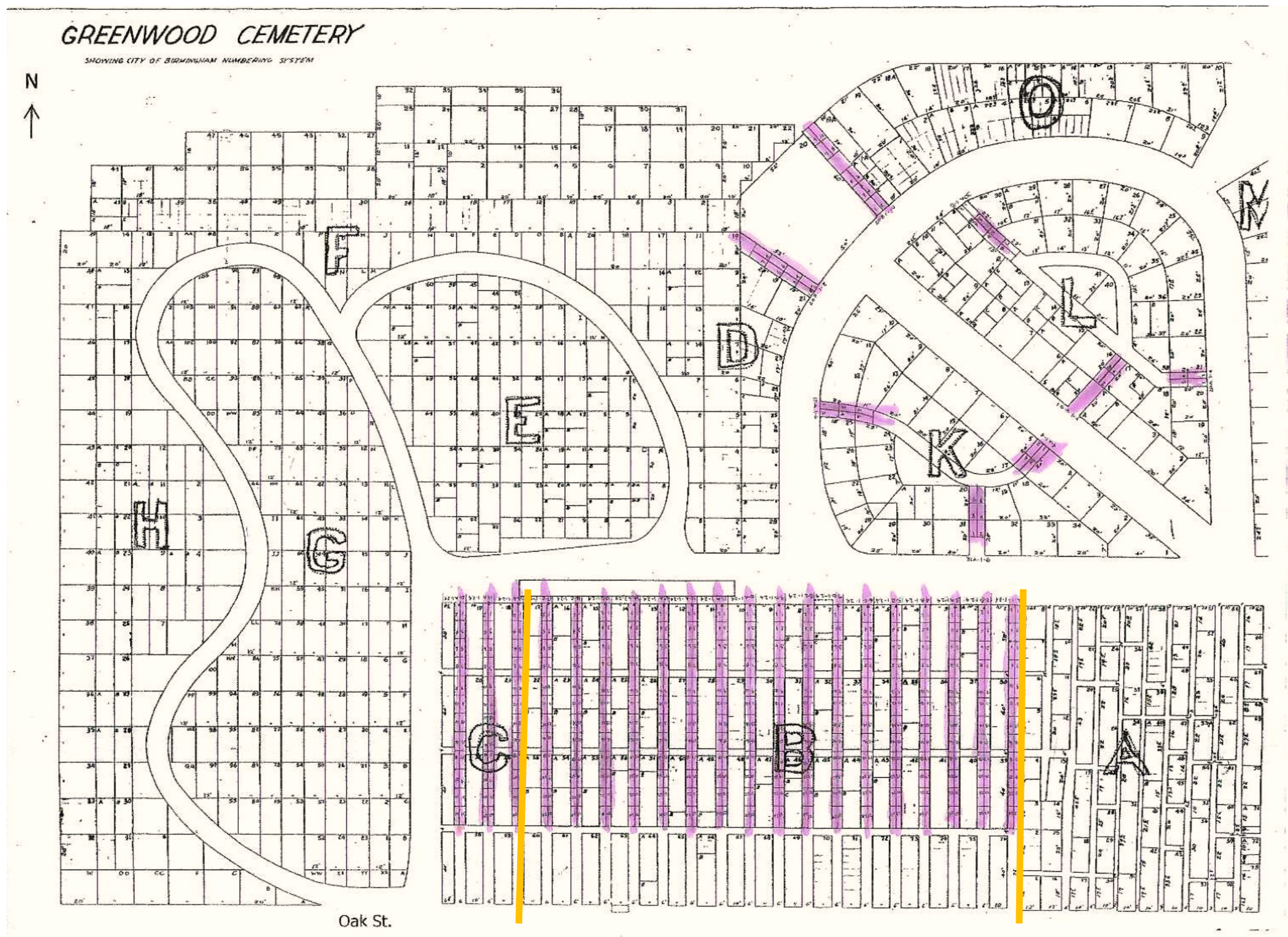
- Map of areas where Elmwood Conducted GPR.

SUGGESTED RESOLUTION:

- To direct the City Clerk to prepare a report for the City Commission on Ground Penetrating Radar.

IDENTIFIED GRAVES AVAILABLE (530), 2015

Elmwood completed GPR in these areas before these graves were released





MEMORANDUM

Clerk's Office

DATE: January 4, 2021
TO: Greenwood Cemetery Board
FROM: Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk
SUBJECT: Consideration to Release Graves

INTRODUCTION:

On December 21, 2020 the City Commission authorized the 10 plots that were sold over the previous authorization limits, a plot that was a pending sale for a family in need in Section B, lot 21-A, and 10 plots in Section C, row 19-A to be available for any future inquiries.

Although there are presently 10 plots available there is a possibility that this limited stock could be depleted in the coming months, to ensure that there is enough plots available the Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board should consider recommending the release of more graves to meet the potential demands.

BACKGROUND:

In 2015 240 of the 530 potential grave plots were released.

By December 31, 2018 199 of the 240 spaced had been sold.

In July of 2019 no action was taken to release more graves and the City Commission charged the Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board with the duty of evaluating the current market price for cemetery plots.

August 16, 2019 GCAB determined that \$3,000 was an appropriate price for graves at Greenwood Cemetery.

December 7, 2020 the City Commission reviewed GCAB's recommendation to release 50 graves. The City Commission requested more detailed reporting on available graves in sections B & C.

December 21, 2020 Museum Director Leslie Pielack and City Clerk Alexandria Bingham provided a detailed map and explanation of availability and activity in Greenwood Cemetery. 11 graves that were sold or pending beyond the 2015 grave release were approved as well as 10 graves in Section C, Row 19-A.

LEGAL REVIEW:

None.

FISCAL IMPACT:

For each plot sold in Greenwood Cemetery, \$3,000 is deposited in the Greenwood Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund (Fund). The purpose of the Fund is to account for the investment earnings on the sale of City-owned plots, and donations, which will be used for the perpetual care and maintenance of the cemetery. Estimated basic annual maintenance costs (lawn, forestry, snow removal, etc.) for Greenwood Cemetery are \$60,000.

Under the current allocation of the portfolio, which is intended to generate income and growth, an additional 385 graves would need to be sold to reach the portfolio target size of \$2 million in order to generate sufficient income to pay for basic annual maintenance.

The city should continue to sell graves to approach their financial goals for the Greenwood Cemetery.

The portfolio's ending fund balance on November 30, 2020, was \$929,235, December data will be available for the February GCAB meeting due to the statement cycles of Fidelity and Vanguard.

SUMMARY

Due to the depletion of available grave plots over the past five years and continued interest in ongoing grave sales, a release of additional grave plots is recommended. Adjustments have been made to data regarding recent sales and available grave plots remaining, which are located only in Sections B and C.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Excerpt, Commission Draft Minutes, December 21, 2020
2. Maps, Greenwood Cemetery and Graves Sold/Available **SUGGESTED**

RESOLUTION:

To recommend that the City Commission authorize the 14 plots available in Section C, Row 18-A for sale.

12-284-20 Greenwood Cemetery Grave Release

City Clerk Designee Bingham presented the item.

Cheri Arcome, Creative Collaborations, explained:

- The contractor does not keep track of how many graves are authorized for sale by the City Commission;
- She did not know any of her sales were unauthorized until a conversation with Museum Director Pielack and City Clerk Designee Bingham;
- She has temporarily halted all sales of graves per Museum Director Pielack's and City Clerk Designee Bingham's instruction until more sales are authorized by the City Commission;
- Ground penetrating radar (GPR) and a three-month field survey were performed at the Cemetery. Unless trees or monuments are removed from the cemetery, the map shows all remaining graves for sale;
- Her recommendation would be to allow for the sale of all remaining grave spaces in order to achieve a self-sustaining perpetual care fund for the Cemetery; and,
- It would be her suggestion to release ten graves from Sections B and C, instead of just from C, to be available for sale while the Commission waits on more information from the GCAB.

Some Commissioners expressed concern about past and present miscommunications regarding the Cemetery. They noted that such miscommunications were likely the result of frequent historic turnover in the City staff serving as liaisons to the GCAB, but said they would like to see Staff figure out how to make sure accurate, up-to-date information is conveyed to all relevant parties moving forward.

In response to a question from Commissioner Hoff, CM Valentine said the GCAB and the City Commission should determine whether the ultimate goal for the Cemetery is still to maintain a self-sustaining perpetual care fund, and if so, whether to release all the graves at once to achieve that or to release them incrementally.

Commissioner Hoff said she would also like the GCAB to ascertain whether GPR was done throughout the entire Cemetery. If it was, she would like the GCAB to just confirm that the graves shown on the map are the only ones left.

Commissioner Baller noted that Linda Buchanan, chair of the GCAB, submitted a letter to the Commission as a private citizen regarding what she thinks should be done vis-a-vis the Cemetery. He said he would appreciate some insight regarding how the recommendations made in her letter interact with the goal of creating a financially self-sustaining cemetery.

There was consensus among the Commissioners that the oversold graves should be authorized, any grave sales currently in progress should be authorized, and that ten additional graves should also be made available so there is inventory while the Commission is waiting for clarification from the GCAB.

MOTION: Motion by Commissioner Host, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Longe:

To authorize the 10 plots sold but not authorized in Sections B, e.g.: B, Row 9-A, Plots 7, 14, 19 and 20; B, Row 10-A, Plot 17; B, Row 11-A, Plots 19, 20, and 24; B, Row 13-A, Plot 1; and B, Row 15-C, Plot 6.

AND

To release 10 plots in Section C, Row 19-A for sale.

AND

To authorize the sale of one additional grave in Section B, Lot 12a, Space 17 or 18.

Public Comment

Laura Shriner, GCAB member, asked the Commission to consider authorization of one additional grave in Section B to accommodate a particular family with a recent death who wanted to bury their loved one near family in that section.

Ms. Arcome said if the Commission authorized the sale of one grave in Section B, Lot 12a, Space 17 or 18 that would accommodate the family Ms. Shriner referenced.

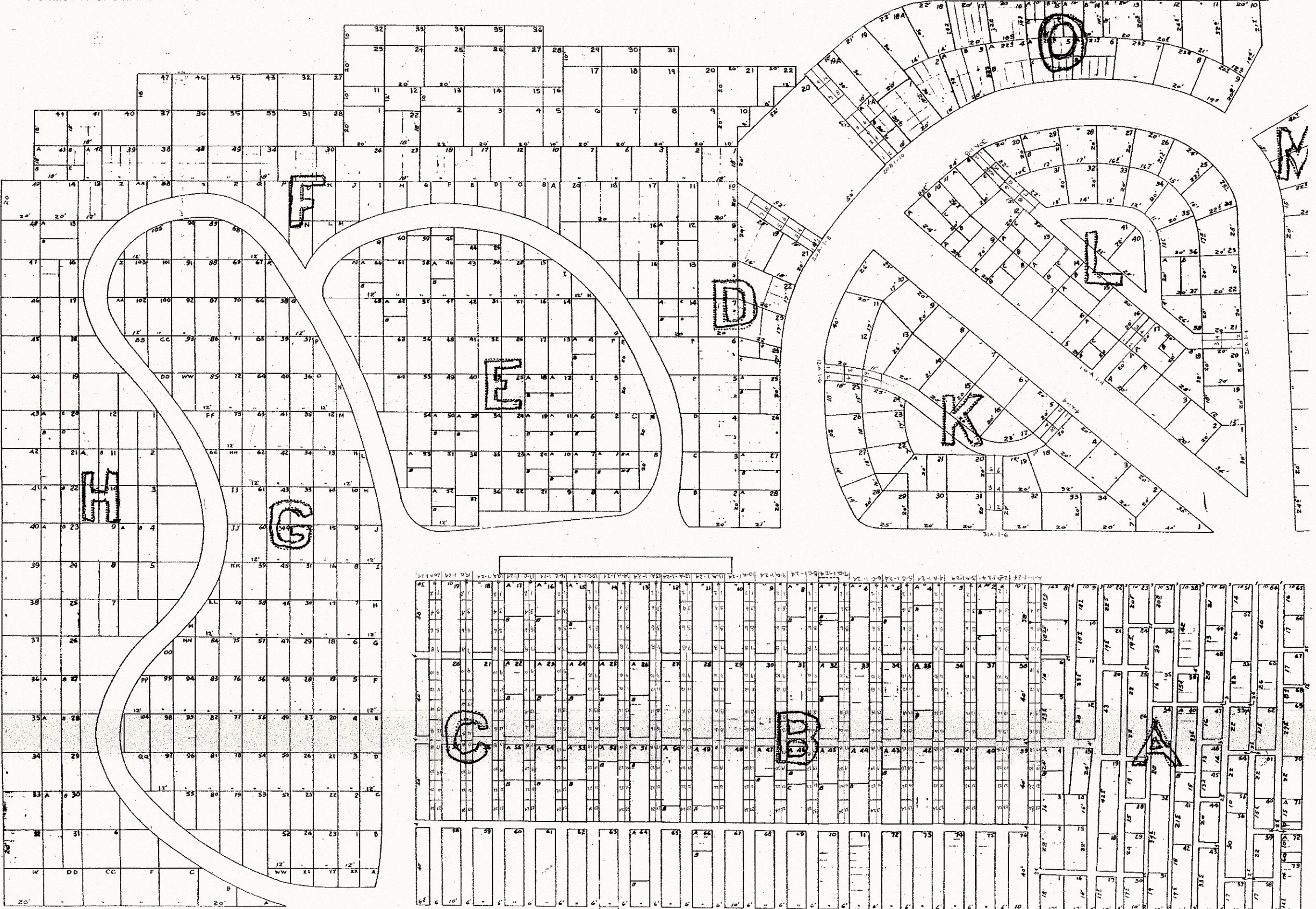
Commissioner Host and Mayor Pro Tem Longe amended their motion to reflect the authorization of the additional requested grave.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Ayes, Commissioner Host
Mayor Pro-Tem Longe
Commissioner Sherman
Commissioner Baller
Commissioner Nickita
Commissioner Hoff
Mayor Boutros

Nays, None

GREENWOOD CEMETERY OVERVIEW

GREENWOOD CEMETERY
SHOWING CITY OF BIRMINGHAM NUMBERING SYSTEM

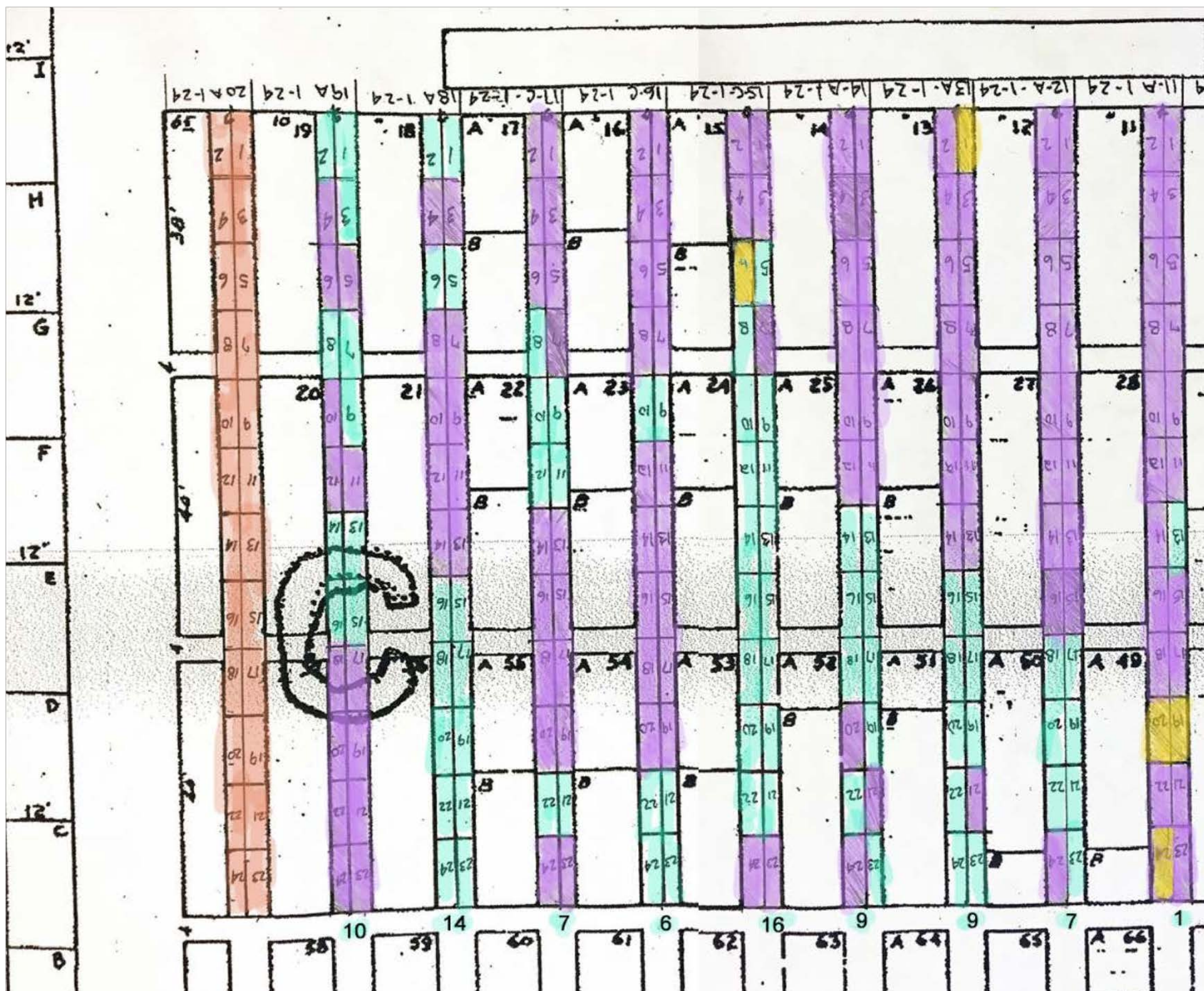


Oak St.

GREENWOOD CEMETERY GRAVES STATUS – Lots B and C

As of **December 15, 2020**, 187 grave plots are available in both B and C. No grave plots are available for sale to the public in any other section of the cemetery.





Detail, Section C
and Section B West

Number of available
graves shown at bottom
of rows

REPORTS

Financial

The portfolio's ending fund balance on November 30, 2020, was \$929,235, December data will be available for the February GCAB meeting due to the statement cycles of Fidelity and Vanguard.

Sales

Greenwood Cemetery Sales and Availability		
	Sec B	Sec C
September 2020	2	0
October 2020	4	0
November 2020	1	0
December 2020	0	0
<i>Pending Sales (purchase agreement in progress)</i>	<i>2 *sites approved in the 12/21/20 release</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>New Inquiries (just information)</i>		<i>3 families</i>
Total Sold	7	0
Total Available Under Current Authorization	0 *	10
<i>Total Available (Not Released)</i>	162	14
<i>* Data provided as of 1/4/2021</i>		

Burials

Greenwood Cemetery Burials								
	Sec B	Sec C	Sec D	Sec K	Sec L	Sec O	Other	Total by Month
September 2020	2	1				1		4
October 2020	1						2	3
November 2020						1		1
December 2020	1						4	5
Total by Sections	4	1	0	0	0	2	6	13
* Data provided as of 1/4/2021								