

GREENWOOD CEMETERY ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA
FRIDAY, MAY 6, 2022
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 151 MARTIN, ROOM 205
8:30 A.M.

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 April 1, 2022

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Greenwood Cemetery Operational Procedures, Conditions and Regulations
- a. Read through the most recent draft of the Greenwood Cemetery Operational Procedures, Conditions and Regulations
 - b. Ask questions or make suggestions, if the current version is sufficient recommend adoption
- B. Policy for Approving and Installing Markers for Persons of Historical Significance
- a. Read through the most recent draft of the policy
 - b. Ask questions or make suggestions, if the current version is sufficient recommend adoption

V. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Preparation for 2021-2022 Annual Report, Goal Reflection & Setting
- B. Future Business for June
- a. Continued Preparation for 2021-2022 Annual Report, Goal Reflection & Setting
 - b. Planning for Grave Stone Inventory
 - c. Potter's Field
 - d. Other Items for Consideration

VI. REPORTS

- A. Update from Museum Director Leslie Pielack (when applicable)
- B. Update on GIS
- C. Update from Clerk's Office
- D. Financial Reports
- E. Cemetery Sales & Activity
- F. City Managers Report

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

VIII. BOARD COMMENTS

IX. ADJOURN

Next Meeting: June 3, 2022

Should you wish to participate in this meeting, you are invited to attend the meeting in person or virtually through ZOOM:

<https://zoom.us/j/98983856041>

Meeting ID: 989 8385 6041

You may also present your written statement to the City Clerk,
151 Martin Street, P.O. Box 3001, Birmingham, Michigan 48012-3001 prior to the meeting.

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

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Friday, April 1, 2022, 8:30 a.m.

151 Martin St. - Room 205

I. Call To Order

Linda Buchanan, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

II. Roll Call

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

Absent: None

Administration: City Clerk Bingham, Museum Director Pielack, Deputy Clerk Woods

III. Approval Of The Minutes

A. Review of the Minutes of March 4, 2022

MOTION: by DeWeese, seconded by Suter:
To approve the minutes of March 4, 2022 as submitted.

VOTE: Yeas, 7
Nays, 0

IV. Unfinished Business

A. Greenwood Cemetery Operational Procedures, Conditions and Regulations

- i. Read through additional revisions and suggestions from City Attorney Mary Kucharek**
- ii. Recommend further revision or to adopt the revised rules and regulations**

CC Bingham noted the Board's agreed-upon recommended revisions, and said those would be integrated for review at the May 2022 meeting.

Items requiring further discussion at the next meeting were as follows:

In regards to I(A)10, Mr. Stern stated that the State does not recognize domestic partnerships or civil unions. He also raised the issue of common-law spouses.

CC Bingham said she would ask for further clarification from CA Kucharek on I(A)10.

The Board recommended that I(A)9, I(A)11, I(A)12, and I(A)14 be grouped together since they were thematically related.

CC Bingham said Staff would evaluate the best ordering options for those four definitions, as either alphabetical or by diminishing size, and would make a recommendation.

In reply to Mr. Stern, CC Bingham said she would verify whether Saturday should be included as a day on which overtime charges would apply for VII(A)7.

Dr. Vercellone noted a potential issue with "10 business hours of daylight" in VII(A)8, observing for instance that the sun sets at different times during the year and there might be inclement weather on certain days.

CC Bingham said she would ask Ms. Arcome if there was a better way to clarify that requirement.

V. New Business

A. Cemetery Service Provider Contract
--

Mr. Stern said Ms. Arcome should be required to put interments out for bid, with the GCAB to review the bids.

Ms. Peterson said that the matter had been looked into previously and it was determined that Ms. Arcome does unique work and that the amounts being charged were fair.

Ms. Schreiner concurred and added that Ms. Arcome also spends many hours dealing with sensitive topics and situations in addition to the logistical and clerical aspects of her work.

It was also noted that in the current difficult labor market it would not necessarily be easy to replace someone with Ms. Arcome's skill set.

MOTION: by Suter, seconded by Peterson:

To recommend authorization to the City Commission for the agreement with Creative Collaborations, LLC, a Cemetery Service Provider firm to act, on behalf of the City, as the service provider to the Historic Greenwood Cemetery for a term of one year with annual renewals until either party exercises the termination provisions as stated in the contract. The annual contract is set for an amount not to exceed \$45,600.00, which will be paid from account #101-215.000- 811.0000.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Yeas, 6

Nays, 1 (Stern)

The Board recommended the position go out for RFP in 2023, in order to determine whether the position was priced at fair market value.

CC Bingham concurred.

B. Future Business for May

- a. Policy for Approving and Installing Markers for Persons of Historical Significance
- b. Preparation for 2021-2022 Annual Report, Goal Reflection & Setting
- c. Planning for Grave Stone Inventory
- d. Other Items for Consideration

VI. Reports

A. Update from MD Pielack

The Board confirmed for MD Pielack that they were interested in two signs, with locations and mounting to be discussed at the May 2022 meeting.

B. Update from Department of Public Services

Chair Buchanan asked for an update on the gate replacement process.

CC Bingham suggested the Board consider soliciting a gate through the City's public art program.

C. Update from Clerk's Office

D. Financial Reports

E. Cemetery Sales & Activity

F. City Manager's Report

VII. Open To The Public For Matters Not On The Agenda
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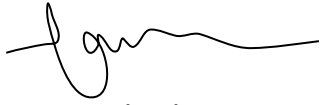
VIII. Board Comments

Ms. Peterson requested information on the status of the website for the May 2022 meeting.

IX. Adjourn

Chair Buchanan adjourned the meeting at 10:12 a.m.

Alexandria Bingham
City Clerk

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura Eichenhorn', with a stylized, flowing script.

Laura Eichenhorn
City Transcriptionist

DRAFT



MEMORANDUM

City Clerk's Office

DATE: May 4, 2022

TO: Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board

FROM: Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk

SUBJECT: Review of Greenwood Cemetery Operational Procedures, Conditions and Regulations

INTRODUCTION:

At the March 2021 GCAB meeting a priority list was determined by GCAB in order to systematically review all sections of the Greenwood Cemetery Operational Procedures, Conditions and Regulations. GCAB completed an initial review of the entire document at various regular meetings scheduled in 2021.

SUMMARY:

Review Schedule – GCAB Reviewed and gave input on every section throughout the regularly scheduled meetings in 2021.

April 2021

XI. Schedule of Fees and Charges

May 2021

General – Overall Language Check

I. Definitions

July 2021

VI. Monuments, Grave Markers and Foundation Monuments

August 2021

IX. Lot Sales Policy

X. Lot Resale Policy

October 2021

V. Operational Regulations

IV. Maintenance and Perpetual Care

December 2021

VII. Funerals, Internments & Disinterment

VIII. Burial Rights Policy

II. Conduct of Persons

III. Traffic Regulations

January 2022

Review document as a whole, sent questions to the city attorney.

April 2022

Review document as a whole after city attorney's revisions. Suggested additional revisions.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Clean copy of the current rules and regulations document.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Review

- Read the current draft of the Greenwood Cemetery Operational Procedures, Conditions, and Regulations.

Follow-up

- If suggested revisions are minor, the clerk's office can make adjustments. If GCAB adopts the current draft, the document will go to the City Manager's Office for approval.

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM

DRAFT - GREENWOOD CEMETERY OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES, CONDITIONS, AND REGULATIONS

I. DEFINITIONS

A. The following words and phrases, for the purposes of these operational procedures, conditions, and regulation, have the meanings respectively ascribed to them.

1. "Cemetery" shall mean Greenwood Cemetery.
2. Cemetery land designations are as follows:
 - a) "Section" shall mean a collection of cemetery lots
 - b) "Lot" shall mean a collection of plots
 - c) "Plot" shall mean an individual gravesite. Interchangeable with "gravesite" or "grave space"
3. "City" shall mean mean any physical part of the City, the City Manager, the City Clerk, the City Department of Public Services, or any any other entity otherwise responsibility for municipal functions, and/or those employed by the city of Birmingham and or under the direction of the city and or its designated contractors.
4. "Corner Marker" also known as cemetery pin or lot pin, is used to locate cemetery sections, lots, and plots.
5. "Department" shall mean the City of Birmingham Department of Public Services.
6. "Immediate Member" shall mean spouse, children, grandchildren, parents, siblings, nieces, nephews, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and stepchildren. Shall also include domestic partner or those in a civil union.
7. "Memorial" shall include:
 - a) "Marker" shall mean a stone or object denoting the location of a grave which is not installed even with the ground level but does not exceed eighteen (18) inches in height, sixteen (16) inches in width, and twenty-four (24) inches in length.
 - b) "Monument" shall denote an object or memorial stone in excess of (18) inches in height, sixteen (16) inches in width, and twenty-four (24) inches in length.
 - c) "Ground Level Memorial Marker" shall mean an object denoting the location of a grave installed at ground level.
8. "Minor" shall mean persons under eighteen years of age.

9. "Permanent outside container" shall be a container that encloses a casket. The following are considered permanent outside containers: concrete boxes, or concrete, copper, or steel burial vaults.

II. CONDUCT OF PERSONS

A. All persons shall be responsible for any and all damage caused to any property in the cemetery. No minor shall enter the cemetery grounds unless accompanied by an adult responsible for the minor's conduct, or unless permission has been granted by the City.

B. All Persons shall:

1. Enter the cemetery through an established gate and only during the hours from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm.
2. Deposit or leave rubbish and debris in city-provided trash receptacles
3. Refrain from picking, mutilating, removing, or destroying any living plants or parts thereof, whether wild or domestic, on the cemetery grounds, except for work by the City.
4. Refrain from breaking, injuring, removing, defacing or otherwise harming any memorial on the cemetery grounds.
5. Comply with applicable leash laws.
6. Refrain from discharging any firearm on the cemetery grounds, except in the conduct of military funerals using only blanks, and with written permission of City or designee and prior notification of the Police Chief.
7. Refrain from the carry, use, or consumption of any intoxicants at any time while on cemetery grounds, or bring into the cemetery grounds, or consume such while in the cemetery.
8. Refrain from hosting or advertising any goods, services, or activities unless the City has provided written permission.
9. Conduct themselves in only a quiet and respectful manner while on the cemetery grounds.

III. TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

A. All vehicular traffic laws of the City of Birmingham shall be strictly observed. Every person or entity in control, including vehicular owners, drivers, and/or as operator who has engaged autopilot, will be jointly and severely liable for any and all damages caused by such vehicle which has entered onto cemetery grounds.

B. No person shall:

1. Operate a vehicle within the cemetery at a speed in excess of ten (10) miles per hour.
2. Operate or park a vehicle on other than established driveways, except for the purpose of City authorized maintenance or construction as permitted.
3. Turn a vehicle around within the cemetery by performing a u-turn.
4. Use a cemetery driveway as a public thoroughfare.

IV. MAINTENANCE AND PERPETUAL CARE

A. The City shall not be responsible for any special care of any particular section, lot, or burial space, or for the maintenance or repair of any monument, marker, or planting placed by the owner. Further, the City shall not contract or agree to give special care to any section, lot, or burial space, except as otherwise noted below.

B. The City shall be responsible for the maintenance and repair of the driveways, buildings, water system, drainage, and fences. The City and/or its designated Contractor shall also cut and maintain the grass areas, remove the leaves, trim, remove, replace or add trees and shrubs, apply fertilizer as necessary, and, in general, maintain the cemetery as a place of natural beauty devoted to the burial of the dead.

C. In order to preserve the integrity of potentially historical markers, the City shall maintain, using best practices and discretion, markers for deaths which have occurred 120 years ago of which there have been no maintenance from family for a period of 10 years.

V. OPERATIONAL REGULATIONS

The following operational regulations shall apply to all areas within the cemetery:

A. Corners of all sections, lots, and plots will be marked with corner markers set flush with the ground surface, which will be installed and maintained by the City and shall not be disturbed.

B. The erection of any fence, railing, wall, coping, curbing, trellis, or embankment, or the planting of any hedge, on any lot or grave is prohibited.

C. The cutting of paths shall not be permitted.

D. The City shall have the right to remove from any lot any objects, including trees, shrubs, and flower pots that are not in keeping with the regulations of the cemetery.

E. Vases and planters shall be allowed on lots or plots, providing that the same shall be kept in good repair. If not kept in good repair, the City shall have authority to remove and shall not be liable for any such removal.

F. The city shall have the authority to remove unapproved items from lots or plots, and the City shall return the unapproved items to an immediate family member. If the item is not claimed within six months it will be considered abandoned property.

G. Planters for the planting of flowers will be removed from lots and plots if not filled with foliage by July 1st. The City shall return the removed planter to an immediate family member. If the item is not claimed within six months it will be considered abandoned property.

H. No person shall plant, cut down, remove, or trim any tree, shrub, or plant within the cemetery except by permission of the City, or a person authorized to act in their stead in matters pertaining to the cemetery.

I. The planting of flowers on any lot, or otherwise disturbing the sod, shall release the City from all obligation to resod without an additional fee.

J. It is not permitted to plant any plant that may grow over three feet in height or is a non-native or invasive plant. If a plant, approved or otherwise, becomes overgrown the City may trim, cut or remove the plant. The City may ask for reimbursement from the plot owner for cost of removal or maintenance.

K. The City reserves the right to remove all plants, flowers or other objects wherever situated that are not maintained in accordance with regulations hereof.

L. The City reserves the right to remove any object that interferes with safety and maintenance.

M. If an individual or group wishes to place items at graves they do not own, they must receive written approval from the City and will be responsible for a plan for removal.

VI. MONUMENTS, GRAVE MARKERS AND FOUNDATIONS

A. MONUMENTS

1. Monuments will be permitted only on two adjoining side-by-side graves under one ownership. No more than one monument shall be erected on any plot.
2. Each monument shall be supported on a concrete foundation not smaller than the base of the monument it supports. Such foundation shall be constructed only by the City after payment has been made. Foundations will be installed April to November, weather dependent, as determined by the City. Requests received after November 1st will be held until conditions allow for installation.
3. Designs for monuments must be submitted to the City, when application is made for construction of foundations. A form with the size, material, and design must be submitted to the City or its designated contractor for approval, and all installation fees must be paid in full prior to delivery of the memorial.
4. No monument of artificial stone, sandstone, limestone, or soapstone will be permitted.

5. All contractors, vendors and workers engaged in setting monuments shall be under the supervision of the City and they will be held responsible for any damages. No work of setting monuments shall be started that cannot be completed by the end of the day following the start of such work.

6. All contractors/vendors engaged in setting monuments shall have prior approval from the city prior to commencement of work. for the setting of any monument from the City prior to commencement of work such contractor/vendor (and the workers thereof) will be held responsible for any damage resulting from said contractor's/vendor's (or the worker's thereof). Further, all monument installations shall be completed at the close of each business day, and non-monument installation may remain unfinished at the close of the business day.

7. No monuments shall be allowed in sections designated only for ground level memorials.

B. GRAVE MARKERS

1. Markers shall not exceed eighteen (18) inches in height and shall have a minimum horizontal dimension at the base of not less than half of the height. All markers shall be in one piece, and shall be dressed on the bottom at right angles to the vertical axis. These measurements do not apply to government issue markers.

2. Individual markers can be sod set without a concrete foundation.

3. A form with the size, material and design must be submitted to the City for approval and all installation fees must be paid in full prior to delivery of the memorial. Installation will not occur between November 1st and March 31st unless weather permits.

C. GROUND LEVEL MEMORIAL SECTION – AREAS PLOTTED AFTER JANUARY 1, 2015

1. On grave spaces in Sections B, C, D, K, L, and O, all memorials on new plots created after January 1, 2015, must be installed at ground level. Memorials can be individual markers measuring twelve (12) OR sixteen (16) inches wide, twenty-four (24) inches long and four (4) inches deep. Partner memorials over two (2) graves can measure forty-eight (48) inches wide, twelve (12) inches long and four (4) inches deep.

2. The memorials must be made of acceptable bronze or granite material and set at lawn level.

3. A form with the size, material, and design must be submitted to the City or its designated contractor for approval, and all installation fees must be paid in full prior to delivery of the memorial. Installation will not occur between November 1st and March 31st unless weather permits.

VII. FUNERALS, INTERMENTS AND DISINTERMENTS

A. FUNERALS AND INTERMENTS

1. No lot or burial space shall be used for any purpose other than the interment of human remains and the erection of appropriate memorials.
2. No interment shall be made in Greenwood Cemetery until a proper burial permit has been issued, and until all other legally required permits have been issued by, and filed with, the proper authorities.
3. The City will provide opening and closing of grave, initial and periodic maintenance only, and will not be responsible for handling and lowering vaults or caskets. Tents, lowering devices, and other materials shall be furnished by the funeral director or vault company.
4. No grave shall be dug closer than six (6) inches from the line of any lot.
5. In all full burial interments, the casket shall be enclosed in a permanent outside container. Such outside container shall be installed by the funeral director, vault company, or the City's designated contractor.
6. In all interments of cremated remains, the container shall be installed by the City, its designated contractor, funeral director, or vault company. The size of the container must be submitted with the request for burial.
7. The City must be notified through the City Clerk or its designated contractor, of the time and exact location of proposed interments in time to allow not less than ten (10) business hours of daylight to prepare the grave. If notification occurs less than ten (10) business hours of daylight prior to burial, overtime charges will apply.
8. All funerals within the cemetery shall be under the supervision of the City. No burials are to be made on Sunday or legal holidays, except by permission of the City. Overtime charges will apply after 2:00 pm Monday through Saturday, and any time on Sundays and Holidays.
9. Interments that involve preparation or follow-up work during other than regular working hours will be done at an additional charge for the overtime portion of the time required. The maximum charge shall not exceed the normal charges plus the weekend/holiday fee. This fee is in addition to the normal interment or disinterment fee charged during regular working hours.
10. Interment of the remains of any persons other than the owner will be permitted only after the written consent of the owner or the owner's authorized agent has been filed with the City Clerk or the City's designated contractor. In case of a minor being the owner, the guardian may give consent upon proof of this authority to act.
11. Only one (1) interment in any one grave space shall be permitted, except in the case of a parent and infant child, or two (2) children dying at about the same time, or in such other unusual cases as it shall seem to the City to be proper under the circumstances. Such interments shall adhere to *Section VIII Burial Rights Policy*.

12. Up to two (2) cremated remains may be placed in the same plot if the owner of the grave space or their heirs purchase the right to such interment. Should the owner permit the burial of such cremated remains, only one additional memorial shall be permitted on the grave space and such memorial shall not be larger than twelve (12) inches wide, twenty-four (24) inches long and four (4) inches deep and installed at ground level. Maximum of three (3) cremated remains may be placed in a single grave space.

B. DISINTERMENTS

Disinterment of a burial shall be facilitated by a Michigan licensed funeral director. Said funeral director shall obtain a permit for such removal from the local health officer of Oakland County. Said funeral director shall complete the removal form as required by the City or its designated contractor. Disinterment shall not commence until after issuance of the Oakland County permit is presented to the City or its designated contractor, approval for removal is granted by the City or its designated contractor, and all applicable fees are paid. Such disinterments shall only be scheduled between June 15th and October 15th each year unless approved by the City. The grave space where the disinterment occurred shall immediately be returned to a safe condition.

VIII. BURIAL RIGHTS POLICY

A. Full Plot

1. One (1) burial right for cremated remains or full burial is included in a full sized plot purchase. To add burial rights for up to two (2) additional cremated remains, owner must purchase each additional right of burial per plot. A maximum of three (3) burial rights are allowed in a full sized plot.

B. Cremation Plot

1. One (1) burial right for cremated remains is included in a cremation plot purchase. Cremation plots measuring three (3) feet by four (4) feet may have one additional burial right, to be purchased by owner. A maximum of two (2) burial rights are allowed in a (3) feet by four (4) feet Cremation plot.

2. Cremation plots measuring three (3) feet by two (2) feet cannot have an additional burial right. A maximum of one (1) burial right is allowed in a three (3) feet by two (2) feet cremation plot.

IX. LOT SALES – PAYMENT PLAN POLICY

A. A payment agreement may be entered into to allow for the purchase price of a plot(s) to be paid over a period of time not to exceed twenty-four (24) months and the period provided to cure a default. A copy of this Payment Plan Policy shall be attached to all installment payment agreements and shall be provided to the Purchaser.

B. Payment agreements require a 20% down payment of the total purchase price, with the remaining balance to be spread into equal monthly payments not to exceed twenty-four (24) months. Such payment agreements shall be interest free. There shall be no prepayment penalty to the Purchaser.

C. Plot(s) being purchased under a payment agreement may not be used for interment until the full purchase price of the plot(s) has been paid. The Purchaser may apply all payments made on the plan to the plot(s) needed for burial. Should this application of funds to the burial plot reduce the balance in the Purchaser's account below 20% of the value of the remaining plots, the Purchaser shall be given a grace period of up to six (6) months to repay the 20% deposit on the remaining plot(s).

D. In the event a Purchaser fails to make an installment payment, the Purchaser shall have ninety (90) days from the default to cure the deficiency and bring the payments current.

E. For purchase agreements initiated after January 14, 2019, failure to pay the entire contract on or before the final payment due date and the cure period will result in forfeiture of the unpaid plot(s) and 50% of all monies paid to date. If enough money is on account to completely pay for a plot(s), the Purchaser shall have the option to purchase said plot(s) with those available funds. Fifty percent of the remaining funds on account and any plots not paid in full shall be forfeited.

X. LOT RESALE POLICY

A. All graves sold by the City after October 1, 2014 can only be returned to the City. Such graves can only be transferred from the original purchaser to an immediate member with supporting documentation.

B. All graves returned to the City shall receive 50% of the original purchase price from the Greenwood Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund. Upon return of the graves, the City may resell the graves.

XI. SCHEDULE OF FEES AND CHARGES

Fees and other charges are as set forth in the Schedule of Fees, Charges, Bonds and Insurance.

XII. REVISIONS

The obligations of the City as herein set forth may, from time to time, be modified by the Birmingham City Commission.

1. October 18, 1971 Resolution No. 1434-71
2. February 13, 1984 Resolution No. 02-97-84
3. February 23, 2009 Resolution No. 02-52-09

4. December 17, 2012 Resolution No. 12-356-12
5. August 10, 2015 Resolution No. 08-174-15
6. March 27, 2017 Resolution No. 03-82-17 (and confirmed by Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board on May 5, 2017).
7. January 14, 2019 Resolution No. 01-011-19



MEMORANDUM

City Clerk's Office

DATE: May 4, 2022

TO: Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board

FROM: Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk

SUBJECT: Draft Policy, Application, and Amendments to the Rules and Regulations to Approve and Install Markers for Persons of Historical Significance

INTRODUCTION:

At the March 2022 GCAB meeting the board reviewed a rough draft of the policy and application to install a marker for a person of historical significance for non-deed holders.

SUMMARY:

The City Clerk's office has made the suggested revisions and seeks further direction from the board on the documents being presented regarding the process, policy, application, and suggested language for the Greenwood Cemetery Operational Procedures, Conditions, and Regulations.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Revised documents regarding the application and policy for historical monument installation for non-deed holders.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Review

- The revised documents regarding the application and policy for historical monument installation for non-deed holders.
- Ask questions & suggest revisions.

Regarding the Rules and Regulations

- The following language will be inserted as a new item under section VI.
 - VI. Monuments, Grave Markers and Foundations
 - A. Monuments
 - 4. A request to install a monument or marker on a grave of special historical significance* may be made by a non-deed holder, subject to compliance with all applicable requirements for monuments and

markers and final approval by the City. Such request shall be made by application, and shall include detail as to the historical significance of the person in question to the City or Cemetery, and obtaining necessary approval of such Application from the City, subject to the criteria in the Application. Any such marker or monument becomes the property of Greenwood Cemetery/City of Birmingham upon installation, and the City is not required to maintain such property, other than as part of the general maintenance of the cemetery.

*The items below would be pushed down and renumbered.

- Add the following definition for A Person of Historical Significance
 - A person of historical significance is someone of importance to the history of Birmingham who has been buried in the Cemetery for at least 50 years. Final determination of historical significance shall be made by the Museum Director/City Clerk/City Manager in conjunction with recommendations from the Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board, the Museum Board, and/or the Friends of the Birmingham Museum, and may include input from other Michigan based community historical groups and/or academic institutions, as well as any known family descendants.

Follow-up

- If suggested revisions are minor, the clerk's office can make adjustments. If GCAB adopts the current draft, the document will go to the City Manager's Office for approval.



APPLICATION AND POLICY FOR HISTORICAL MONUMENT INSTALLATION FOR NON-DEED HOLDERS

City Clerk's Office
151 Martin Street, P.O. Box 3001
Birmingham, MI 48012
248/530-1880 PHONE
248/530-1080 FAX

- I. Steps**
 - II: Policies and Procedures**
 - III: Application**
 - IV: Greenwood Cemetery Rules and Regulations**
-

I. Steps

STEP	REQUIREMENT
Application Submittal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicant turns in completed forms with all supporting documents to the Clerk's Office.
Staff Review <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clerk• Museum Director• Cemetery Service Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clerk reviews records and ensures that all information is gathered from applicant, communicates with Museum Director and Cemetery Service Provider, and prepares for GCAB• Museum Directors begins research on historical significance and prepares for Museum Board• Cemetery Service Provider advises throughout
Board Review <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Museum Board• Cemetery Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Museum Board determines historical significance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cemetery Board considers request in respect to the rules and regulations
Notice of Approval or Denial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerk communicates with applicant granting approval and advises applicant to coordinate with cemetery service provider OR • Clerk advises applicant of the denial or suggested revisions to the application/plan as recommended by staff and advisory boards
Installation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursuant to the Greenwood Cemetery Rules and Regulations

II: Policies and Procedures

1. Applications must be complete and submitted to the City Clerk's office to begin the review process.
2. The city staff responsible for cemetery operations will have sole and complete discretion in deciding whether to approve a historical monument installation for non-deed holders with the input of applicable boards.
3. The City of Birmingham or its representative will determine if the proposed marker complies with the current cemetery rules and regulations.
4. The applicant must show their due-diligence in contacting any known next of kin, considering all family lines of the deed holder or person being recognized. City Staff will confirm the applicant's research and expand if possible on the research and available information regarding the recognized individual and/or deed holder in attempt to determine if there is any available next of kin that could give consent.
5. Installation of monuments cannot occur between November 1 and March 31 unless weather permits. The installation should be coordinated with city staff or its representative.
6. The applicant is responsible for all costs regarding the design, purchase, installation and maintenance of an approved monument.
7. The City Clerk's office should be notified and give approval for any planned celebration regarding the installation or reveal of the installed monument.
8. The applicant and their affiliate must acknowledge and adhere to the Greenwood Cemetery Rules and Regulations at all times.
9. Guidance on historical significance will be provided from the museum.

GREENWOOD CEMETERY

OAK AVENUE BETWEEN GREENWOOD AND LAKEVIEW STREETS
BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN



(DRAFT) APPLICATION FOR HISTORICAL MONUMENT INSTALLATION

For non-deed holders, Pre-payment required for all marker installations

Deceased

Name of Deceased: _____

Grave Location: Section _____ Lot _____ Grave # _____

Applicant

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Relation to deceased: _____

Detail of historical significance to Birmingham or Greenwood Cemetery: _____

* If more room is needed to explain attach a detailed letter and all supporting documents.

Please note: installation of a marker or monument by a non-deed holder for purposes of historical significance of the deceased is subject to review and approval by the City of Birmingham.

Monument/Marker Information

Monument Company: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please provide/attach detail and specifications for marker, including foundation type, style, size, material, and inscription, and attach design or drawings provided by Monument Company: _____

	Marker Size:	Base Size:	Foundation
Length			
Width			
Height			

Office Use Only

Reviewed, Greenwood Cemetery Superintendent: _____ Date: _____

Additional Historical Significance Review

Museum Board Recommendation: _____ Date: _____

Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Committee Recommendation: _____ Date: _____

APPROVED:

Clerk, City of Birmingham: _____ Date: _____

and/or City Manager: _____ Date: _____



MEMORANDUM

City Clerk's Office

DATE: May 4, 2022

TO: Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board

FROM: Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk

SUBJECT: Goal Reflection, Setting & Preparation for the 2021-2022 Annual Report

INTRODUCTION:

As FY 2021-2022 is wrapping up it is time for GCAB to reflect on the progress made this past year.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- GCAB held 9 meetings in FY 2021-2022
 - July 2021
 - August 2021
 - October 2021
 - December 2021
 - January 2022
 - March 2022
 - April 2022
 - May 2022
 - June 2022
- Thoroughly reviewed and updated the Greenwood Cemetery Rules and Regulation
- Introduced the idea of connecting the sidewalk along Oak Ave. in front of the cemetery
- Continued discussion about grounds maintenance coordinated with DPS and Creative Collaborations
 - Mitigating any disruption from construction adjacent to the cemetery
 - Maintaining and replacing trees
 - Consideration of improving the perimeter fence for the cemetery
 - Consideration of improving the pole and chain in section F
 - Added a trash receptacle
- Discussion and revision of a policy for installing markers for persons of historical significance, soon to be adopted
- Gave input on the sign from the Michigan Freedom Trail – National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom
- Recommended renewal of the cemetery service provider contract for Creative Collaborations

ATTACHMENTS:

- 2020-2021 Greenwood Cemetery Annual Report

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Conversation

- Any revisions or additions to the lists of accomplishments?
- How do the accomplishments tie in with goals?
- Should the goals be revised or reprioritized for 2022-2023?
- What else does the board wish to see in the 2021-2022 Annual Report

Follow-up

- Draft report for 2022-2023 will be presented at the next GCAB meeting with time for discussion

GREENWOOD CEMETERY ADVISORY BOARD



2020/2021 ANNUAL REPORT

August 12, 2021

Linda Buchanan, Chair
Linda Peterson, Vice Chair
Pam DeWeese
Laura Schreiner
George Stern
Margaret Suter
Joseph Vercellone

10E1

INTRODUCTION

The Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board was established by the Birmingham City Commission on October 13, 2014. One of its duties is to submit a report to the Commission on an annual basis of the general activities, operation, and condition of the cemetery for the preceding 12-month period. The Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board Annual Report includes a summary and update of the cemetery's status, related finances, and the GCAB's planned activities for the next fiscal year.

In alignment with the City's fiscal year, the current GCAB's report covers the period from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

GENERAL ACTIVITIES

Meetings

The Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board is required to meet at least quarterly. During the report period, the board met three times in 2020 and six times in 2021. Board activities focused primarily on established project priorities for the period.

2020/2021 Accomplishments

- Continued progress on GIS map in regards to initial setup and data entry
- Completed an 18-month report to synchronize GCAB's annual reporting with the city's fiscal year; the report covered January 2019-June 2020.
- Approved Grave Releases:
 - December 21, 2020
 - Resolution # 12-284-20 - 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 Row 19-A for sale. AND to authorize the sale of one additional grave in Section B, Lot 12a, Space 17 or 18.
 - January 25, 2021
 - Resolution # 01-012-21 - To authorize the release of 14 plots available in Section C, Row 18-A for sale in Greenwood Cemetery. Furthermore the City Commission directs the Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board to evaluate the grave site pricing and return with recommended changes prior to any further release.
 - April 26, 2021
 - Resolution # 04-128-21 - To release 38 graves in Section B, rows 17-C, 16-C, 15-C, and 14-A to be available for purchase in Greenwood Cemetery.
- Evaluated grave prices and recommended an increase
 - In February of 2021 the GCAB studied current grave prices and made a recommendation for the Commission which was discussed and passed on March 22, 2021.
 - Resolution # 03-098-21 - To increase the price of the plots in Greenwood Cemetery that accommodate one full burial or up to 3 cremains from \$3000 to \$4000 effective immediately upon passage by the Commission, and for the new rate to be applicable to all currently released graves and future grave releases.
- Updated the cemetery fee schedule
- Completed initial planning and proposed language updates to the Greenwood Cemetery Operational Procedures, Conditions, and Regulations
- Aligned expectations and considerations regarding planting and maintenance of trees in the cemetery
- Set goals for 2021-2022
- Renewed the Cemetery Service Provider Contract
- Confirmed location of unmarked burials (also known as Potter's Field) research and report completed by Museum Director Leslie Pielack
- Completed initial preparation and planning for a volunteer monument/marker inventory survey of Greenwood Cemetery

OPERATION

Sales and Financial Information

On December 1, 2019, Creative Collaborations, LLC became the provider for cemetery services, with the exception of grounds maintenance, which was provided by the City's Department of Public Services. On May 1, 2020, Creative Collaborations entered into a one-year renewable contract with the City to provide cemetery services on an ongoing basis. The contract was renewed again on April 26, 2021 for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Grounds maintenance continues to be provided by DPS with ongoing communication and collaboration between the Creative Collaborations, DPS, and the City Clerk's office.

On January 14, 2019, the City Commission approved a payment plan policy for cemetery plots that requires full payment within 24 months. During the 2020-2021 fiscal year, one new payment plan has been initiated. The Clerk's Office and Treasurer's Office monitors active payment plans. Plots under a payment plan are considered sold for purposes of availability unless the plot becomes available again in the event of a purchaser default.

Grave Sales Detail, July 2020 - June 2021

	3Q – 2020 July, Aug, Sept				4Q – 2020 Oct, Nov, Dec				1Q – 2021 Jan, Feb, Mar				2Q = 2021 April, May, June			
Sec	B	C	B+C	Oth	B	C	B+C	Oth	B	C	B+C	Oth	B	C	B+C	Oth
# sold	3	-	3	-	5	-	5	2	2	9	11	-	-	1	1	-
Resident	1	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Res	2	-	-	-	3	-	3	2	1	8	9	-	-	1	1	-
Pmt Pln	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Total	3				7				11				1			

**On March 22, 2021 the City Commission approved the grave price increase for plots that can accommodate one full burial from \$3,000 to \$4,000 per plot.*

FY 20-21 Grand Totals	
Sales in B	10
Sales in C	10
Sales in Other	2
Resident Purchases	5
Non-Resident Purchases	17
Payment Plans Initiated	1
Total Graves Sold	22
Private Transfer of Ownership	7

**Plots in Sections B and C sold under a payment plan are included in the number of sales made for the quarter in which the payment plan was instituted. The remittance to the Perpetual Care Fund of payment for the plots is recorded in total in the quarter in which the final payment is made.*

Beginning December 1, 2019, Creative Collaborations, LLC, remits 100% of revenue to the City, which then makes payments to the contractors for services performed.

Burials and Inurnments, July 2020 - June 2021

Burials and inurnment activity during the period can be used to understand utilization of graves and assist in planning for future sales.

	1Q 20	2Q 20	3Q 21	4Q 21	TOTAL	Sec B	Sec C	B + C	Sec D	Sec K	Sec L	Sec O	Other
Burials	1	4	4	3	12	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	5
Inurnments	7	5	-	4	16	4	1	5	-	-	3	1	7
Total	8	9	4	7	28	5	3	8	1	1	4	2	12

Perpetual Care Fund

Revenues from grave sales are used to increase the Perpetual Care Fund for Greenwood Cemetery, with investment earnings remaining with the PCF. This has contributed to substantial growth of the fund. Often there is a delay from when the payment is posted for a plot in respect to the date of the sale.

Detail for July 2020 through June 2021:

2020 Q Ending September 30

Proceeds from cemetery plot sales	18,104.00
Investment income	<u>5,238.46</u>
Revenue for Perpetual Care Fund	23,342.46

2020 Q Ending December 31

Proceeds from cemetery plot sales	13,512.00
Investment income	6,270.68
Realized investment gains	<u>6,106.80</u>
Revenue for Perpetual Care Fund	25,889.48

2021 Q Ending March 31

Proceeds from cemetery plot sales	6,000.00
Investment income	<u>5,106.83</u>
Revenue for Perpetual Care Fund	11,106.83

2021 Q Ending June 30

Proceeds from cemetery plot sales	33,600.00
Investment income	<u>5,139.40</u>
Revenue for Perpetual Care Fund	38,739.40

Market gain (loss)	<u>181,241.44</u>
--------------------	-------------------

Increase (decrease) in fund balance	280,319.61
Beginning fund balance, July 1, 2020	<u>866,438.45</u>
Ending fund balance, June 30, 2021 (preliminary)	1,146,758.06

CONDITION

During the 2020-2021 fiscal year, the City's Department of Public Services has overseen cemetery landscape maintenance, which has included:

- Oversight of Lawn Mowing Contractor including weekly cuts and spring and fall cleanup
- Oversight of Forestry Contractor for Tree Maintenance as directed by DPS
- Maintenance of the Tree Inventory Program
- Lawn fertilization twice a year
- Burial topsoil and seeding: spring and fall
- As-needed general clean up: grave blankets, old flowers, fallen branches
- Trash removal: 2 to 3 times per week
- Maintenance of water system: start up, winterizing, and repair as needed
- Repair of turf as needed
- Removal of snow stakes
- Snow removal
- Raising and leveling of markers/monuments or approval of arrangements with vendor for same
- Building/fencing/road maintenance as needed

PLAN FOR 2020/2021

The Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board has prioritized the following action items for 2021/2022:

CRITICAL GOALS

Short Term

- ***Review and update Greenwood Cemetery Operational Procedures, Conditions and Regulations***
 - Discussion and planning to review and update the Greenwood Cemetery Operational Procedures, Conditions, and Regulations began at the February 5, 2021 meeting. The board decided to update language and definitions for consistency and clarity; then strategically move through the document section by section to ensure that all of the current and future needs of the cemetery and persons using the cemetery are met and protected. GCAB plans to address one or two sections of the document at each GCAB meeting in the coming year until a fully revised document is ready for the City Commission to consider.
- ***Review the Cemetery Management Agreement***
 - Creative Collaborations, LLC. has been the contracted cemetery service provider since December 1, 2019. Since then the contract has been renewed in one-year increments on May 18, 2020 and again on April 26, 2021.
 - GCAB wishes to reevaluate the contract, to ensure that all Greenwood Cemetery needs are being met, along with the needs of the city and persons using the cemetery. GCAB is interested in going through the RFP process and assessing the current market for providers of these services to make sure that the City of Birmingham is able to retain the best cemetery service provider available.

Long Term

- ***Develop a long range plan for the cemetery***
 - Over the past year, the GCAB has had numerous discussions about the need to develop a more detailed long range strategic plan to address current and future needs in the cemetery. GCAB will start drafting and revising a plan in the 2021-2022 fiscal year.
- ***Confirm the baseline amount of known available plots in the cemetery***
 - Record reconciliation is an ongoing process in the Clerk's Office. While GCAB closely monitors sales activity in the cemetery, they also monitor interments and inurnments throughout the cemetery. Transfers of ownership, interments, and inurnments are the most common activities taking place in in the cemetery's sections other than B and C. This goal partners with the planned monument/marker inventory survey and the GIS mapping initiative to reconfirm how all space in Greenwood Cemetery is being used whether that be designated green space, sold space, or unsold space.
- ***Monitor the continued growth of the perpetual care fund***
 - The GCAB monitors the growth of the perpetual care fund and can propose strategies for increasing the funds growth in order for the fund to reach a point where the interest accrued can cover most or all of the general maintenance requirements of the cemetery.

- ***Monitor the demand for cemetery services***
 - GCAB members review cemetery data in regards to sales, internments and inurnments and consider trends in order to suggest ways Greenwood Cemetery may need to adapt in order to meet future demands.
- ***Continue historic preservation efforts***
 - The GCAB works collaboratively with the Museum Board and Friends of the Birmingham Museum (a.k.a, the Birmingham Historical society.) GCAB develops projects such as the monument/marker inventory survey, and the Friends of the Birmingham Museum regularly conducts tours in the cemetery to continue to educate and engage citizens while preserving history in the cemetery.

DESIRED GOALS

Short Term

- ***Replace pole & chain in section F***
 - The pole and chain in section F remains in place for the safety of cemetery users and to allow access as needed for cemetery operations. The current pole and chain functions as a safety measure, GCAB wishes to find an alternative safety barrier that meets the aesthetics of the cemetery. DPS and the cemetery contractor will provide input to make sure any proposed changes meet safety and operational requirements.
- ***Reevaluate the effectiveness and possible need for GPR in the cemetery***
 - GCAB wishes to reevaluate the potential benefits of GPR and take into consideration any change in cost of this type of survey as well as improvements in technology since the item was last reviewed.
- ***Evaluate fencing maintenance needs for Greenwood Cemetery***
 - GCAB wishes to examine the current state of the fencing and determine if any or all areas are due to be repainted.

Long Term

- ***Monument/marker inventory survey***
 - On June 4, 2021, GCAB began working towards a plan to conduct a survey on all the monuments and markers in the cemetery. This survey will help with determining inventory, current conditions, and historic preservation needs with the guidance of Museum Director Pielack and City Clerk Bingham. The GCAB wishes to conduct this survey with volunteers and the support of city staff in order to cross-reference general information and collect baseline condition data and photos that could potentially be linked with the GIS data project. Monuments or markers that may need maintenance may also be identified through this survey.
- ***GIS Mapping – Launching a digital map for public reference***
 - City Staff in the planning department with GIS expertise created a GIS map of the cemetery. Data points from DPS on tree locations within the cemetery were added as a layer to the map in the spring of 2021. This goal ties in with the monument/marker inventory survey and confirming the baseline information of known available plots in the cemetery. Ongoing efforts are being made as time allows, the Clerk's Office provides progress updates to GCAB as needed.
- ***Determine Capital Outlay Projects***
 - GCAB may discuss and study the potential benefits of a capital outlay project. The GCAB will provide a recommendation and report to the City Commission if a capital outlay project is identified.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Grave sale activity primarily occurs in sections B and C and is closely monitored by the City Clerk's office.

The City Commission releases graves upon recommendation from staff and the Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board.

On December 21, 2020, the City Commission approved the release of remaining graves in section C, row 19-A. There are 24 graves mapped out in this row. As of July 1, 2021, 14 graves are owned, 5 graves are unowned but obstructed, and there are 5 graves ready for purchase and use at this time.

On January 25, 2021, the City Commission approved the release of remaining graves in section C, row 18-A. There are 24 graves mapped out in this row. As of July 1, 2021, 22 graves are owned, 2 graves are unowned but obstructed and not able to be used at this time.

On April 25, 2021, the City Commission approved the release of remaining graves in section B, rows; 17-C, 16-C, 15-C, and 14-A. There are 24 graves mapped out in each row. As of July 1, 2021, there are 29 graves available for purchase and use, 9 graves are unowned and obstructed, 57 of these graves are owned.

	Section C (released) Rows: 18-A, 19-A, 20-A	Section B (released) Rows: 14-A, 15-C, 16-C, 17-C	Section B (reserved) Rows: A-1 through A-13
Obstructed	31	9	*Currently being reviewed
Owned	36	58	187
Available	5	29	*125

The GCAB, Clerks Office, DPS, Museum, and contracted cemetery service provider continue to work collaboratively to preserve the historic charm and ambiance of Greenwood Cemetery while ensuring the highest standards of maintenance and service are being provided. The GCAB will continue to monitor data as provided by the City Clerk, work on their goals as laid out in this document, and make recommendations for future grave releases and/or improvements for the preservation and operation of the Historic Greenwood Cemetery.



MEMORANDUM

City Clerk's Office

DATE: May 4, 2022

TO: Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board

FROM: Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk

SUBJECT: Information Regarding Various Potter's Fields & Request from Linda Buchanan

INTRODUCTION:

On April 29, 2022, Linda Buchanan requested adding an agenda item regarding memorial marker for those buried in Potters' Field

ATTACHMENTS:

- Email from Linda Buchanan dated April 29, 2022 requesting to place the item "Memorial marker for those buried in Potters' Field" on the agenda
- Map and information from the Birmingham Historical Society *Greenwood Cemetery Inscriptions and Burials* book dated November 1, 1984
- The Potter's Field by Graham Denyer Willis, University of Cambridge
- The Detroit News, *Suit targets Detroit, church, companies in burial plot mixups*
- Channel 7 – ABC Buffalo, *I-Team: Cemetery mixup has lawmakers calling for change*

SUGGESTED ACTION:

- Review materials regarding Potter's Field
- Make a motion to discuss the matter further at a future GCAB agenda
Consider
- The sensitivity and appropriateness of this request
- If interested, this request should follow the review process and policy that CGAB is working to establish regarding Historical Marker Application and Installation Process for Non Deed Holders



Alex Bingham <abingham@bhamgov.org>

Agenda

Linda Buchanan <lgbfeb23@gmail.com>
To: Alex Bingham <abingham@bhamgov.org>

Fri, Apr 29, 2022 at 8:16 AM

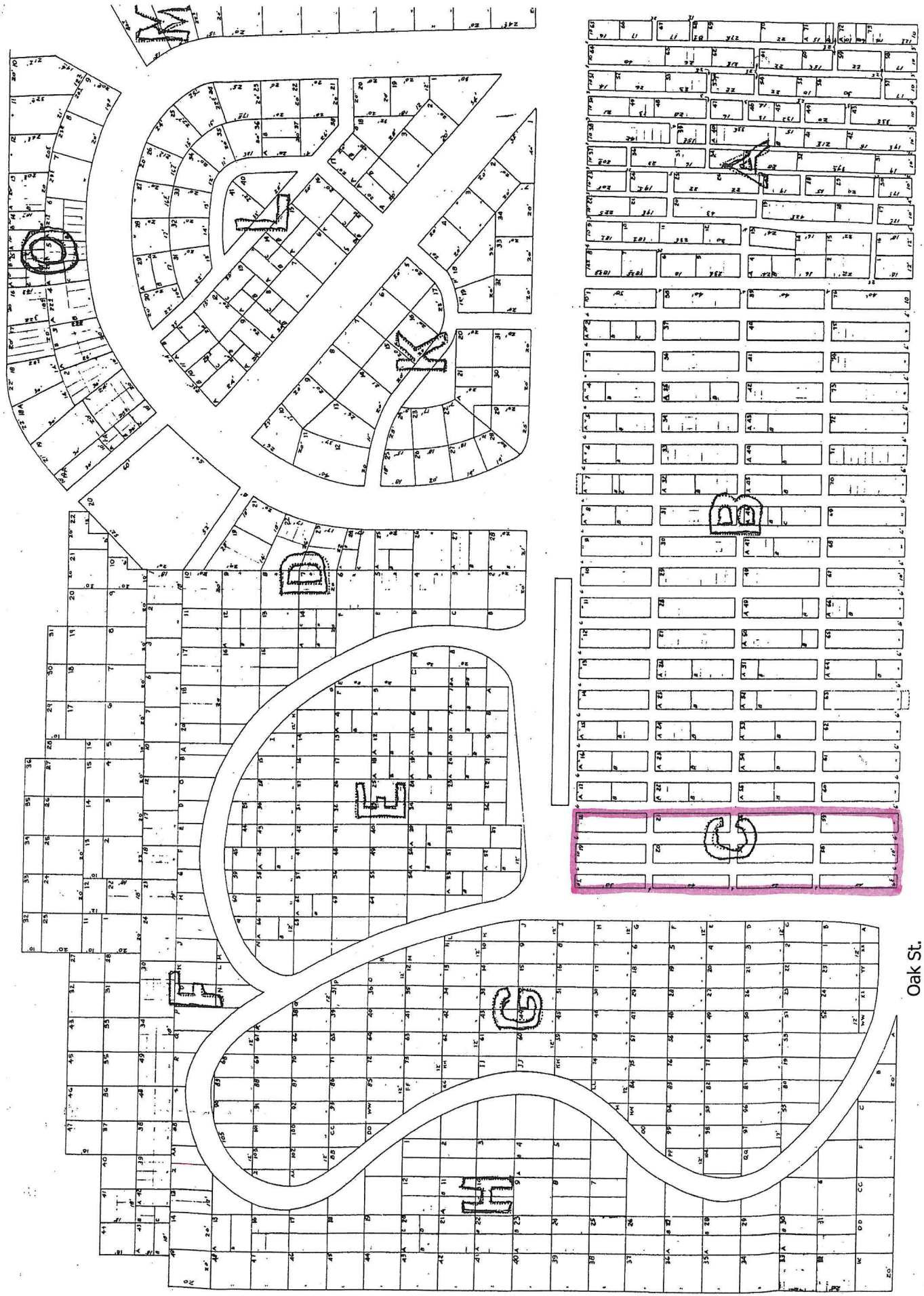
Hi Alex, Did you get my voice mail message on Monday re putting "Memorial marker for those buried in Potters' Field" on the agenda for new business? Now is the time of year to do this.

Thanks.

L. Buchanan
Chair GCAB

GREENWOOD CEMETERY

SHOWING CITY OF BIRMINGHAM NUMBERING SYSTEM



Oak St.

Section C

former Potter's Field

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
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9
10

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POTTER'S FIELD C56 from the City Record

1. Unknown. See list (A stone exists. See description in text.)
3. Unknown. See list.
7. Child of Stanley Grayson 1906.
8. John J. Johnston 1907. (There is a stone near this spot for Mary E. Baringer.)
9. Valvia Howe ndd., Child of Ferguson 1903 (Flossie? Marie?)
10. Henry S. Courtney 1903
11. Unknown. See list.
12. Child of Eagle 1901 Henry Moore 1901
13. Mrs. Clark 1899 (Buried in pathway between Lots 56 & 59)

POTTER's FIELD C57 from the City Record

1. or 2. Joseph W. Hyatt. (A stone exists. See description in text)
2. Unknown (Buried in pathway between Lots 57 & 58)
4. Unknown (same as 2.)
8. Unknown (same as 2.)
11. Unknown (same as 2.)
13. Child of Frank Hayden 1901. (same as 2.)

POTTER'S FIELD C58 from the City Record

1. Unknown See list.
6. Mrs. Malinda Lord. (A stone exists. See description in text.)
8. Mrs. Sarah H. Gilligan no dates
14. Clarence Riffenburg 1933

POTTER'S FIELD C59 from the City Record

4. Unknown. See list.
5. Unknown. See list.
7. William H. Blanchard no dates.
9. Unknown. See list.
11. Unknown. See list.

POTTER'S FIELD***LIST OF UNKNOWN BURIALS

Kelcher, Child of	1887
Shadbolt, Child of	1887
Carron, Child of	1889
Munson, Mrs.	1889
Clark, James A.	1891
Smith, Louis	1892
Sorter, Carl Ernest	1914
Sorter, Mrs.	1914
Perrin, Cynthia	1915
Barringer, Mrs. Mary E. (A stone exists in Section C Lot 56 Grave 8. See text)	
Cowen, Emily L. (A stone exists in Section C Lot 20 Grave 6. See text)	
Pepperall, Walter Gordon	1917
Ferrier, Clarence	1919
Howland, Child of Frank	no dates

POTTER'S FIELD***LIST OF UNKNOWN BURIALS cont.

Wild, Charles	1875
Warner, Children of E.	1882
Woodin, Child of	1873
Adams, Mrs.	1875
Child removed from Perrin lot	1882
Fall, child of William	1883
Riffenburg, William	1883 (A stone exists in Section C Lot 59 Grave 10. See text.)
Child found on railroad	1872
Woodin, Child of	1873
Woodruff, Mrs.	1884
Johnson, William	1884
Pepperall, Child of	1912
Ferguson, Levi M.	1916
Ferguson, Cecil	1917
Saur, Georgina	no dates
Hutton, Child of	1886.
Perrin, Mrs.	no dates

The Potter's Field

GRAHAM DENYER WILLIS

University of Cambridge

INTRODUCTION

The “potter’s field”—indigent cemetery, pauper’s burial ground, pit grave—is a category and practice that has existed for centuries. Today the term is bandied about loosely, affixed both to spatial locations and to kinds of bodies in space. The idea is this: the potter’s field is where the most worthless are buried, usually in “communal” conditions. It is a location where the everyday techniques of governance, and their byproducts, are concentrated and made material.

Take the case of New York City. Here, an entire island—Hart Island—is a potter’s field. It is abstracted from public view. Yet the bodies buried there have been actively predated and “cared for” in a range of ways. Insurance firms, old age homes, hospitals, and the prison system shape these subjects of a condition in which the inability to pay to be laid to rest defines the result. At Hart Island, these bodies are buried in mass graves dug by industrial machinery and filled in by prison labor paid 50 cents an hour, often after “benefitting science” at elite New York City Medical Schools (Bernstein 2016). The bodies of the potter’s field, like those who bury them, are deeply marked by race, evidenced as much in the lives left to die as in their ultimate condition of material disposal. Historically, this is especially acute: the potter’s field has been where victims of lynching, hanging, and racialized violence have been put in their place.

Acknowledgments: This article has benefited from much intellectual heavy lifting that is not mine. I am deeply indebted, first, to the *CSSH* editors and reviewers, who participated fully in making this work better. Their investment epitomized the critical and substantive collegiality that makes scholarly work unique. I am grateful to several colleagues who graciously and constructively engaged with this article in its multiple forms and helped turn it from a series of premises and inflection points into something more coherent. Finn Stepputat, Jeff Garmany, Ieva Jusionyte, Laurie Denyer Willis, Anthony Fontes, Kevin Lewis O’Neill, Kristen Drybread, and Winifred Tate all took the time to reflect on partial or entire drafts. Some ideas were further enriched in conversations with Sharika Thiranagama, Samira Bueno, and Thomas Blom Hansen. Special thanks go to Amy Jaffa and Max Horder, two rising scholars who will soon make significant waves. Thanks also go to participants in the Political Sociology Reading Group at the University of Cambridge and to attendees at a Stanford Department of Anthropology presentation. All translations are my own.

Furthermore, the potter's field has been decisively shaped by governing logics as they shift over time.

And yet, in some places potter's fields are also spaces where disinterment is standard and where political massacres of past and present blend together in human fragments. Especially in Latin America, direct and indirect violence leads straight to churning urban cemeteries that are endlessly sowed, unsowed, and re-sowed again (O'Neill 2012; Klaufus 2016; Fontes *n.d.*). A case in point is the potter's fields in the city of São Paulo, Brazil, where little is sacrosanct or made invisible. Dogs traipse, shitting, pissing, and digging where they please. Bits of coffin are everywhere. Scraps of button-up shirts lie partially buried all around. Do not take your eye off the ground or you will fall in. This terrain is a mundane mass grave; a space of disposal *en masse*.

This article is motivated by what I see as the more or less accepted blending, tactile or imperceptible, of devalued life and earth inside and outside of certified cemeteries in contemporary times. To contain the dead bodies produced by liberalism is too burdensome. They blow across bureaucratic boundaries and spatial containments. Moreover, the byproducts of the violence of abandonment and the violence of policing, and what they enable, need not be circumscribed by the state in cemeteries or geomorphic Hart Islands. Others now do the burying of the "worthless" and the criminal elsewhere, expanding the dimension of the potter's field beyond legal certification.

In what follows, I unpack the "potter's field" as an everyday practice and category as it evolves in the material treatment of dead bodies and body parts. "Social death" is not just a category of the living; there is a concordant material, subterranean, but fluid space of the dead. From São Paulo, I show how in the past, as now, the potter's field has been politically useful for hiding bodies, but in different ways over time. In the Cold War, the potter's field was where Brazil's national security state hid assassinated and tortured political insurgents. Today, it is where the violence of abandonment and the violence of policing are made mundane, and responsibility is interred. Those buried here are deemed disposable, and responsible for their condition in both life and death.

Abandonment, today, generates uncertified cemeteries. Around this city there are tens, perhaps hundreds, of *de facto* cemeteries where the "worthless" and "criminal" are disposed of without political rupture. Uncertified cemeteries are a material condition inseparable from governance by abandonment. They may not be "legal" spaces, but they are pedestrian, and *de facto* authorized, in keeping with the selectivity and absent presence of the state that has become commonplace around the world (Goldstein 2016). These cemeteries are all around, reflecting emergent but sustained patterns of governance by alternate orders, the outcome of a politics that uses landscape as a weapon (De León 2015), and the ways in which others like hospitals, "experiment" with abandoned and devalued life. Though states govern the dead (Stepputat 2014), I propose that the potter's field, as governance itself, has moved

beyond state bureaucracy. It does not much matter that uncertified cemeteries are made by others, so long as they do not contain the wrong kind of people. It becomes news when they do.

These uncertified potter's fields are revelatory in showing that dead bodies seem to fertilize and give life to particular kinds of death-circling sociality. These sorts of sociality are an especially tricky kind of material and social "potentiality" (Simone 2016), especially distinctive, it seems, in the current moment. To illustrate, I point to the terrestrial and material artefacts of what "organized crime," as a social infrastructure, leaves in the earth. In cities throughout Latin America uncertified cemeteries now banally dot urban spaces. Potter's fields, whether tended by the state, organized crime, or others like hospitals, are the infrastructural dirt of contemporary politics, vital for understanding emergent political change and its foreclosure.

I unfold my discussion in five parts. I first provide some background on how I arrived at this analytic space and how I propose to try to make sense of it. I then consider how scholars have approached the potter's field historically and more recently, often with an eye to the communities on the edge of falling in. In my third section, I look more empirically to Latin America and shifting patterns of governance and violence there, and their correlated patterns of graves. I follow this with an assessment of how these spaces are used for political purposes, such as for hiding "valuable" bodies or making direct violence disappear quietly. Finally, I discuss the potter's field as it exists in uncertified and de facto ways via its terrestrial coordinates in São Paulo. I conclude with some thoughts about why such cemeteries demand scholarly and political attention and how potter's fields today are as revealing and meaningful as ever.

MATERIAL MOTIVATIONS

From 2009 to 2012, I carried out ethnographic research with homicide and other detectives of the Civil Police in São Paulo (Denyer Willis 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017). I accompanied them as they investigated homicides that are so routine in this city, as well as the nearly as routine police shootings of citizens, known then as *resisting arrests followed by death*. It was here that the cemetery began to coalesce for me as a specter of governance. Revisiting my field notes, I recall one case that happened, peculiarly, on the Day of the Dead:

Dia dos Finados—The wind sways the eucalyptus trees overhead. There is a hushing sound. We are no longer in the city, as expansive and endless as the city of São Paulo is. The two-lane road is blocked, and a Military Police officer directs traffic as it comes, from both sides, when it comes. We are mulling at the scene of a police shooting. The homicide detectives I am accompanying have been sent out to this place, on the outskirts of the city. Here a young man shot and was shot. He was in his early twenties. The Military Police car in pursuit came to rest abutting a curb, diagonally on the street. Facing it is a motorcycle askew on the ground. He had a military-grade assault rifle, the police told us. The police car's hood has been *furado*—"punctured" with bullets—the metal literally peeled back in some places. These were bullets that "belong" on

the fields of war. The police involved in the shooting speak with a visible sense of relief. It was not their skin or their bones peeled back. The young man is now lying in a zippered grey bag in the morgue in town. We go there next. But the detectives already know he is like most of the 832 others killed by police in 2015 in this city.¹ Down the street, not more than 500 meters away, is a cemetery. Modest families mull and pass around the brick and mortar walls that surround it. There are flowers. Many flowers, arranged ornamentally, thoughtfully. Many are plastic.

During this research I observed how everyday practices of claiming and defending certain lives for legal protection are reinforced or overturned. While with these detectives, I waded through the mire of the Brazilian state's selective and minimal engagement with many lives. On occasion we visited "fields" where bodies had been either purposely buried or had simply been left, undetected and unclaimed, to blend and disappear. Detectives were routinely confronted with something I thought was audacious: there are cemeteries in the city used routinely by people not authorized to do so by law. For example, in 2012, a university in an historic São Paulo neighborhood was decertified, leaving its 2,100 registered students in the lurch. Three months later, something else uncertified was unearthed in the university's yard. Acting on a tip, the homicide detectives I was with discovered fifteen bodies in a *cemitério clandestino*. The jumbled remains of these bodies—young, old, fetuses, and parts of bodies—had been tossed asunder in a shallow communal grave. The rector of the former university released a statement affirming that the bodies had been part of a study by the school's medical arm—they had benefitted science. Since the school had been deactivated years before, she had ordered the bodies be disposed and they were interred in a courtyard. There was no explanation of where they had come from. The response of pragmatic and resource-poor detectives to these kinds of cemeteries was often a shrug. It was just more death.

During this period of my research I never entered a certified cemetery. They stood in the background, brick and mortar reifications that appeared stable and static. But as I concluded my research, forty-three students in Ayotzinapa, Mexico were "disappeared" following a protest. In the search for them investigators carried out a forensic investigation of a suspected mass grave on the city's outskirts, where a witness claimed the bodies had been burned and disposed of. During the excavation the analysts found charred fragments of other bodies. The site was a cemetery that was not a cemetery. But it did not seem to matter who those others were. They were material but unexceptional evidence of how violence is historically layered in ways that are difficult to disentangle.

¹ The data is from São Paulo state statistics. They include on- and off-duty shootings by police from the two main police institutions: Polícia Civil and Polícia Militar (the Civil Police and the Military Police).

I looked further into the situation in São Paulo and the finalities of bodies in and out of cemeteries there, as “made” by violent policing and under the violence of political abandonment. In 2016, I began to study two city cemeteries, Dom Bosco and Vila Formosa, both of which had spaces for pauper’s burials. One afternoon, I stood beside a row of open graves in a part of Vila Formosa that was for the urban poor, where each arriving casket was allotted 15 minutes for burial. These were not nameless paupers; they came with families, social ties, and wailing, and yet the treatment of these bodies was hardly different from those buried nameless.

In one open grave, next to another that was being filled by pallbearers and family, was a bone (see [figure 1](#)). Looking as though it had been placed there intentionally, it had been left behind during routine disinterment that morning. Gravediggers and others walked around the edge of the grave as they placed a casket in an adjacent one. Some of them looked in, noticed the bone, and moved on. No one mentioned it or pointed it out. It was a worn old femur, the largest human bone. It was evidence of nothing, and apropos of nothing but a proliferation of bones. Ten minutes later a new casket was placed on top of it.

I was left to wonder what really counts as the beginning and the end of the potter’s field when all bodies of the urban poor are buried in graves where bones are jumbled, left behind, and treated like soil. Dom Bosco and Vila Formosa are the two places where the “formally unclaimed” are sent for burial in certified potter’s fields. But they are also where the urban poor who receive free burials go. This slippery lack of distinction in how the bones of the unclaimed and the poor are treated, in these cemeteries and elsewhere, motivates the enquiry that follows.

PUTTING THEM IN, KEEPING THEM OUT

The potter’s field has been overlooked in scholarship, although study of it overlaps in narrow ways with vital work on Cold War and historic mass graves (Rosenblatt [2015](#); Rubin [2015](#)), the political lives of dead bodies (Verdery [2013](#)), and the socio-cultural meaning of death (Riley [1983](#); Baudrillard [1993](#); Kaufman and Morgan [2005](#); Lomnitz [2005](#)). But I see particular urgency in considering its significance today, since the potter’s field has proven remarkably durable and universal in this moment of liberal globalization and individual responsibility.

In *The Work of the Dead*, Laqueur ([2015](#)) argues for recognition of the “age of the cemetery,” in which a decline in churchyard burials and the expansion of private funereal interment took place, following on larger structural changes that occurred in patterns of political order and industrialization. Privately run cemeteries became deeply intertwined with Victorian urbanization and new foundations of capitalist production, emerging as commoditized terrains. In this period of emergent division and reordering, these were classed



FIGURE 1. Femur.

spaces that central government legitimized but did not necessarily administer. They were driven by a particular specter of that which they were not: a mass grave. Under this new logic of class, spatially demarcated in earth, abandonment in death became a severe truth for the living. The imaginary of the

undignified pauper's funeral that no one attended or commemorated drove sales of individual private cemetery plots (*ibid.*). The image of being interred in a pit in a jumbled and festering mess with nameless others was a powerful motivation to find an alternative.

Analytically, the fragments of this literature reveal two things about the conditions of death. First, the classed cemetery was inseparable from a rapidly expanding urban condition. Intensifying conditions of abandonment, and their spatial manifestations, needed to come to rest in mortality somewhere. Never directly addressed in the descriptive work of early urban scholars like Engels (1892), the mass grave, or French *fosse commune*, is hardly obscured behind dramatic descriptions of the early urban and industrial condition, including abject mortality, desertion of children, and the unhindered obliteration of readily disposable labor. If the early urban condition was about expendable labor, in factories and distant colonial plantations, it was also about controlling criminality. The transience of the urbanizing city, the newness of its inequality and abjection, its densification, and the rise of new kinds of criminal disorder—which would drive the creation of police as we recognize them today (Rawlings 1995)—were well encapsulated in an ominous and well-avoided urban symbol, the “one horse hearse with a pauper-load” (Laqueur 2015: 318). No citizen wanted to be that cargo.

The second thing revealed is that the specter of the urban potter's field inspired new forms of social and economic organization designed to keep people from falling into it. Focusing on a population on the edge of the potter's field in urbanizing America, DiGirolamo (2002) considers how street level “newsboys” in the late nineteenth century struggled to not be buried nameless in a pile of bodies. Newsboys were largely poor and sometimes orphans, and they often formed trade groups. What makes this population remarkable, DiGirolamo argues, is that the threat of the potter's field inspired solidarity. Newsboys took up collections and created poor but “pitifully elaborate” funerals to avoid dehumanized, indigent mass burials (*ibid.*: 5).

In England around this same time, the specter of the mass grave was similarly powerful in engendering new kinds of institutions. The rise of for-profit cemeteries spurred the development of “burial societies.” These were systematic but basic forms of insurance to cover costs of death, sickness, and funerals. Laqueur elaborates: “By 1874, two and a quarter million people, mostly men, belonged to friendly societies which provided death and sickness benefits; to this figure must be added their spouses who were insured for funeral only” (1983: 110).

In Victorian England the mass grave became something of a pseudonym for subsequent practices. It represented the possibility of a body being pulled apart after death. The 1832 Anatomy Act in England allowed for pauper bodies to be dissected for medical investigation before their final burial in a mass grave. This new law made an implied practice normal. Previously, this

treatment had been reserved for hanged felons or racialized “criminals,” but under new certification the trade in pauper bodies redrew the normative categories of the living, with science as justification. Hurren (2004) shows how this political effort to create medical knowledge was deeply entangled with early Victorian Poor Laws and expanded government anti-welfare policies, both of which facilitated the provision of bodies. One clear beneficiary was the Cambridge Anatomical School at the university’s Downing College. Cambridge received bodies from around the region, leveraging the political moment of disposable bodies to advance its dominant position in health science research. The same pattern of pauper body trafficking was crucial to the creation of medical knowledge in the United States (Blakely and Harrington 1997; Sappol 2002).

The potter’s field and its uses are maintained, even as they change in direct relation to the governing logics of life. The later New Poor Laws (1880–1914), which advanced the penal philosophy of the workhouse and emergent notions of care, expanded the use of the mass pauper grave. Here, the pit grave was governed through the idea of work; poverty—the “absence” of work—came to replace abandonment and missing kin or social ties as a defining logic for determining who would end up there. Strange (2003) argues that a pauper’s burial in this late Victorian period was especially abhorrent because it denied rites and mourning customs even when the dead did have family. Burial “on the parish” meant not anonymity (necessarily), but rather strict central government control over the impossibility of commemoration—only a plain pine box was allowed, with no individual markings or space for mourning. This “ultimate disgrace” (Thompson cited in *ibid.*) sometimes inspired people to try to get their kin out of the pit, even years after their burial. Some families applied to exhumate bodies from communal graves once they had found the money to pay for a proper burial (Strange 2003). Such was the logic of the *workfare* New Poor Laws, and the evisceration of poor lives in death was a powerful governing technique for driving economically productive life.

Studies of pauper’s mass graves and the potter’s field have spoken predominantly in the past tense. Surprisingly little work has dealt directly with these spaces as a material or governance condition. What contemporary research does exist follows a similar thread, examining how people remain terrified of falling into the space or of letting certain others fall in. Writing of a public hospital in Australia, Fox (2005) describes how social workers there are, structurally, the last resort for defining who gets a funeral and who is buried in an unmarked grave. Similarly, Castex (2007) considers the ways that the last line of service in social work itself is to cobble together enough resources to prevent clients being buried by numbered stake only. In the United States, this means running between embassies, places like the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or fundraising with cap in hand to access legal means of identification (DNA, photographs, fingerprints). In other words, such

workers routinely scrape together whatever resources they can to keep people out of the pit.

There has been recent and important comparative work. Kim (2016) studies the homeless or near-homeless in Japan, a population defined largely by weakened or severed ties with family and kin. Here, the fear of *kotodushi*, “isolated death,” is powerful, and it drives a kind of “necrosociality”—mutual commemoration and care for the condition of the dead and the materials of their memory. Kim describes how a welfare shelter came to create a communal tomb for the dead where the remains of day laborers, the mentally ill, and other *muen*—those “without ties”—of the organized underclass are placed to rest.

This same line of “organization on the edge” is echoed in the few contributions on the subject from Latin America. Kristen Drybread’s (2013) incisive work on street children in the Brazilian northeast considers the specter of ignominious disposal for these small “indigents.” These street children anticipate an early death, and what matters for them is to be surrounded and commemorated in death rather than being left to the vultures on a trash heap. Drybread recalls a conversation among them in which one boy tells how the state treated a peer after he was killed by an extermination squad: “No one claimed the body, so the folks at the morgue stuffed him in a plastic bag and threw him in the pit” (ibid.: 217). Similarly, the mass grave emerges ever so slightly in the work of Jones, Herrera, and de Benítez (2007) about street children and suicide in Puebla, Mexico. While groups of children organize to provide a casket, they are nonetheless confronted by logics of Catholic judgment and burial for the “sin” of killing oneself, which means burial face down in a common grave.

MASS GRAVES: FROM EXCEPTIONAL TO MUNDANE TERROR

Today the study of mass graves references history, often pointing decisively to the Cold War, which was infamous for a particular kind of violence (Gordillo 2002; de Walque 2005; Heryanto 2006). This is especially true for Latin America, where during the second half of the twentieth century millions were killed, tortured, and disappeared. Militaries and police pursued dramatic counterinsurgency campaigns, often as newly centralized forces (Gill 2004; McSherry 2012). Paramilitary groups at wrist’s length from the state, like extermination squads and “communist hunters,” ran roughshod in city and countryside massacring real or perceived political insurgents, indigenous communities, and even academics (Koonings and Kruijt 1999; Sluka 2000). On the other side, leftist rebel groups and urban guerillas strove to destabilize authoritarian regimes by perpetrating their own bloody massacres, kidnappings, and strategic bombings (Rochlin 2003).

The result was many bodies in need of burial. The earth of the region received this violence in marked and unmarked graves and in clandestine and public sites of mass burial. In Guatemala, massacres of indigenous populations became almost routine, as did the sites of bodily disposal. Wilson speaks

of stumbling upon a “clandestine” grave that everyone in the village knew about, where years after the violence, “The bodies laid where they had been tossed, untouched and unrecovered” (2001: vii). More commonly, the perpetrators of this violence sought to obscure the finality of those they had killed, not necessarily due to a fear of being held to account, but rather because the political dead *deserved* anonymity, namelessness, or existence alongside unremarkable and dead indigents. The corpses of the disappeared and killed were subjected to a “deliberate commingling of remains in unmarked graves” (Férrándiz and Robben 2015: 1). They became symbolically nameless “political indigents,” now incapable of inflaming political will and insurgency among the living. Mass graves and disappearances were about stripping away political resistance en masse, both through multifarious murders and via the terrifying silences of those never heard from again.

The Cold War is over now and the hegemonic liberal project asserts that violence has subsided. Efforts to reclaim the silences of the “missed people” are now center stage in new struggles for democratic voice and the construction of liberal capitalism as a project. Such violence is treated as a historical project. Muddy and painstaking searches are ongoing in many countries today, emphasizing, materially, the way that a body—its bones—may bring some resolution to a specific period of victimhood and wrongdoing. This wrongdoing can be literally and figuratively unearthed from the mass grave, definitively and scientifically asserted, propelling a political discussion of liberal justice. The release of historical documents, sometimes slowly, sometimes in unexpected troves, has pushed forward efforts in the same vein (Weld 2014). Exhumations of political dissidents, and the broader reconciliation projects concerned with the moral crises of the past, have become central to many scholarly discussions about righting the wrongs of “then” (Rosenblatt 2015; Wilson 2001; Sanford 2003). But the mass graves of this current interest are typically seen in the light of systemic or normative ruptures, of genocides, civil wars, dictatorships, or analogous catastrophes.

Liberal hegemony minimizes the need to commingle valuable and un-valuable bodies in earth. Violence is now subsumed in the dualism of direct violence and the violence of abandonment, and what abandonment enables (Scheper-Hughes 1993; Bourgois 2001; Biehl 2005). Those who are buried nameless, unmarked, and uncelebrated are so, still, by political definition, and under hegemony, in ways that remain largely uncontested. Today, the ongoing police violence in liberal democracies, or the ways in which real or perceived criminal populations are left to kill each other, have meant that bodies can pile up, more or less unhidden, yet be maintained as invisible and unexceptional by a paradigm of suitable victimhood (Nagengast 1994; Samet 2013). The lived experience of democracy—twenty-plus years after countries emerged from the terror of authoritarian governments—maintains a particular delineation of which lives matter.

Massacres still take place. There is a vast discussion of the ways that the violence of today is contiguous and mixed with that of the dictatorship past, and is in some cases increasing (Mitchell and Wood 1999; Cingranelli and Richards 1999; Aretxaga 2003; Comaroff and Comaroff 2006). Terror continues to define and prop up the political present, sustaining it with deep contradictions (Arias and Goldstein 2010). But this historical moment of state terror has been made invisible and left unrecognized, confined largely to populations that democracy-as-project continually fails to “emancipate” or is disinterested in emancipating.

State terror is now twofold: It is direct violence that many condone by recognition or omission, or minimally acknowledge via pseudonyms or socially acceptable metaphors such as the War on Drugs, stop and frisk, or hyper-incarceration. It is also the space of abandonment, and a practice of abandonment as a form of rule, in which direct violence is made possible, logical, and uncontestable (Taussig 1984). Under these conditions, to be terrified is to recognize the impossibility of predicting violence, the likelihood of it happening, and the slipperiness of resistance to it. Terror has become a question of position and implied power: intense and horrifying for some, invisible and unimportant for others. To systematically resist the hegemonic practice of violence is to open oneself to not just the possibility of violence, but its certainty.

In the divided cities of contemporary Latin America this terror is extreme. Consider Alves’ observation that the practices of routine police violence in São Paulo are bleak and uncontestable. Alves recounts a story told to him by a mother, Dona Lurdinha, whose son’s neck police snapped as she wailed for them to stop: “I knew they had broken it,” she said, “because I saw he was trying to grab the gate and his hands stopped in the air ... right here, in front of me” (2014: 146). The police did not feign justification and she would have no resolution or recompense.

Her experience is unexceptional, and few police are ever held responsible for such violence. To the contrary, they have little to fear, even if they dramatize violence. In 2016, police in São Paulo circulated a series of photos in a WhatsApp group that showed an officer holding an axe to the head of a young black man. With a Military Police vehicle visible in the background, the officer wears a clown mask from a horror film, points a gun at the man’s forehead with one hand, and rests the axe on his head with the other. The young man clasps his hands together, bending over in obvious fear.

But these actions and massacres on behalf of political power, which sustain the ability to deny the existence of state terror, are not just mundane occurrences with one or two victims. Massacres of four, five, or six people are routine. In May of 2012, while I was undertaking research in the homicide division of São Paulo, members of one notorious police group, ROTA, executed six young men in what was described in the police report as a “gunfight.” The incident was in fact a massacre and an execution, as related to homicide

detectives by a witness who saw police remove one of the men from their car beside a major highway miles from the scene and shoot him. Despite police claims of a firefight, no police were injured, nor did their cars sustain any damage. Three officers were arrested, but after two years of trials and a substantial burden of incriminating evidence, they were declared innocent and returned to duty.

Central to this story is that the six people killed were alleged to be members of São Paulo's organized crime group, the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC). When it is not police doing the killing, violence between those who are deemed less valuable is nonetheless legitimated under an implied logic of "let them kill each other." This sort of violence is part of a larger pattern found in spaces of this and other cities that outsiders seldom see, where shadowy para-state groups carry out multiple killings, known as *chacinas*, with remarkable regularity.

Not surprisingly, the young men suspected of gang and organized crime violence are routinely cast as liberal pariahs, antithetical to the civilizing project and uncivil in their "barbarity" (Holston 2009: 25). The "they" is, of course, a broad category, which draws on racial, gendered, and spatial tropes that make it easy to dismiss the victims and perpetrators as unimportant and their lost lives as inconsequential due to their distance from categories of "innocence" and "civility." To put this differently, whether Dona Lurdinha's son or the young man with an axe to his head were or were not involved in crime is irrelevant. The political space they inhabit—one freely predated by police and the violence of abandonment—traces how bodies are placed in earth. These conditions underpin, and fill, the potter's field today as it has come to transcend state-certified spaces.

COMMINGLINGS

In discussions of violence and democracy in Latin America scholars often reference Brazil's 1992 Carandiru prison massacre (Mitchell and Wood 1999; Ahnen 2003; Wacquant 2003). In this single incident riot police used machine guns, shotguns, knives, and bombs to kill 111 inmates. This case has been theorized and historically situated as it relates to institutions, citizenship, and the development and emergence of organized crime in the post-Cold War period (Caldeira 2000; Darke 2013; King and Valensia 2014; Silvestre 2016). But this massacre is simply one instance in an historical arc of violence against marginal populations, especially as those populations amalgamate class and racial categorizations. Where the bodies of those killed at Carandiru ended up hints at the historical congruence of the potter's field.

They came to Vila Formosa, Latin America's largest cemetery. This is a vast and deeply unsettling place. Empty holes of red earth yawn everywhere. Remnants of past graves—broken portraits, granite plaques, pieces of clothing—scatter the fields, making it difficult to know what or who is under

what spot. The grounds are expansive—780,000 square meters. In colloquial discussions, many have told me that the only larger cemetery is in China. Yet the right metric for measuring size may not be square meters. In making comparisons about size, I wonder if there is an International Association of Cemeteries as there is, say, an International Association of Airports, and if so, do they keep tally by territorial size, or by the number of bodies that have been sowed under, as airports count size by the number of passengers? Both are spaces of fluidity.

An estimated 1,500,000 people have been buried in Vila Formosa since it opened in 1949. In a city of eleven million people, that is a lot, given the tens of public and private cemeteries that also exist. If death was a big business in Brazil as it is in the United States, things would be dramatically different. In Brazil, though, state payments for health-related services go less systematically and fluidly to third parties—old age homes, caregivers, hospitals, and so forth—that keep poor people alive, indebting them and turning them into commodities, until their death and an eventual pay out. In Brazil, everyone gets a free, if sparse, burial. The city of São Paulo pays and manages most of the cemeteries. They are public, open to all, and made open for all. They are highly organized, even if pieces of coffin, bone, and plastic commemoration lie everywhere. They must be, due to the number of people they handle. Their management is utterly modest, having succumbed to the demands of routine burial and disinterment.

Just outside one of Vila Formosa's gates is a single flower seller. In this social space, people find ways to commemorate given the deep constraints. Just getting to the cemetery can be a challenge since it is in the city's eastern reaches, far from metro and arterial bus lines. To get here is easiest for those who live in this part of the city, where "quality of life" is significantly lower than in wealthy neighborhoods. People in the latter bury their dead in places like Cemitério da Consolação, where tourists go to see the ornate tombs, sculptures, and permanent funerary rites. That cemetery's walls are topped with razor wire to keep out tomb raiders. Outside its walls, on a busy thoroughfare across from the Medical School and Hospital of the University of São Paulo, is a row of around fifty flower vendor stalls. While they now sell also to passing motorists, these vendors are historically rooted in the creation and display of bouquets to commemorate death, and they compete for a lively market.

The contrast with Vila Formosa is extreme. At Vila Formosa they commemorate with small granite plaques, spinning wheels, plastic flowers, and figurines. Disinterred gravesites reveal something about these commemorations. Fragments of pine or similar woods remain in some, while in others bits of medium-density fiberboard have blended into the earth around, leaving behind only bits of shiny faux-wood laminate (see [figure 2](#)).

On one of my visits there, a cold wind blew through the trees. The night before dropped to 4 degrees Celsius, very cold for São Paulo. On the way to the



FIGURE 2. Fragments.

cemetery the taxi driver told me that a six-year-old boy who had been living with his parents on the street had died of hypothermia. We conjectured that he, like us, might be going to Vila Formosa. The asphalt road leading up from one of the cemetery's three entrances is broken to pieces, and the exposed earth beneath is patterned in rivulets from hard rains. At the entrance gate a small, unattended fire of plastic and garbage burns, flickering against a wall and turning it black with ash. Stray dogs run about, bouncing around the mounds and holes in the ground. On my first visit, sensing that I was unfamiliar, they barked and stayed close to the grave workers, who barely noticed me. Our car had pushed up the hill, beneath a row of towering trees. Bureaucrats had planned this as a tree-lined boulevard. One can see the idea, but while some trees are still alive others are burned out, hollow shells.

Most of the dead from the Carandiru massacre are buried here, eighty-seven of them (Rezende [n.d.](#)). This momentous massacre early in Brazil's re-liberalization period is often seen as evidence of the shift in categories of state violence away from the killing of real or suspected political insurgents and toward those—criminals, the poor—who might usurp economic prosperity. Most of the eighty-seven have long since been disinterred and moved to the ossuary. Basic burial includes three years in the ground. After that, if no one foots the bill for them to remain buried, bodies are pulled up, one by one, shovelful by shovelful, handful of bone by handful of bone, placed in a plastic bag alongside thousands of others in a mass grave.

Vila Formosa is the place where many of the urban poor are buried today, through an incessant routine. Every fifteen minutes a body is put in the ground. Sometimes families arrive, mull about for a few minutes, and then leave. Rows of pre-dug graves await. Those whose relatives have paid the fee stay in the ground, but the terrain around them is dotted with disinterred graves of those buried three years before. Disinterment takes place daily from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., carried out by a special shovel-bearing crew. But there is no time to collect everything in the coffins. What comes up in exhumations are the big bones and what is left of larger remnants such as clothing, shoes, or plastic items. These go into overflowing dumpsters. Most of the coffin stays in the ground, as does much of the body. Forget about any small bones like fingers, hands, or feet, or even some bigger ones; there is no time (see [figure 3](#)). The next burial will go on top. This is a disinterment not of reclamation or reconciliation, but of disposal.

The history of Vila Formosa is significant, particularly starting with Brazil's Cold War government. The beginning of Brazil's dictatorship in 1964 brought a wave of state violence. In 1968, the state's counterinsurgency actions accelerated with the signing of an "Institutional Act" (AI-5) that abolished habeas corpus, established media censorship, and closed the National Congress and state assemblies. This act effectively centralized power in the federal government under the pretense of national security, and resulted in a



FIGURE 3. There is no time.

highly coordinated campaign against real and perceived political dissidents, which in turn led to an explosion of killings and disappearances.

In São Paulo, many of those killed by police and “communist hunting” extermination groups ended up in the ground at Vila Formosa, where they were buried as nameless indigents or under false names. Only rarely were they released to family members. An extensive report by the organization



FIGURE 4. Dom Bosco.

Grupo Tortura Nunca Mais (“torture never more”) (1995), details the fate of fourteen such insurgents at Vila Formosa, and draws direct lines from their political activity to state repression and subsequent efforts to make them disappear into Vila Formosa’s potter’s field. One such case is as follows:

Hamilton Fernando Cunha, Militant of the Popular Revolutionary Vanguard (VPR). Born in Florianopolis in 1941, son of Fernando Manoel Cunha and Filomena M. Rosa. Killed by machine gun on February 11th 1969 while resisting arrest, as police from the Department of Social and Political Order attempted to capture him at his workplace. The police version of the repressive event states that Hamilton had been shot by a revolutionary *companheiro*, who escaped unidentified, when police announced he was under arrest. He was buried as an indigent at Vila Formosa Cemetery in São Paulo (ibid.: n.p.).

Also among these known burials was the country’s most prominent leftist revolutionary, Carlos Marighella. He was a leader of the National Liberation Action, a group known for having kidnapped the United States Ambassador in 1969. His actions as a Marxist became internationally famous from his book *Minimanual of the Urban Guerilla* (1969). Marighella is perhaps the most publicly known person ever buried at Vila Formosa, defying the place’s insignificance. Writes Bonassi,

...a striking tomb where the ants are having a party calls my attention. It is particularly striking next to its surrounding neighbors. I approach the mound of earth where these ants party. A wooden cross falling over has one of its arms buried. I try to read, *gella, quella, ghella* ... the letters are of a time that remind me of music, of particular words. I smile. A dust devil forms. A hand pulls me violently back. It is my dad. He keeps pulling me back while looking to the horizons and the concrete ossuaries that surround the place. He orders me never to return. He says it is the tomb of a terrorist, and that the police could be watching. It took me some time to understand why the police would be watching a dead person. To me, from that day forward, “*terrorista*” comes from “*terra*,” the soft earth and ant hills of the largest cemetery in Latin America (1996, quoted in Rezende n.d.).

In 1969, though, the police were themselves looking to make bodies disappear, unwatched. The terrorist must be made silent in death, un-commemorated. With the killing of political insurgents then on the upswing under the new federal powers, political leaders sought to make their own repressive violence entirely invisible. Vila Formosa was too busy. This potter’s field was of declining usefulness for their purposes.

On 2 March 1971, the state consecrated Dom Bosco cemetery on the far northern reaches of the city. Surrounded by steep hillsides and green forests, and only reasonably accessible by car, this remote cemetery was purportedly the city’s first burial ground for indigents, the unclaimed, and the abandoned. But much more was underfoot. The government contracted a British firm called Dowson and Mason to build an industrial grade cremation furnace there. This company was surprised to learn that a cremation furnace was

necessary, given the design of the cemetery and the purpose of such a furnace, and they wrote a note to raise their concerns:

It seems this project has no funeral hall, and has some things, frankly, that we cannot understand—even though we have been incorporated and working for fifteen years on cremation projects around the world.... We would like to know the reasons why two enormous entrances to the cremation room, where the actual cremations take place, are necessary given that this is usually a discrete place where few people ask to be. It would be especially disturbing for these doorways to remain open all the time for the general public or anyone to see inside (quoted in Bobadilla [n.d.](#)).

They did not realize that Dom Bosco was not meant to be a public place. It was designed to be a closed factory that would allow a high flow of bodies to disappear in no-nonsense ways. At the height of a political moment in which the Brazilian government was being increasingly and internationally implicated in tortures and disappearances, the inhumane design frightened the contractors, and in the end Dowson and Mason did not build the furnace. In some ways this did not matter, and Dom Bosco remained a cemetery for indigents, and under this guise it became a site for the disposal of political insurrection. It drew little attention in a period when public congregations and organized political activities of any kind were prohibited.

Twenty years later, in September of 1990, and with the support of São Paulo's first female mayor, human rights workers and forensic anthropologists excavated a 30-meter-long trench at the site that opened up a mass grave with 1,049 bags of bones and another 525 bodies. Dom Bosco became the focal point of a national discussion of, and contested reconciliation with, the violence of the dictatorship period. International forensic and human rights experts visited and wrote reports, and the case made headlines globally. Years later, investigations continue, but at a snail's pace. Political involvement with the process, including meddling in the universities responsible for the remains, has stalled advances. The search to identify political dissidents was revitalized in 2014 and has gained new momentum; 151 of the 1,049 boxes have been opened and 144 sets of bones have been analyzed. Of the bones catalogued, eighty-one are from males and twenty-four from females (Nuzzi [2015](#)).

The discussion about democracy and reconciliation that surrounds Dom Bosco is the main reason the cemetery enters public discourse. And yet there are striking paradoxes: of those buried at Dom Bosco, it is believed that only twenty were suspected Cold War political dissidents. The rest—many more than a thousand—are nameless individuals of the potter's field. These are not simply the infirm, the destitute, or those without families. They include also victims of the extermination squads that patrolled the poor and informally urbanizing spaces of São Paulo during the same period. The murders of these voiceless individuals have proved easy to obscure in the category and soil of the *indigente*. It is remarkable how little we know, even now, about these "paupers" who commingle with the reclaimable dead.

Those who continue to be interred or obscured as indigents at Vila Formosa and Dom Bosco receive little attention beneath the heavy history of state terror associated with the place. Walking on the modest grounds of Dom Bosco, where gravesites consist largely of wooden stakes, 10' x 10' granite plaques, unmarked grassy mounds, and jumbled headstones, a commemorative wall looms as a reminder of that terror. Painted in solid red with white letters, it reads: "Here the dictators tried to hide the politically disappeared, victims of hunger, of the violence of a police state, of the death squads, and above all of the rights of poor citizens of the city of São Paulo. Be it registered that these crimes against freedom will always be discovered." Subscribing the text is the name of Luiza Erundina de Sousa São Paulo's mayor during the early 1990s and a political progressive and federal senator today. While a testament to egregious violence past, it recognizes the many other victims of political injustice. And yet it stands, solemnly, at the background of a politically forgotten field where countless young men are buried every day, many of them between ages fifteen and thirty. On investigation, one headstone plaque tells a story of a police operation that resulted in the arrest of four men and the killing of the twenty-year-old named Wesley buried under my feet. His grave plaque reads, "With the love of his parents and siblings."

Though Wesley was claimed by his family, a staggering number of "unclaimed" people remain. The need to mitigate costs is severe, and new solutions are always being sought. Every Saturday since April 2014 the city of São Paulo updates a municipal webpage that provides tens of new names of indigents sent to the potter's fields of Dom Bosco and Vila Formosa. Over the three years since the webpage first appeared, 2,152 have been listed (Prefeitura [n.d.](#)). Many suffered deaths from treatable "let die" health complications, such as pneumonia or septic shock, that occurred in places like "a public thoroughfare" (*ibid.*). Many other listings cite violence and trauma as the cause of death.

Take one example of a police killing: Police shot and killed Marcelo Sabino dos Santos following a vehicle chase down a major highway. Unclaimed at the morgue, he was sent to Dom Bosco. A newspaper report recounted what happened:

A police chase on Wednesday afternoon ended with a shootout, one dead and one wounded on Pinheiros Ring Road near the Eusebio Matos bridge. The incident caused the lanes toward Interlagos to be totally obstructed between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m., creating 7 kilometers of backup. Around 2:15 p.m. the lanes at the incident and the express lanes were opened up.

It all began when two armed thugs accosted businessman Mauricio Menezes, forty-six, at a gas station at Ponte Bandeiras, on Tiete Ring Road at around 12:50 p.m. The thieves forced him to get out of his car and drove off. "All I could hear was shouting: 'You lose! You lose!' Then I got out of the car." Menezes managed to stop a Military Police car, which began the chase.

Near the Remédios Bridge, the thugs collided with a number of cars and hit a motorcyclist. Rescue was called and the victim taken to hospital.

Further along on Pinheiros Ring Road the robbers ran the car into an abutment and skidded across the lanes. Immediately after, the shootout with police began. One of the robbers was killed and the other injured. The police helicopter assisted in the work. “When the shootout began I could only think of saving my car and the death of the two thugs,” affirmed Menezes.

After five hours of traffic paralysis the Pinheiros Ring Road was clear for motorists. The body is with analysts. It will then be sent to the coroner [Instituto Médico Legal (IML)]. No identity information is yet available for the dead man (Veja 2014).

The article’s emphasis on how this incident interrupted urban life for a specific few, and its characterization of the individuals as “thugs”—*bandidos*—who deserved to die, are striking. That the first sentence about a police killing immediately shifts to a second sentence about traffic consequences speaks volumes about what is implied. The robbed man’s open desire to see them dead, while striking in this story, is a common trope among large segments of society, and it also defines many aspects of policing.

Subsequent media reports identified the dead “thug” as Marcelo. The entry on the municipal potter’s field webpage makes a transparent connection to the incident: “Marcelo Sabino dos Santos, 26, born 21/09/1987, died 21/05/2014, son of Antonio José dos Santos and Maria das Dores Sabino dos Santos, Police Report 392/14, 51° Precinct, place of incident Pinheiros Ring Road, 6800, Interlagos, multiple bullet wounds, sent by Central Coroner for free burial at Dom Bosco Cemetary in Perus” (Prefeitura n.d.). I was unable to find Marcelo’s grave at Dom Bosco, and other aspects of his case are equally elusive: whether his parents could not afford to collect him, whether he was estranged, or whether he was simply alone and poor and thus turned to crime. But these questions are extraneous to his social identity as a killable individual. It is likely that Marcelo’s remains now lie under a single wooden stake marked by a number written in felt pen. By the time the present article appears, he will already have been disinterred, placed in a plastic bag, and stored alongside thousands of others.

THE POTTER’S FIELD, UNCERTIFIED

Foucault argued that “the reverse of biopolitics is thanatopolitics” (2000: 416). As the state cares for its citizens through biopolitics, so is it “entitled to slaughter” through a politics of death (ibid.). Thanatopolitics, as the politics of death, practiced through political abandonment and terror, creates an abundance of bodies. The current politics of death transcends state certified cemeteries, settling and motivating possibility beyond state delineation. Those who would be slaughtered so absolutely by police and abandonment are not vapid or listless. They speak and act, both through and in response to violence. Murray (2006) asks the important question: what would it mean to speak in the name of death? He gives the example of suicide bombers.

Another example is that of “organized crime” and its cemeteries. The uncertified potter’s field is a terrestrial manifestation of what a politics of abandonment makes possible. In a late liberal moment, scholars have rightly revisited questions of sovereignty and the fracturing, transcendence, or symbiosis of political order relative to states (Nordstrom 2000; Hansen and Stepputat 2006). Where there are spatial practices of emergent sovereignty, it follows that there should be questions about where those slaughtered find their earthly place. It does not follow that the bodies that contemporary slaughter produces will always end up in a certified cemetery.

Starting in 2009, almost immediately after Rio de Janeiro was awarded the 2016 Olympics, the city’s police initiated a new public security policy intended to remove “drug gangs” from informally urbanized but strategically located hillside *favelas*. Called “pacification,” this policy, slowly applied, relentlessly and combatively sought to retake control of spaces governed by these highly racialized and prison-rooted “gangs.” This exceptional Olympic effort exposed something unexceptional for those living in these communities: the discovery of burial fields in these recently “pacified” spaces soon became mundane news. Police found them at the tops of hillsides in at least seven different *favelas* during the early years of the policy, and many surely never made the news. In these fields, armed groups buried those they killed for transgressing rules about crime in the community, acts deemed wrong such as sexual violence and “snitching.”

Organized crime and its violence and sovereign characteristics are not new, but why has the potter’s field now moved beyond state bureaucracy? Conditions of abandonment, and the specter and sharp edge of violence and undignified burial are enablers. Where such conditions become extreme, it becomes easy for them to transcend certified spaces. A clear example of this in São Paulo is the evolution of the PCC organized crime group. The PCC is a byproduct of the Carandiru prison massacre, where survivors were stripped naked and made to pile the dead in rows as blood flowed “shin deep” across their legs (Magalhães and Novaes 2013). According to the words of the PCC’s own statute, written one year later and now widely available, “The Primeiro Comando da Capital PCC, founded in 1993, in a monstrous and tireless fight against oppression and the injustice at the concentration camp ‘attached’ to the Taubaté House of Custody and Treatment, has as an absolute theme ‘Liberty, Justice, and Peace.’”

Others have convincingly argued that this group emerged as both a resistance to terror and a form of governance outside of the state (Alves 2016; Biondi 2010). Today, the PCC is a regime of both care and slaughter: a collective of self-defined criminals rooted in urban spatial practices of informality, which has codified rules that follow the fluid movement of young black men between the urban periphery and the prisons. They are, their once-leader said, *filhos da miséria*; “sons of misery.” The PCC enforces a social order

beyond its “baptized” members, and asserts a governing function in communities in many historically violent parts of the city and throughout the prison system of São Paulo state.² The organization is credited with presiding over a “peace among criminals”—*paz entre ladrões*. It enforces rules about how violence is to be used—where, why, and upon whom—through a complex system of formalized tribunals that bring together victims, suspects, family members, “legal” defense and prosecution, and local community members (Biondi 2010; Feltran 2011; Dias 2013). Internal documents of the group, given to me by a gatekeeper in the public security system, tell us a great deal.³ The PCC maintains a graduated system of punishment that has been codified with surprising bureaucratic rigor. Standardized reporting of punishments happens via templated documentation that includes twelve different fields of data ranging from the number of members punished to the names of “godfathers.” This system of bureaucratic management, aimed largely at decreasing violence, is coordinated by leaders who are in prison. Members have learned and constructed this alternative system of justice by drawing on their direct experiences with the violent injustices of the state’s justice system. This alternative system imposes severe punishments on those who break cardinal rules about sexual abuse, theft from the organization, and killing or harming anyone without prior authorization.

Questions of violent death are central to the organization, and not just in the practice of violence. They are deeply concerned that their own people die with dignity rather than suffering death from unjust police executions or capture and torture by police or rivals, or burial in a pit with no commemoration. This concern represents a redefinition of care. There are clear examples. When one member was killed by police while carrying out PCC business, members accounted for his death and outstanding drug debts in a bureaucratic document. In doing so, they also noted the importance of providing money for his proper burial:

Known as: Marcos

Neighborhood: Quarrytown

Amount of loss: 650.00 in weed and 3,993 in coke from 12/2010

OBS: Marcos was done in during an operation in which he was hit and injured and he was in the hospital for a few days but died. The brothers from the city passed along that for a funeral to take place they need help because the family does not have the conditions to do a burial.

This appeal resulted in a separate document dated from the next month that accounts for the organization’s drugs sales, costs, and expenditures. In it I

² This is increasingly the case in many other states in Brazil as well. Recent massacres in prisons in the far north were a result of fighting between the PCC and rival groups.

³ In 2012 a worker in São Paulo’s public security system gave me a trove of electronic documents consisting of PCC punishment and drug sales records, seized in a series of arrests. I have analyzed these extensively elsewhere (Denyer Willis 2017; Lessing and Denyer Willis n.d.).

find a line between “360.00 for cost of car to take family members back home from visit to W2 prison” and “700.00 for Fred’s trip to the capital city,” which reads: “1,900 re: payment of funeral for our oldest brother from Quarrytown.”

Marcos was not Wesley or Marcelo, but he could have been, and under slightly different conditions the PCC might not have paid for his burial. The PCC regularly pays the funeral expenses for those it cares for. In this case, the R\$1,900 Brazilian Reais they paid is roughly three times the monthly minimum wage, and R\$1,600 more than the R\$300 required to avoid ritual disinterment after three years. This notion of care means ensuring an appropriate mortuary ritual and a proper coffin in a certified cemetery. It also means that the body will not be disposed of in the pit.

The PCC’s high degree of organization in this regard may be unusual. With thousands of members over a diffuse territory, it must write things down for future consultation. But a basic pattern is evident: incipient forms of order that redraw which lives must be cared for also must redraw which lives need not be. The latter can and must be slaughtered. In Rio de Janeiro and elsewhere, this generates a noticeable pattern of materiality and burial space.

The consequences of this pattern of social order were obvious during the time I spent with São Paulo’s homicide detectives, disclosed in burial pits that dot the city’s landscape. There are many media reports of such clandestine cemeteries, including on YouTube and other social media platforms (G1 2010; R. Ribeiro 2016; R7 2013). These boneyards are sometimes large and well organized. They are used repeatedly, with burials occurring in different periods as necessary. One found in 2016 held thirty bodies. A hallmark of these PCC fields is that the bodies are buried head down and show evidence of violent deaths.

One particular field, located in the city’s far south side, is striking for its material parallels and systemic position. Police were led there on a tip from a local community member who told them to “Have a look at the ground next to the cemetery, beside a fence” (A. Ribeiro 2016). After searching through a densely wooded area they found an area of recently disturbed earth. Digging, they discovered a foot, and hours later, with many more people digging, three bodies. Eventually they found at least three others, with every indication that still more remained.

What makes this field noteworthy is not its existence per se, but that it existed, and was used repeatedly, immediately adjacent to a certified cemetery. That cemetery has the same name as the informally urbanized community that surrounds it, “Cherry Tree Park” (Parque das Cerejeiras). Yet this is a private cemetery, consecrated and made legal by the state but not run by it. The owners declare on their website that it is made in the “American Model” (Memorial Parque das Cerejeiras 2016), with expansive green space, grounds secured by twenty-four-hour private security, surveillance cameras, and gates

manned via a fortified outpost. Its grounds are adorned with twenty-two landscape sculptures by a named artist, a pond with Asian carp, “ecological trails,” and a viewing platform that looks out over a green vista that resembles a neatly manicured golf course. This is not a typical Latin American cemetery of mausoleums or dirt mounds bored through by ants. This is a new place, mirroring the most privileged kind of life in liberal death.

POTTER’S FIELDS: BONES BEGET BONES

What is the relationship between Cherry Tree Park and this potter’s field? The earth between them is indistinguishable. And yet they are separated by a wall that inscribes in earth a material distinction between the legal—the certified—and the illegal. But is that difference what matters? In fact, this wall is irrelevant, at least in terms of political will. Cherry Tree Park and the uncertified cemetery are the same in the sense that a liberal democratic moment, by legal institution and by omission, allows both to exist as byproducts of state practices that normalize the PCC and similar groups. Following Roy, we might argue that uncertified potter’s fields can serve as a “...device that uncovers the ever shifting urban relationship between the legal and the illegal, legitimate and illegitimate, authorized and unauthorized” (2011: 233). These two spaces are mutually constituted and intertwined, bound together in everyday practice and assumption, and accepted as ordinary.

And yet, what is peripheral is central to the logic of power. I have argued elsewhere that the black urban poor are used to justify security, wealth, and status for those who tell themselves they deserve it (2015). This ability to make such categories matter is a sovereign prerogative. As Diken argues, “All contemporary urban space is organized according to the logic of the favela” (2005: 307). The *favela*, the black body, the uncertified cemetery—all are routinely referenced as forms of barbarity, vindicating the walls, policing, and inequality. And yet this space transcends the law and also the walls that circumscribe it.

In March 2017, Mexican police unearthed a burial pit outside of Vera Cruz in which they found the jumbled remains of at least 250 people. This case is important and exceptional in three ways. First, this enormous cemetery was discovered by family members searching, in defiance of the state’s apathy, for missing loved ones believed to be buried in pits scattered across the Mexican countryside. Movements for this purpose, which are now commonplace across Mexico, practice a kind of citizenship to liberalism that is enabled, not surprisingly, by “bake sales and raffles” (Villegas 2017).

Second, some of Mexico’s uncertified cemeteries are exceptional in their scale. In the years since the exceptional violence of 2007–2011, with tens of thousands missing, it is their size that grabs public attention. To find one with twenty corpses is not worthy of note, but discovery of one with more than two hundred is.

Third, such a space encapsulates the obscured logics of the liberal violence of abandonment. Though the state's institutions do not need to kill, they routinely do so. Political power must displace responsibility for its violence onto individuals or the violent groups that are made possible, perhaps necessary, under such a logic of political order. The uncertified cemetery, while not a direct outcome of the state, becomes useful to it as a material invocation of responsibility interred elsewhere. When these burial fields are made noteworthy—250 corpses!—a suite of rote questions flood in: How many were innocent? Who among them should be reclaimed? How much will this all cost to sort out? All of these questions confound the problem and deploy the same logic of value. Such notions of innocence and productive life enable the practice of uncertified cemeteries.

These questions become more pressing in the everyday life of a megacity. How does it matter that we are not asking questions about mundane mass graves of people “left to die,” or about the ways in which the uncertified cemetery is written with its own novel paradigm of innocence and productivity? The potter's field reflects the varying spatial organizations and value logics of historical moments, located far from the conquistador's churchyard, whether they be in a mass grave for the destitute of Poor Law England, the indentured prisoners of Hart Island, or those killed by police in São Paulo. Such conditions are political, and they are useful to those with political power.

But if the specter of the potter's field has catalyzed forms of organization historically, how does it serve the same purpose today, as we fill these fields in uninterrupted flows? And how does it matter that those who worry about burial conditions are not “simply” newsboys or street kids? Though they are easily obfuscated as “illiberal” gangs, organized crime, and paramilitary groups are systemic forms of sociality. They are, in this way, a kind of insurance against disposal in a mass grave, a Victorian “burial society” in other times by other means.

To put this differently, the potter's field can tell us a great deal about what many of us take for granted: that in moments of “humanitarian reason” mass graves are conventional. This is why the potter's field is so deeply unnerving. It reveals, materially, how privilege is implicated in violence while it also compels us to recognize ways that apparently illiberal varieties of politics are in fact legitimate forms of sociality.

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Abstract: I unpack the “potter’s field” as an everyday practice and a category, especially as it operates in the material treatment of bodies as a mirror of life. I examine this space of “worthlessness” as it exists in liberal capitalism. From the potter’s fields of São Paulo, Brazil, I consider how these are, in fact, mundane mass graves, made politically useful as a means to obscure important bodies alongside those who are, today, the subjects of terror. I then ask how the rise of the uncertified potter’s field—a burial field for disposable bodies, not made legal by the state—is inseparable from recent historical and contemporary conditions of political abandonment. The uncertified field is made easy by a politics of abandonment, and becomes useful to state institutions as a material invocation of responsibility, interred elsewhere, while nonetheless advancing a larger logic of governance and political will in our times.

Key words: mass graves, indigent cemetery, potter’s field, São Paul, Brazil, violence, abandonment, liberalism

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The Detroit News

DETROIT

Suit targets Detroit, church, companies in burial plot mixups



Oralandar Brand-Williams

The Detroit News

Published 6:15 p.m. ET June 9, 2021

A class-action lawsuit was filed Wednesday against the City of Detroit, a church and two local companies in connection with the recent discovery of burial plot mixups at Gethsemane Cemetery.

The 18-page lawsuit, filed in Wayne County Circuit Court, accuses the city, New Calvary Baptist Church, Necaba Management Group Inc. of Southfield and the Enduring Memories Cemetery Management Company in Detroit of gross misconduct and business practices and failing to provide adequate burial services and maintenance of plots at the cemetery on the city's eastside.

New Calvary was subcontracted by the city's Recreation Department to maintain the grounds of Gethsemane Cemetery from 1992 to 2012, according to city documents. In turn, the church subcontracted the maintenance services to Necaba Management Group, which was the maintenance services provider of the cemetery until its contract was terminated last year.

Enduring Memories Cemetery Management took over the maintenance of Gethsemane last year, according to the lawsuit.

The plaintiffs are Tawauna Perkins and Tony Thomas.

Perkins' brother Owen Gray was buried at Gethsemane after his death in 2018. While visiting her brother's grave, Perkins discovered, according to the lawsuit, burial plots were "seemingly" destroyed and many headstones at the cemetery appeared to have been dug up or "laying in disarray" behind a building.

Perkins said her brother's headstone was cracked as if it had been moved or broken.

Thomas alleges that his mother's headstone had been moved while he was visiting the cemetery on three different occasions. Thomas said he also noticed that there were boulders and dirt around where his mother's burial plot had been. He later discovered, according to the lawsuit, that his mother's grave had been relocated without notifying him or his family.

Thomas' mother, Mary Ann Thomas, died in 2011.

Perkins and Thomas were not available for comment Wednesday on the lawsuit.

The lawsuit alleges that burial plots were "double sold" but families were told they were buying single plots.

"Families have been victimized by defendants' action and their gross disregard for the final resting place of plaintiffs' loved ones, " the lawsuit alleges.

Joe Sauder of Sauder Schelkopf in Berwyn, Pa., which filed the class-action lawsuit along with a Troy law firm, said Wednesday: "We look forward to litigating this case to seek the appropriate relief for the families who have been impacted by these egregious allegations and pushing for the answers they deserve."

On Monday, investigators from the Detroit Police Department and the local office of the FBI began exhuming remains at Gethsemane as part of a wide-ranging investigation into the complaints of mixups in burial plots.

A Detroit woman complaint that her brother's body was missing and although his headstone was there, the body of her brother was missing and the burial plot contained the bodies and caskets of four other individuals instead.

John Roach, a spokesman for the city, said the city took over the cemetery about 20 years ago. He declined to comment further.

Efforts to reach New Calvary, Necaba Management Group and Enduring Memories Cemetery Management Company for comment were unsuccessful Wednesday.

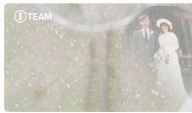
STATION PROMOTION



I-Team: Cemetery mixup has lawmakers calling for change

Buffalo man mistakenly buried in a potter's field

Buffalo man mistakenly buried in a potter's field



By: [Ed Drantch](#)

Posted at 9:15 AM, Apr 28, 2022 and last updated 11:12 AM, Apr 29, 2022

BUFFALO, N.Y. (WKBW) — Barbara and Bill Sherman took a sacred oath: "in sickness and health, until death do us part."

But in life after death, it's those still living — keeping them apart.

Barb's brother Jim Saxer wants to see his brother-in-law buried where he belongs, at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Tonawanda next to his bride.

"I mean his name is on the tombstone already without the dates," said Jim Saxer.

But Bill isn't buried there.

Instead, he's buried in a potter's field with the poor and unclaimed at Lakeside Cemetery in Hamburg.

"We can't rest easily," Saxer said. "And I know, we think he's not at rest either because this is not what he wanted."

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A muddy bureaucratic mess stands in his family's way.

Buried before public notice

Bill died in January, but no one really knew.

"After my sister passed away we didn't see him as much, but we'd reach out a bit here and there and he'd respond. Sometimes he did, sometimes he didn't. But that's okay, that was Bill," Saxer added.

It wasn't until February that Saxer learned of Bill's death. He was reading the obituaries in the Sunday paper when he saw the name William Sherman of Buffalo listed.

Bill died a month earlier, but by then it was too late for a proper burial where he actually belongs. Bill had already been buried in Erie County's graveyard.

"They say that they give two weeks to find the next of kin, and if they can't, they turn it over to the mortuary - funeral home company, and then they take care of burying him," said Saxer.

But Bill died on Jan. 19 and the obituary wasn't printed until a month after his death.

Those two weeks passed and no relatives even knew Bill died.

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Erie County paperwork obtained by the I-Team shows the two-week timeline has been used only since Dec. 2020, due to the pandemic causing limited space in the morgue.

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Greene sent a letter to the commissioner for the Erie County Department of Social Services when Saxer reached out to his office — and the I-Team got involved.

"Their primary goal is to have their relative, Mr. Sherman, exhumed and reburied in his family burial plot next to his late wife. Unfortunately, they have no legal right to make this request because the failure to identify a proper next of kin put the estate of Mr. Sherman under the control of the Erie County Public Advocate."

Greene believes the public advocate is just doing the job by law, but says an exception should be made.

"At this point, the county has got to help, to intervene, to loosen up the bounds of her capabilities," said Greene.

In its response to Greene's letter, the county wrote, "I am instructing my staff to work with the Erie County Public Administrator to begin the exhumation process at Departmental expense..."

The county claims it did its due diligence in finding next-of-kin, searching databases and using Google to find information about him.

But the county sent a certified letter to Barbara Sherman, claiming it didn't know she had been buried for almost two decades.

Erie County has possession of those records.

"That's probably the biggest blunder we've made," Greene added.

Could this happen again?

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"That's the most important thing," said Greene. "The failure stood with us and we're the ones that need to correct it."

Moving Bill Sherman from Block F at Lakeside Cemetery to his pre-death designated plot rests in the county's control.

"We want him buried where he belongs," Sherman said. "So we can all rest easy, especially him because this is what he wanted."

That's something his brother-in-law is hopeful will happen soon, so they can have a proper burial for a man who should have had one — if not for this grave error.

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E-mail

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MEMORANDUM

Clerk's Office

DATE: April 4, 2022
TO: Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board
FROM: Christina Woods, Deputy Clerk
SUBJECT: Greenwood Cemetery Service Provider Recommendation

INTRODUCTION:

Review of project: digitalization of cemetery records into an interactive map database.

BACKGROUND:

Years prior work began on creating a digital map of the cemetery in which each plot was assigned information pertaining to that plot. The base map has been mapped into GIS (Geographic Information System Mapping), a software used for mapping. GIS pulls information for each plot using a Microsoft Access database.

PROJECTED OUTCOME:

If completed, the map database will: Be accessible online, viewable by anyone in the public, include name, death and birth dates, and be searchable by name.

It will not have the following features: "Satellite view" of the individual plots, will not include reasons of death due to privacy, will not be connected to any search engines like as google or ancestry.com, and will not be able to be updated automatically, and will result in dual records upkeep.

CURRENT STATUS:

The map and database have been set up. Some data has been hand entered, but process has stopped with other priorities in the Clerk's office taking precedence.

ACTION PLAN:

Time will need to be allocated to completing the data base. This could include individual, manual entry if the raw data currently used cannot be uploaded into the Microsoft Access database. This input must be done by an employee, due to the original documents containing sensitive information which is not for public viewing.

Majority of burial records do not specify if there are cremains or full burial in the plot. If this is something that is requested, a plan will need to be created to find a way to obtain and document that information.

If photos of monuments or headstones are requested to be accessible through the interactive map on the website, we will need to bring in IT to create a solution as Microsoft Access will not be able to host the photos on the internet to be utilized by the interactive map.

SUMMARY:

The Clerk's office has reviewed and assessed the work and time needed to complete this project. Because it is not a project that has a fiscal or procedural impact, because it is an auxiliary record which is not used in the functioning of cemetery operations and management, and because it is superseded in priority with other duties of the Clerk's office, this project will be a long-term focus and will only occur when time allows.

REPORTS

Clerk's Office Update

The clerk's office is working hard on preparation for the May Celebrate Birmingham Parade and Party in Shain Park. Additionally the clerk's office is preparing for the 2022 election cycle. Elections will be held on August 2nd and November 8th.

Isabella, a newly hired intern for the City Clerk's Office, started work in the clerk's office in late April. Isabella is a student from Marion who comes in for a few hours each week after school, she is eager to learn more about her local government. Kelly Dolland, a new part time clerical assistant, joined the clerk's office team on May 4, 2022. Kelly is a former city clerk who retired from Frasier and a wonderful addition to our team. Stacy Vail, a former part time clerical assistant in the clerk's office, transferred to the Ice Arena.

Deputy Clerk Woods spent time with the City of Clawson on May 3, 2022 learning all about Election Day opening and closing procedures.

The City Clerk's office plans to attend the DPS Open House on Saturday, May 14th. Also, don't forget that the Celebrate Birmingham Parade and Party in Shain Park will be held on Sunday, May 15th. We hope to see you there!

Financial

Greenwood Perpetual Care Fund



Sales

Greenwood Cemetery Sales and Availability		
	Sec B	Sec C
July 2021	1	1
August 2021	-	-
September 2021	-	1
October 2021	-	1
November 2021	-	-
December 2021	1	-
January 2022	-	-
February 2022	-	-
March 2022	-	-
Total Sold	2	3
Total Available Under Current Authorization	25	2
Total Available (Not Released)	123	0
<i>* Data provided as of December 31, 2021</i> <i>* On 1/29/21 Cheri noted that graves 1 & 2 in Section C rows 18-A & 19-A are not able to be used due to obstructions.</i> <i>* on 3/25/21 Row 19-A 1,2,13,14,16 Obstructed by Trees</i> <i>* Grave Release Approved by Commission on April 26 – Section B, Rows 17-C, 16-C, 15-C & 14-A for a total of 38 Graves, 9 of which are obstructed)</i> <i>* 1 grave in section B, row 2-A was released on December 13, 2021 by the City Commission for an at need situation for a family with adjacent space.</i>		

Burials & Activity

	Sec B		Sec C		Other		Total by Month	
	Full	Crem	Full	Crem	Full	Crem	Full	Crem
July 2021		1	1		1	3	2	4
August 2021	1	1			1		2	1
September 2021				1		4	0	5
October 2021		1			1	2	1	3
November 2021		1	1	3		1	1	5
December 2021		3			1	1	1	4
January 2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
February 2022	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
March 2022	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Totals	1	7	2	4	5	11	8	22



CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

April 2022

Baldwin Public Library

Public Open House

The Library will be holding a public open house on Sunday, May 22 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., with remarks to be held at 2:30 p.m. The open house will celebrate the grand reopening of the expanded Youth Room and second floor renovations, honor Doug Koschik's retirement, dedicate Jim Miller-Melberg's Michigan Spring Statue, and commemorate Martha Baldwin's induction into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame.

Library Tours

Youth librarians will be conducting library tours for second graders attending the Birmingham Public Schools throughout the month of May. Students will have lunch in Shain Park, take a walking history tour of downtown Birmingham, and learn about the history of Martha Baldwin and the Baldwin Public Library.

Used Book Sale

The Friends of the Baldwin Public Library will be holding a used book sale from May 14-16. View sale hours at www.baldwinlib.org/friends.

Trust Investment Policy and Gift & Donation Policy

On April 18, the Library Board met for a regular meeting. The Board voted to approve updates to the Trust Investment Policy and the Gift & Donation Policy. These policies can be viewed at <https://www.baldwinlib.org/mission/>.

Strategic Plan

The Board also approved a new strategic plan for the library for 2022-2025. The full plan can be read at <https://www.baldwinlib.org/staff-board/>. Highlights of the plan are listed below.

Mission: The Baldwin Public Library in Birmingham, Michigan enriches lives by providing opportunities and resources for everyone to learn, connect, and discover.

Vision: The Baldwin Public Library will be an essential part of the community and

the first choice for access to cultural, recreational, and learning opportunities.

Core Values

Intellectual Freedom
Equitable and Inclusive Access
Education and Lifelong Learning
Innovation
Welcoming Environment
Integrity
Collaboration
Commitment to Excellence

Strategic Goals

Programs & Services: Adapt programs and services to meet the needs of the changing population
Facility: Create a welcoming, safe, and accessible building that meets the needs of our staff and users
Diversity & Equity: Provide and promote equitable and inclusive resources and opportunities for all populations
Community Outreach & Partnerships: Develop and strengthen BPL connections within the community
Personnel & Organization: Train, empower, and equip members of the organization to best support users and each other
Financial: Maintain and improve financial health

The Birmingham Museum

As part of its commitment to greater public access through technology, the museum will continue its virtual offerings during the remainder of the spring season with free Zoom presentations and YouTube video recordings of its lecture series at the Baldwin Public Library. The talk on Thursday, May 5 at 7 p.m. will be given by Donna Casaceli and titled "Birmingham's Stories of War and Service". Tying in with the recent inclusion of Greenwood Cemetery into the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, the talk on Friday, June 3 at 7 p.m. will be on Birmingham's connections with the Underground Railroad. Visit the Library's [events calendar](#) to register for each talk. Learn more at www.bhamgov.org/museumprograms.

Birmingham Shopping District (BSD)

Spring Stroll

The Birmingham Shopping District was pleased to see such an amazing turnout for the Spring Stroll on April 9th. More than 150 families registered and more than 25 businesses participated. This was a pleasant surprise for a first year event.

Business Mix Analysis

The BSD is currently working on a business mix analysis for the downtown in order to determine the market saturation for restaurants, salons, and types of retail. This study

will also be helpful in identifying where there are missing business categories. The BSD intends to use this information to create priorities for the business recruiter.

Construction Initiatives

The BSD is preparing initiatives and programs to assist businesses and mitigate disruptions during the South Old Woodward reconstruction project. The BSD is in constant communication with the city's Engineering Department. Scott Zielinski attended the most recent Merchant Meeting at Hastens on April 20th to answer questions from business owners. Preserving some parking options during construction is a priority for the BSD. The BSD is working with private property owners to secure lots for public parking.

The BSD is also working on a number of initiatives to promote businesses with signage and incentives during the project. A texting service will also help provide downtown stakeholders with up-to-date information about time-sensitive news in order to help business owners and property owners navigate some of the challenges that may arise.

Building Department

Monthly Report

The [Building Department's monthly report](#) provides an update on the following construction activity: building permits issued, building inspections conducted, trades permits issued and trades inspections conducted. In March, we processed 461 online permit applications, which brings the 2022 total to 1,179.

City Inspectors & Code Enforcement Using GovAlert

To supplement the launch of GovPilot, the Building Department installed the GovAlert mobile application on City issued phones for inspectors and Code Enforcement officers. They will now have the ability to record any violations identified while traveling between inspections or conducting City business. These violations and complaints can be reported in real time and workflows immediately route complaints to the appropriate department for resolution.

Congratulations, Mollie!

Mollie Mackinnon earned her Code Enforcement Officer certification from ICC this month.

City Clerk's Office

Parade & Hometown Celebration

The tradition continues in 2022 as the Celebrate Birmingham hometown parade marches back into downtown Birmingham on May 15, 2022.

The parade will feature local businesses, civic groups and organizations and will begin at 1 pm by Booth Park and travel down Old Woodward onto Maple, ending at Shain Park. Capping off this festive parade is a community celebration in Shain Park with activities and entertainment for families, ending at 4 p.m.

Parade participants are still being accepted and sponsorship opportunities are still available until April 28, 2022. Contact the City Clerk's Office at (248) 530-1880 or visit

bhamgov.org/parade for information and registration.

Thank you to our sponsors and supporters! Parade Main Sponsor - The Bank of Ann Arbor; Parade Master - Beier Howlett, PC; and parade supporters DAR Piety Hill Chapter, Michelle Woodell, and Michigan United Credit Union.

Elections

The Clerk's Department relies on many election workers to ensure a smooth election. In preparation for the Aug. 2, 2022 primary, we will begin contacting past election workers in May and recruit new election workers in May and June. Election workers will attend training in July, and at that time we will evaluate whether we need to recruit more workers for the Nov. 8, 2022 general election.

Voting while out of the County

Voters who will be out of the United States for the 2022 elections can submit a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to obtain an absent voter ballot by e-mail, fax or regular mail. This application must be submitted every year for which a voter will be out of the United States for an election. To obtain this application, visit www.fvap.gov

Voter Information

You can check your voter information, register for an absentee ballot, identify your precinct, district and more at <https://mVIC.sos.state.mi.us/>. If you have not registered for an absentee ballot and you are not on the permanent absentee ballot list, make sure to register soon. The deadline to register for an absentee ballot is 5 p.m. the Friday before the election.

Board and Commission Appointments

The following City of Birmingham [boards and commissions](#) have vacant positions or members with terms expiring soon:

BOARD:	APPLICATIONS DUE:	INTERVIEWS/ APPOINTMENTS:
Advisory Parking Committee	4/20/22	4/25/22
Architectural Review Committee	4/20/22	4/25/22
Board of Zoning Appeals	4/20/22	4/25/22
Brownfield Redevelopment Authority	4/20/22	4/25/22
Housing Board of Appeals	4/20/22	4/25/22
Public Arts Board	*until filled	
Storm Water Utility Appeals Board	*until filled	
Triangle District Corridor Improvement Authority	*until filled	

For details, visit www.bhamgov.org/boardopportunities.

Cemetery

At the April 1, 2022 Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board meeting, the board reviewed the penultimate draft of the Greenwood Cemetery Rules and Regulations document. This document has been thoroughly reviewed by the board for the past year and has input from City Attorney Kucharek, the Department of Public Services and the Greenwood Cemetery Contract Manager. The board discussed the Cemetery Service Provider Contract and

recommended that the agreement with Creative Collaborations, LLC be authorized by the City Commission. They also discussed topics they would like to address in future meetings including historical marker policy, prepping for the annual report and goal reflection, beautification of the cemetery, and burial documentation digitalization.

Future Agenda Topics for Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board

May 6, 2022 - Meeting in person at City Hall

- Planning for grave stone inventory project
- Preparation for 2021-2022 annual report, goal reflection & setting

June 3, 2022 - Meeting in person at City Hall

- Topics to be determined

City Manager's Office

Communications

GovPilot Citizen Concern Module Update

The city has received positive feedback from residents regarding GovPilot. The system is working well, both internally and externally. Between March 3, 2022 and April 20, 2022, we received 71 GovPilot Citizen Concern Module submissions. Of those, 48 were submitted via the new GovAlert mobile app and 23 were submitted via the [GovPilot website form](#). During the same time period last year, 26 submissions were received using the city's previous citizen concern system. We are very pleased with the significant increase in submissions received via our new system, and the high number of GovAlert mobile app submissions. Our short video explaining how to submit a request via the app is available at www.bhamgov.org/govalert.

Ongoing Communications Projects

The communications team is ready for a busy spring and summer! Continuing with our educational video series, upcoming projects will include a video tour of the newly renovated Birmingham Ice Arena, a video about Springdale Golf Course and Lincoln Hills Golf Course, and a time-lapse video of the South Old Woodward Reconstruction Phase 3 project. The team is working on the May edition of the Around Town e-Newsletter, and the summer edition of the Birmingham Beat newsletter. Frequent eblasts cover topics such as Parks & Recreation Bond projects, Citywide Master Plan updates, and last-minute news about fire hydrant flow testing, inclement weather updates, lane closures and more. Recent press release topics have included Woodward Avenue noise, the Adams Park grant, Greenwood Cemetery, golf course opening announcement and more. The team is helping with Engage Birmingham projects that will launch in the coming weeks, in addition to monthly photography, video and social media planning. Other projects in the works include the employee newsletter, new City Guide publication and the virtual Skyway Tour.

South Old Woodward Reconstruction Phase 3 Communications Plan

The communications team is working with the Engineering Department and the Birmingham Shopping District to finalize plans for keeping residents and businesses informed of updates pertaining to the South Old Woodward Reconstruction Phase 3 project. Similar to Phases 1 and 2, weekly updates will be sent to the project's constant

contact group subscribers. Residents and businesses are encouraged to visit www.bhamgov.org/enews to sign up for South Old Woodward Reconstruction Phase 3 project updates.

Human Resources

City Engineer Update

On Thursday, April 14, 2022, Mohmedyunus Patel formally withdrew his signed acceptance of the City Engineer position. He had formally accepted the position on February 25, 2022. Following two revised start dates, he was scheduled to begin employment with the city on Monday, April 18, 2022. [Follow this link](#) to download a memo detailing the timeline of events regarding the City Engineer recruitment process between the city and Mr. Patel. The Human Resources Department reposted the City Engineer position and the application is available at www.bhamgov.org/jobs.

Staff & Vacancy Update

Department	FT & PT Staff Estimate	Current Vacancies/Hiring	Percentage Staffed	Vacancies Filled Since 2020	Notes
Birmingham Shopping District	5	Farmer's Mkt Asst	100%	3	Four hires pending
Clerk's Office	5	-	100%	5	Hiring Intern
Building	17	-	100%	1	
Engineering	8	City Engineer Engineering Intern Pub. Wks. Insp.	63%	5	Open to applications
Finance / Treasury	14	Secretary B	93%	4	Posting upcoming
Fire	35	-	100%	10	
Information Technology	4	-	100%	2	
Maintenance	2	-	100%	1	
Manager's Office / Communications / HR	6	-	100%	6	
Museum	3	-	100%	0	
Parking System	9	-	10%	1	Hiring plan in FY 22-23
Planning	7	-	100%	4	
Police	71	Police Officer (2) PT Dispatcher	100%	9	Dispatch post upcoming 2 Officer hires upcoming
Public Services	56	Streets & Parks Operator (3)	TBD	8	Currently hiring 2 SSW Asstistant Foremen

City Staff Vaccination Update

Vaccination Card Tracking			
Department	# Received	Total Staff	Percentage
City Staff	194	222	87%
IT	4	4	100%
BSD	4	5	80%
Community Development	30	33	91%
Fire Dept	33	36	92%
Clerks	5	5	100%
Finance/Treasurer	12	13	92%
Building/Maintenance	2	2	100%
Museum	3	3	100%
Police Dept (w/o crossing guards)	51	61	84%
CM/HR	6	6	100%
DPS (w/o summer seasonals)	44	54	81%

Miscellaneous

Oakland County Parks and Recreation

On Monday, April 4, 2022, City Manager Tom Markus, Parks and Recreation Manager Carrie Laird, and Assistant to the City Manager Melissa Fairbairn escorted Oakland County Parks and Recreation Director Chris Ward on a tour of the City's park system. The tour featured several City parks, Springdale and Lincoln Hills Golf Courses, and the newly renovated Birmingham Ice Arena. Staff thanked Director Ward for the County's \$100,000 grant for Adams Park and emphasized the strong support that residents have shown for parks and recreation improvements in our community. The City looks forward to future collaborations with Oakland County Parks and Recreation.

Department of Public Services

Arbor Day

The City of Birmingham is continuing its tradition of participating in the celebration of Arbor Day on the last Friday in April. National Arbor Day, much like Earth Day, is a holiday that celebrates nature. In our case, it recognizes the importance of trees. The most common way people celebrate Arbor Day is to get together in groups to plant a tree or trees.

Arbor Day 2022 will take place at Pembroke Park in cooperation with the Daisy Troop and participation by some Pembroke Elementary School children on Friday, April 29, 2022 from 12:30 p.m. -1:00 p.m. The Daisy Troop will provide us with a short program in addition to the planting of a tree in the City Park.

Lincoln Hills and Springdale Golf Courses

Lincoln Hills and Springdale Golf Courses offer a quick round of golf for those on the go. Our two municipal golf courses are nine hole golf courses, rated top in the Detroit Metropolitan area. Both courses are open to everyone! Invite your friends along to experience Birmingham's top-rated golf courses that are close to home, fun and affordable.

Birmingham's golf courses offer adult and youth lessons by a PGA golf pro, a fun Junior Golf Program, power carts, adaptive golf carts, league play, Club Tournaments, and great food and beverages. Special pricing opportunities are available for Residents, Non-Residents and Businesses.

Reservations may be made online or by calling Lincoln Hills at (248) 530-1670 or Springdale at (248) 530-1660. Learn more at www.GolfBirmingham.org.

Birmingham Ice Sports Arena

The newly renovated Birmingham Ice Sports Arena offers skating opportunities for those of all ages. Whether you want to rent ice for a party, participate in open skating, or register for skating lessons, the arena offers something for everyone! Located on the

Kenning Park property, the indoor arena contains a regulation sized ice rink with bleacher seating. A smaller studio arena is used for lessons and skating parties within the sports complex. The rental of the party room is available with or without the studio rink.

To inquire about summer ice availability, other facility offerings or to book the party room contact 248.530.1640 for assistance.

DPS Open House

The Department of Public Services hosts the annual DPS Open House during the month of May. We are happy to resume the tradition this year. The event will be held at 851 South Eton on Saturday, May 14, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

National Public Works Week is May 15-21, 2022. The "Ready & Resilient" theme this year highlights the ability of these professionals to perform regular public works duties and be ready at a moment's notice to react to emergencies or as first responders during natural disasters, plus to overcome trials seen in the field.

Public Works superheroes help keep communities strong by providing an infrastructure of services in water, sewer, streets, public buildings and spaces, parks, forestry and grounds, emergency management and first response, solid waste, and right-of-way management. They are what make our communities great places to live and work. So join us in celebrating these superheroes!

Engineering Department

The following contractors are currently working on City projects, or will be starting up in the coming month:

- JB Contractors will be back to continue with the 2021 Sidewalk Repair Program, with work focused in the area between Southfield & Pierce and 14 Mile to Maple. They will also work on sidewalk ramps in the downtown area and other citywide repairs.
- Precision Concrete Cutting is back, working to remove potential trip-hazards along the City's network of sidewalks, with their effort focused in the area between Southfield & Pierce and 14 Mile to Maple.
- Pamar Enterprises will be back to continue with the 2021 Asphalt Pavement Rehabilitation Program. They will be working on several streets, but their effort is scheduled to begin on Latham, between Saxon and Lincoln.
- Angelo Iafrate Construction Company is planning on starting the S. Old Woodward Reconstruction project in mid-May. We are also coordinating with Consumers Energy who has been planning to replace the gas main along a portion of S. Old Woodward before the City project begins.

Fire Department

Firefighter Training

During the week of April 4th, the Fire Department conducted multiple days of training at the future Restoration Hardware site on South Old Woodward. The crews trained on fire suppression, search and rescue using artificial smoke. The construction of the

commercial structure allowed the firefighters to use various tools and techniques to breach the walls, floors and roof. This training opportunity was very important in the development of our young department.

Midwest Fire Rescue Expo

Chief Paul Wells and Battalion Chief Tom Hughes attended the Midwest Fire Rescue Expo in Novi on April 13. The show was a great opportunity to see the latest fire, medical, rescue tools and technology to improve the service we can provide to the City. The biggest take away from the show was the increase in prices due to demand, supply issues, etc. Fire and medical equipment is also taking 3-4 months to get delivered after a purchase order has been issued. New ambulance and fire truck build orders are currently taking 18-24 months, compared to 6 months in the past. Thankfully the Fire Department does not require any new ambulance or fire truck purchases in the next few years.

Fire Hydrant Flow Testing

The Fire Department and Department of Public Services recently completed fire hydrant flow testing on select hydrants throughout the city. Work began at 10:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 13 and concluded at 5 a.m. on Thursday, April 14. The Fire Department received compliments from residents who appreciated this work occurring during the middle of the night. The city did not receive any reports of discolored water. The Fire Department appreciates the community's patience as crews work each year to ensure hydrants are operable and give the proper water flow when needed.

Planning Department

Master Plan 2040

On April 18, 2022, the City Commission formally directed the 2040 Plan consultant team to begin preparation of the third and final draft based on the feedback they received over the Planning Board review process. All of the documents related to the 2040 Plan remain available on www.thebirminghamplan.com. You can also watch a recording of past meetings on the City of Birmingham website. As a reminder, you can still submit comments directly to the consultant team through the aforementioned 2040 Plan website, and also submit comments directly to the Planning Division to be placed in the next available agenda of the Planning Board.

Planning Board

Overall, the Planning Board is keeping very busy with agendas that are now full moving into July. There are several ordinance studies that have been waiting for the 2040 Master Plan review to be completed that the Planning Board has begun to tackle along with various site plan reviews. A tentative Planning Board schedule is provided below:

- 243 E. Merrill – La Strada – SLUP, FSP & DR (4/27/22)
- Watkins/Brown – REZONING (4/27/22)
- 588 S. Old Woodward – Phoenicia – SLUP, FSP & DR (4/27/22)

- 294 E. Brown – FSP & DR (4/27/22)
- Outdoor Dining Study (PH 5/11/22)
- Accessible Ramp Study (PH 5/11/22)
- Front Yard Setback Study (PH 5/11/22)
- Side Yard A/C Units Study (5/11/22)
- Window Standards (5/11/22)
- 185 N. Old Woodward – Bell – SLUP, FSP & DR (5/25/22 – POSTPONED FROM 4/13/22)
- 320 Martin St. – Birmingham Post Office – CIS & PSP (5/25/22)
- 310 E. Maple – Casa Perno – SLUP, FSP & DR (5/25/22)
- 460 N. Old Woodward – Wilders – SLUP, FSP & DR (6/22/22)
- 1160 Grant St. – SLUP, FSP & DR (6/22/22)
- 36877 Woodward – Gasow – SLUP, FSP & DR (6/22/22)
- 770 S. Adams – Perennial – FSP & DR (6/22/22)

Historic Preservation

The Historic District Commission (HDC) is steadily making progress on its larger preservation goals with a number of smaller projects that will contribute to the overall historic preservation plan that the HDC hopes to develop in the next year. The Historic District Commission continues to build a strong media presence to educate Birmingham residents, highlight preservation efforts in the City, and encourage historic designation.

Public Art

The Public Arts Board is continuing its 2022 call for entries. The program affords an opportunity for artists to receive a small grant to provide public art in the City of Birmingham. Along with the call for entries program, the Public Arts Board continues to field donation requests. In addition to public art programs, the Public Arts Board has been reviewing applications for the newly adopted Wall Art application process. Two applications have been reviewed so far, and several more inquiries have been made within the approved Wall Art boundaries. In addition, City Staff has been fielding multiple inquiries for Wall Art along the Woodward corridor, prompting a review of the Wall Art boundary and a possible expansion.

Multi-Modal Transportation Board

The Multi-Modal Transportation Board (MMTB) is diligently working through the challenging task that is improving conditions along the Woodward corridor. The MMTB is actively working on the Woodward Avenue Road Diet Checklist, and will be studying various other improvements for Woodward in the near future.

Police Department

Commander Grewe Accepted into FBI National Academy

Commander Scott Grewe has been accepted into Session 283 of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Academy (FBINAA). The FBINAA is recognized as the most

prestigious law enforcement training academy in the nation and throughout the world. Commander Grewe will attend the FBINAA from July 9, 2022 through September 16, 2022. The FBINAA training center is on the campus of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's main training facility in Quantico, VA. The location is also home to the Marine Corps Base Quantico.

Staff Promotions

1. Lieutenant Chris Koch was promoted to the rank of commander. Commander Koch will be in charge of the Investigative Division. Commander Koch has been with the department for 21 years.
2. Sergeant Michael Romanowski was promoted to the rank of lieutenant. Lieutenant Romanowski will be assigned to the Patrol Division as a platoon supervisor. Lieutenant Romanowski has been with the department for 11 years.

Parking Systems Update

Parking Systems Manager Ryan Weingartz prepared a memo detailing the status of the monthly parking pass wait list, occupancy rates, construction projects, parking system equipment, facilities and operations. [Follow this link](#) to download the memo.

Future Agenda Items

Download a summary of [future agenda items](#).

Future Workshop Items

Download a summary of [future workshop items](#).