

**GREENWOOD CEMETERY ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2015 AT 8:30 AM  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, ROOM 205, 151 MARTIN**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

George Stern, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present: Pamela DeWeese  
Darlene Gehringer  
George Stern  
Barbara Thurber

Absent: Kevin Desmond  
Linda Peterson  
Laura Schreiner

Administration: City Manager Valentine, Clerk Pierce, and Deputy Clerk Arft, ~~and Cheri Arcome of Elmwood Cemetery~~

Guest: Cheri Arcome, Elmwood Cemetery

Ms. Pierce distributed an updated membership roster to those present, and noted the binders distributed today contain all pertinent information relative to Greenwood Cemetery. She asked that the members bring them to each meeting for reference.

A copy of the Contractor's Quarterly Report which was originally distributed January 9, 2015, was also distributed. In response to a question about cemetery maintenance, Ms. Pierce stated maintenance, including but not limited to lawn care, weed control and monument trimming, is contained in the Request for Proposals as part of the agreement with Elmwood for an annual cost of \$15,750.

Mr. Stern asked to clarify that there are currently available 82 lots, which are neither new nor reclaimed. His understanding is that the City would receive 100% of the proceeds of the sale of those existing lots and the Contractor would not receive a commission on those unsold lots.

Mr. Valentine referred to section 2 of the contract which covers compensation and which says the contractor "shall receive 100% of the income from interment services, the sale of second rights of interment, foundations and memorial installations and other miscellaneous service fees as approved by the City. Additionally the Contractor shall receive 25% of the proceeds from the sale of new or reclaimed grave spaces."

Mr. Stern believes that the list of unsold lots as of December are neither new or reclaimed, and therefore no commission is due to the Contractor. Mr. Valentine stated that a lot is either new or is reclaimed, and there is no other designation of grave spaces. Mr. Valentine stated that up to theis point the city had not identified new spaces, there were none. Once those spaces were identified, those were considered new spaces, and that provision is covered by the contract.

**III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 6, 2015**

**MOTION:** Motion by Gehringer, seconded by Ms. Thurber:

To approve the Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board minutes of February 6, 2015 as corrected.

**VOTE:** Yeas, 4  
Nays, None  
Absent, 3 (Desmond, Peterson, Schreiner)

##### **B. APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 23, 2015**

**MOTION:** Motion by DeWeese, seconded by Thurber:

To approve the Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board minutes of February 23, 2015 as corrected.

**VOTE:** Yeas, 4  
Nays, None  
Absent, 3 (Desmond, Peterson, Schreiner)

##### **C. HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION REVIEW & SPACE AVAILABILITY**

(Recommendation Checklist Item #8)

Ms. Pierce attended the March 18, 2015 Historic District Commission (HDC) meeting at the Board's request to request the HDC review the utilization of green space for burials and request any limitations of that use. She reviewed the Commission's recommendations which include no existing headstones or gravesites be moved, no existing trees or mature landscaping be removed, flush mounted headstones be used for all newly created graves so as not to provide any visual disruption, maintain the structural integrity of all historical markers and the landscape, and all contractors who work in the cemetery to be bonded and insured. The HDC hopes to have the opportunity to review other requests the Board may have.

**MOTION:** Motion by DeWeese, seconded by Thurber:

To thank the Historic District Commission for their review.

**VOTE:** Yeas, 4  
Nays, None  
Absent, 3 (Desmond, Peterson, Schreiner)

Mr. Stern thought the compromise for flush mounted headstone was excellent in an effort to find graves for people, while maintaining the visual garden context of the cemetery.

Ms. DeWeese would like to add that any damage done to historical markers during the process will be the responsibility of the management to repair.

Mr. Stern asked how a situation would be handled if graves purchased previously are situated across a path from each other. Ms. Pierce said that when the city sold multiple graves, they were sold in one section only and did not cross paths into a different section. She stated that the City would check the records for that situation.

Mr. Stern and Ms. Thurber asked if an individual owns a space on the edge of a section, would they be given an opportunity to purchase the newly created lot in the green space. Ms. DeWeese asked how would different owners of the plots across the path be handled if they both wanted to purchase the newly created lot.

Mr. Valentine stated ~~the intent of~~ the objective is to identify the new spaces in order to address the needs of the people on the interest list. He noted that it would be appropriate to add that as a caveat to a recommendation if desired. To ask the people along the green space if they wish to buy into the space next to them is a different issue, and may impact the opportunities for the people on the interest list.

Ms. Arcome pointed out that based on her conversations with the public who have space there and desire to purchase more and be close to their family members, she suggested that only one list be maintained and not create several different lists for the different scenarios. Prioritizing by needs of the individuals may be difficult to handle.

Ms. DeWeese expressed concern over the notification to the public. Ms. Pierce said the papers will cover the fact that additional spaces are available in Greenwood once it is presented to the City Commission. Mr. Valentine added that the City will send out press releases. He noted that the issue of family members can be handled internally.

Mr. Stern confirmed for Ms. Gehringer that the discussion is about conditions if this did go forward. She said if reclamation is done, there would be 306 grave sites that could possibly be reclaimed, and 42 empty graves in Section A that are unsold. She stated that she is not sure that the City needs another 530 graves. She suggested the Board consider opening a section at a time versus all at once and weigh the pros and cons.

Ms. DeWeese commented that the Board's responsibility is to the citizens. Realistically, it will take 5-7 years for reclamation. This is a way for people to get their needs met quickly. She does like the idea of using the ground penetrating radar in the green space.

Mr. Stern asked how big the lots are in the pathway. Ms. Arcome answered that the graves are 3' x 10', with a standard size being 3' x 8'. The size of the green space will accommodate two graves side by side.

Ms. DeWeese repeated her concerns about damage that might occur. Ms. Arcome stated that she is confident this would not happen, and said these are very highly skilled employees who work in the cemetery.

Ms. Gehringer asked how equipment gets to the graves when graves around are already occupied. Ms. Arcome answered that the equipment drives over the graves, which is common practice. The City would not sell a new grave if it could not be accessed.

Ms. Gehringer said the Michigan Historical Cemetery Preservation Manual regulations suggest that monuments not be cleaned. She questioned how monument cleaning can be done in a historical cemetery by anyone when the historical cemetery regulations indicate it should not be done. Ms. DeWeese said the state regulations may not be enforced. Families are going to want to keep the monuments clean. Mr. Valentine suggested that would be a good discussion for the board under the rules and regulations.

In response to a question from Mr. Stern, Ms. Pierce explained that the intention is for the board to decide on the utilization of green space and decide on the use of ground penetrating radar. Future discussions will include the rules and regulations and the grave interest list. The Board needs to move forward with a decision on the green space, followed by a decision on the ground penetrating radar.

**MOTION:** Motion by DeWeese, seconded by Thurber:

To recommend that the City offer the graves located in the green space of Sections B, C, K, L, and O for sale, with limitations as recommended by the Historic District Commission, and this board, which includes fixing any damage that may occur, advertise the opportunity for people that have space in the cemetery and work with families that have lots adjoining green space so that they are aware of the opportunity as well.

Ms. Gehringer said she will not be voting in favor of this motion. She believes that this discussion is premature, and she does not want to spend every meeting on this issue. She wants to work on the interest list and ground penetrating radar.

Mr. Stern stated that the top priority of the City is to satisfy the need of the community for additional spaces and that is why it has been made a top priority.

Mr. Stern asked if there is any limitation to the number of lots a family can buy. Ms. Pierce said that will be brought up as a separate agenda item. Ms. Pierce said what has to be done is determine whether or not to move forward with these spaces. She confirmed that no graves will be sold until the interest list, ground penetrating radar and rules and regulations are discussed.

In response to a question by Mr. Stern, Mr. Valentine explained the motion provides direction to move ahead so staff can formalize what needs to occur. All motions are recommendations to the City Commission to formalize those actions. Effectively the Board makes a decision on the space availability and how to proceed with the conditions, then looking at what rules and regulations would have to be modified in order to address the conditions, as well as also addressing the GPR issue to have a comfort level that those spaces would not be already utilized. There are other issues that have to be considered such as the mechanics of how that list would be utilized. There are multiple pieces here that have to be addressed individually.

VOTE:           Ayes, 3  
                  Nays, 1 (Gehringer)  
                  Absent (Desmond, Peterson, Schreiner)

MOTION FAILED. ~~Ms. Gehringer commented that it is important to get as much input from the Board members as possible, and that is why she decided not to vote for the motion today. said she voted no because she thinks this is an important issue and we are missing three members who should have input and vote on it.~~

This item will be brought back to the next meeting under Unfinished Business.

The Board agreed to advance the discussion of Ground Penetrating Radar next on the agenda.

## **E.       GROUND PENETRATING RADAR DISCUSSION**

Ms. Pierce reviewed the report and noted the amount received yesterday from company B for Sections B,C,K,L,O only was \$8,900.

Mr. Valentine said the question is whether to proceed with a recommendation to the City Commission to authorize a Request for Proposal for GPR. Since the RFP would be a cost, the City Commission would have to approve expending the funds.

The Board discussed whether to use GPR on the entire cemetery or only the green space.

**MOTION:** Motion by Gehringer, seconded by DeWeese:

To recommend that the City Commission authorize a Request for Proposal be issued for Ground Penetrating Radar services for both the entire cemetery and also only sections B, C, K, L, and O.

VOTE: Yeas, 4  
Nays, None  
Absent, (Desmond, Peterson, Schreiner)

**V. CONTRACTOR REPORT**

A. CEMETERY UPDATE

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

Patricia Andrews asked who is maintaining the cemetery. Ms. Pierce answered that Birmingham Lawn is providing lawn care for the cemetery at this time.

Ms. Andrews asked how many can be buried in a burial site. Mr. Stern said the rules and regulations govern the number of occupants. Ms. Pierce added can hold one full burial ~~site~~, or three cremains. Currently, a second right of burial can be purchased with one full burial and have two cremains on top. She said the rules refer to number of people, not number of containers. As it is now, that would be two people in addition to one full burial. However, this could be looked at during the discussion of rules and regulations.

Ms. DeWeese announced the cemetery tour on Saturday, May 2, 2015.

The next meeting is Friday, May 1, 2015 at 8:30 AM.

**VIII. ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:58 AM.

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