

**GREENWOOD CEMETERY ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 2017 AT 8:30 AM
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, ROOM 205, 151 MARTIN**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Darlene Gehringer, called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

II. ROLL CALL

ROLL CALL: Present: Darlene Gehringer
George Stern
Kevin Desmond
Linda Buchanan
Margaret Suter

Absent: Linda Peterson
Laura Schreiner

Administration: Acting City Clerk Arft

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

IV. NEW BUSINESS

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Items under Pending will be presented as a verbal status update to the Board and may not require action at this time.

A. NATIONAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION OF CEMETERY

Ms. Buchanan had no new report. Mr. Christiansen had previously advised Ms. Buchanan that he would be visiting the cemetery. She suggested keeping this item under Unfinished Business for the present time.

B. DIGITIZATION OF CEMETERY RECORDS

Ms. Arft reported that both Pontem and BS&A have been contacted to schedule dates for their presentations to the Board.

C. REQUEST FOR RFP FOR GPR SERVICES IN THE CEMETERY

D. REQUEST FOR RFP FOR MASTER PLAN OF THE CEMETERY

Ms. Arft said the requests will be part of the Budget hearing for the 2017-18 fiscal year. An estimated cost for each RFP was submitted with each request after some investigation was done by City staff. The Board members would like to review the proposed RFP as well as the responses at the appropriate time.

E. AMENDMENT TO THE CEMETERY CONTRACT WITH ELMWOOD

Ms. Gehringer suggested we review the contract and the Board members can discuss their thoughts at the next meeting.

Mr. Stern thinks the only amendment the Board should consider is cancellation.

VI. CONTRACTOR REPORT

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

VIII. BOARD COMMENTS

Ms. Arft provided a copy in the agenda packet to the Board of the City Commission meeting minutes of December 5, 2016 regarding their discussion of Mr. Paul Robertson's request for an exemption to the flush marker only regulation in Section F North, where he owns two graves.

She noted that the Commission asked that staff conduct some research and investigation of our records and a physical visit to the cemetery, and perhaps include more photos of the area.

Mr. Stern asked how many graves are occupied in Section F-North at this time. Ms. Arft said a member of the staff is involved in that research at the moment. She provided some information from our records that the earliest burial recorded so far in that section was in February 1969. The earliest Rules and Regulations found that reference the flush marker only regulation in Section F North was from 1971.

Ms. Arft noted that the Commission will be seeing the Action List to approve or revise the order. The Board can then work according to the direction of the Commission.

Ms. Gehringer asked that the exact location of Mr. Robertson's graves be made available at the next meeting.

Ms. Buchanan expressed concern about changing the rules, and then people are going to request changes in other flush marker areas.

Ms. Suter raised a concern that if the City decides to bring the cemetery maintenance back, and the regulation is lifted in Section F North, will it then cause a problem with maintenance.

Ms. Gehringer suggested that the maintenance during the 1970's was by hand, rather than machine. She is not sure why it was an issue.

Mr. Stern added that in those times, there was a big push for memorial garden sections and cemeteries. He thinks that trend has run its course, and we are seeing people who want monuments. He proposed that we remove the restriction in Section F-North and allow monuments. He would like to keep flush markers in B & C because that is what the Historic District Commission recommended. He does not think it makes any sense for K, L, and O to have the restriction, however.

MOTION: Motion by Stern, seconded by Desmond:

To allow upright markers to be put in Section F-North and also in the new Sections of D, K, L, and O, but not B & C.

Mr. Desmond agreed, because he looks at Sections B & C differently. They are adjacent to the road, and are visible when people drive and walk by the cemetery. Section F-North has more open space, and if the reason for the restriction was maintenance-driven, the equipment is improved today regardless if the Contractor or the City is maintaining the cemetery in the future. He would suggest that the purchaser be very

prudent and work with the manufacturer to consider the ground situation and any warranty provided.

Ms. Suter suggested we need to spend more time on this subject. She would like to see some restrictions in place, however.

Ms. Buchanan expressed concern on the fairness issue.

VOTE: Yeas, 2
 Nays, 3
 Absent, 2 (Peterson, Schreiner)

Motion failed.

MOTION: Motion by Stern:
To review the roadway between Sections K & L and open it up to new gravesites.

Motion failed for lack of support.

Mr. Stern said we can protect the Booth and Rosso families with small pathways.

Ms. Gehringer reminded the Board that once a site is designated as a historical site, it cannot be changed. Mr. Stern said it could be appealed, and the museum is doing that now with the siding on the Allen House.

Ms. Buchanan expressed concern that changing the road could jeopardize the application for national historical designation.

Ms. Suter said we have many graves available now.

Mr. Stern suggested that people are looking for graves that can have monuments.

Mr. Stern asked if the cemetery would be at the Long Range Planning meeting on January 28th. Ms. Arft said she would check and confirm.

Mr. Stern asked if the City Manager was moving forward on MCL 456.537. First, the Commission needs to adopt the law, and then the Board can recommend implementation if the Commission so directs. He said the idea would be that once the Commission recognizes the state law, then direction would come to this Board for a recommendation as to how the law could be implemented.

Ms. Gehringer asked if the City Attorney had addressed it. Mr. Stern said the City Attorney had addressed it, and agreed.

MOTION: Motion by Stern, seconded by Desmond:
To urge the City Commission to adopt MCL 456.537, and send to the Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board a request for rules of implementation.

Ms. Buchanan asked if this should be included on the Action List with the reclamation.

Mr. Desmond clarified that Mr. Stern is requesting to open the door to discuss action steps for the reclamation. Mr. Stern confirmed.

Ms. Suter asked why the Board is recommending the adoption of the law to the City.

Mr. Desmond said that the intention of the Board with the motion is to bring the law to the City Commission's attention and request consideration of adopting the law.

Mr. Stern agreed, and explained that the Board also urged the City to adopt the Perpetual Care Fund previously.

Ms. Gehringer said the Board has brought the new law to the Commission's attention in previous conversations.

Mr. Desmond said once this is published, there will be some backlash from the public.

Ms. Gehringer asked if the Board would like to review the law before the Board proceeds with anything.

It was agreed to review the law at the next meeting.

VOTE: Yeas, 2
 Nays, 3
 Absent, 2 (Peterson, Schreiner)

Motion failed.

Ms. Gehringer clarified that the new law will be discussed at the next Board meeting.

IX. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 AM.

ca