

**GREENWOOD CEMETERY ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
FRIDAY, JULY 21, 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**

PRESENT: Linda Buchanan  
Kevin Desmond  
Darlene Gehringer  
Linda Peterson

ABSENT: Laura Schreiner  
Margaret Suter  
George Stern

Administration: Clerk Brown, Deputy Clerk Arft

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 5, 2017**

Ms. Gehringer offered corrections to the minutes from Mr. Stern in his absence.

- On page 2, add the word "budget" in the second sentence of the second paragraph of Section IV, item B
- On page 2, add the words "of all cemetery records including burial records" after the word "digitization" at the end of the fourth paragraph
- On page 3, change the word "is" to "be" in the last line of the second paragraph of Section VIII

Ms. Gehringer suggested corrections to the minutes.

- On page 2, add the word "its" in the first sentence in the seventh paragraph of Section IV, item B
- On page 2, change the words to "newly created grave spaces" at the end of the second sentence in the seventh paragraph of Section IV, item B
- On page 2, change the word "missing" to "adding" in the first sentence in Section V, item B
- On page 2, add the words "treated as a", and replace the words "and that" with "but" in the second sentence in Section V, item B

Ms. Gehringer asked that the name of the board member who made the suggestion for a donation display be added to the minutes.

Ms. Gehringer requested more detail of discussions be included in the minutes in the future. Clerk Brown noted that minutes typically include discussion when there has been action taken. Ms. Gehringer asked that at least the individuals and topic be included in the minutes in the future.

MOTION: Motion by Desmond, seconded by Peterson:  
To approve the minutes of May 5, 2017 as amended.

VOTE: Yeas, 4  
Nays, None  
Absent, 3 (Schreiner, Suter, Stern)

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

##### **A. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON**

Clerk Brown said the Board is required to elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson at this meeting.

**MOTION:** Motion by Desmond, seconded by Peterson:  
To nominate Darlene Gehringer as Chairperson.

Ms. Gehringer accepted the nomination.

VOTE: Yeas, 4  
Nays, None  
Absent, 3 (Schreiner, Suter, Stern)

##### **B. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON**

**MOTION:** Motion by Peterson, seconded by Desmond:  
To nominate Linda Buchanan as Vice-Chairperson.

Ms. Buchanan accepted the nomination.

VOTE: Yeas, 4  
Nays, None  
Absent, 3 (Schreiner, Suter, Stern)

##### **A. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS - MASTER PLAN FOR CEMETERY**

Clerk Brown described the process for drafting the RFP. It follows the standard template for the City and all the legal requirements for attachments for all contractors. To prepare this, she used the action list that was presented to the City Commission in 2016 and placed all of the items into categories. A master plan is designed to describe what the Board wants a contractor to investigate within the various categories and to bring back their ideas and best practices. In reviewing the Board's action list, most fell into the following categories:

- Optimizing space for interment (infrastructure, features and landscape planning, columbaria, GPR, contacting owners)
- Reviewing current policies, regulations, operations, and management in relation to best practices (cemetery regulations, maps, records, management agreement, quarterly reports, capacity demands, future uses)
- Financial planning (Perpetual Care fund, establishing a 501(c)(3) support organization, donor program)

Clerk Brown said the cemetery records digitization is currently being updated by the Clerk's Office, and our contractor also has digitized records. She included this item as a sub-category of optimizing space, since she recalled that previous discussion of digitization was for the purpose of public searching of burial records. In the Scope of Work, she included it under *Planning for Infrastructure, Features and Landscape*. This would include making the records available to the cemetery visitors whether online or at a physical location such as the cemetery or the Clerk's Office.

Ms. Peterson asked if the records would be available to search at the Clerk's Office or online. Clerk Brown responded that her recollection of the conversations included both, and this would be something that the Board and the contractor would determine at their meetings.

As for the topic of reclamation, Clerk Brown noted that in July 2016, the City Commission gave no direction to the Board to proceed with reclamation, but rather to proceed with the sale of the existing, available spaces in the cemetery. The word "reclamation" is not included in the RFP.

Ms. Gehringer noted that in July 2016, the Commission included four members who are no longer serving. There are four new members, and some of them are interested in reclamation. She confirmed that the Board can review that with the contractor.

Clerk Brown noted that funding in the amount of \$20,000 is available for the master plan. The contractor will be asked to prioritize the items, and the Board will make recommendations to the Commission to address them as funding becomes available in the Perpetual Care Fund.

Ms. Gehringer asked what is meant by "best practices". Mr. Desmond suggested that it refers to accepted standards for the management of cemeteries. Ms. Brown added that it would include operational procedures and industry standards.

Ms. Gehringer suggested correction of the spelling of the word "interment" throughout the document.

Mr. Desmond suggested that October is a quick turnaround for the selection of a firm. Clerk Brown said the Board will revisit the timeline later in the meeting.

Ms. Gehringer asked if Finance Director Gerber would be involved in the financial discussions. Clerk Brown confirmed he would.

Ms. Gehringer suggested other edits throughout the RFP document.

Mr. Desmond clarified that this is a master plan specifically for Greenwood and not a master plan for the City. The members agreed with Mr. Desmond that the Board is the steward of Greenwood Cemetery, and not running a cemetery business for the City.

Ms. Gehringer noted that the Commission has previously stated that the City is not interested in buying more property.

Ms. Buchanan commented on Mr. Stern's communication with Mr. Christensen of the State Historic Preservation Office. She explained that Mr. Christensen said that while the cemetery does not qualify as a national site, it is a Michigan historic site. She felt that there must have been a miscommunication between Mr. Stern and Mr. Christensen. Ms. Buchanan explained that in order to attain national status, the cemetery must have state status, which it has had since the 1990's.

Clerk Brown asked Ms. Buchanan if the City is required to do anything to maintain the historical designation. Ms. Buchanan explained that she does not think there is anything that has to be done.

Clerk Brown clarified for Ms. Gehringer that the reference in paragraph 4 of the Scope of Work to the establishment of a 501(c)(3) organization to support the cemetery would be an organization such as a Friends of Greenwood Cemetery.

Clerk Brown asked if any members agreed with Mr. Stern's suggestion to remove the words, "in relation to best practices" in the title of paragraph 3 of the Scope of Work. It was the consensus of the Board that it was important to keep the title as it is. Mr. Desmond commented that he would trust a reputable contractor to know what he or she is talking about.

Ms. Gehringer suggested adding an item in paragraph 9 of *Contractor's Responsibilities/Submission Requirements* on page 9 to include website and app access as one of the components. Clerk Brown noted that those items are addressed under *Infrastructure* in paragraph 5 on page 5.

Clerk Brown commented that the attachments to the RFP satisfy the legal requirements the City follows for RFPs and cannot be edited.

Clerk Brown said that with the RFP now reviewed, the Board will need to recommend approval of the RFP to the City Commission. If approved by the Commission, the RFP can be released. From that point, it is sent out allowing 3-4 weeks for bids to be submitted. That timeline can be increased if appropriate. The next Commission meeting that a recommendation could be scheduled is August 14<sup>th</sup>. If the Commission approves it, Ms. Brown would post it to MITN. We would decide how long to give potential bidders to respond to the request.

If the bids are due in October, the Clerk's Office will not be able to review the responses until after the November election. Likely, it would be January 2018 before the Board would be furnished with a spreadsheet of the responses.

Mr. Desmond would be ready to move on this in order to get this on the August 14<sup>th</sup> City Commission agenda, allowing sufficient time for responses.

Ms. Gehringer suggested that the Board meet in November, but not make the decision on the choice of a contractor at the meeting. It was agreed to re-schedule the November meeting to November 17<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 AM.

The evaluation will be completed in December on a date to be determined at next month's meeting. The contract will be awarded in January 2018.

The Board agreed to change the master plan process commencement date to January 2018 and the completion date to October 2018.

It was noted that these dates are tentative.

It was the consensus of the Board to bring back the RFP with the changes discussed to the August 4, 2017 Board meeting.

## **V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

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

Ms. Gehringer would like to discuss the practice of payment plans or deposits at the next meeting, and noted that the Commission indicated that the Board should continue to address operational concerns at the cemetery.

**VI. CONTRACTOR REPORT**

Ms. Gehringer asked why Section F North grave sales are not being tracked. Clerk Brown noted that the report was created to track the newly designated grave spaces in order to know when sales were reaching the limit the City Commission set.

Clerk Brown, responding to the Board's request, said she would ask that the report account for any sections in which there are still available lots for sale.

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

**VIII. BOARD COMMENTS**

Ms. Gehringer wants to discuss the gate at the east cemetery.

Ms. Buchanan would like send a note of thanks to DPS regarding the planting of the oak trees.

**IX. ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:39 AM.

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