

**GREENWOOD CEMETERY ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
FRIDAY, APRIL 6, 2018 AT 8:30 AM  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, ROOM 205, 151 MARTIN**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**II. ROLL CALL**

PRESENT: Linda Buchanan  
Kevin Desmond  
Darlene Gehringer  
Linda Peterson  
Laura Schreiner  
George Stern  
Margaret Suter

ABSENT: None

ADMINISTRATION: City Clerk Mynsberge

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 2, 2018**

Mr. Stern requested that midway down the first page "interning" be changed to "interring" in both locations where the word is used.

**MOTION:** Motion by Buchanan, seconded by Suter,  
To approve the minutes of the February 2, 2018 Greenwood Cemetery Board meeting.

VOTE: Yeas, 7  
Nays, 0  
Absent, 0

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**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.

**A. DISCUSSION OF RESPONSES TO GREENWOOD CEMETERY MASTER PLAN RFP**

City Clerk Mynsberge reported:

- Both proposals are far over budget.
- City Clerk Mynsberge and City Manager Valentine reached out to both companies to request more information regarding operational analysis.
- Responses should arrive by next week.
- The GCAB may want to consider renaming the Plan as something regarding consulting instead of a Master Plan since the Master Plan RFP is not yielding the desired results.

Mr. Stern said that:

- Neither Johnson and Anderson (J&A) nor Fleis and Vanderbrink (F&V) seemed to understand what the GCAB was looking for. Mr. Stern continued with specific critiques of the J&A report including the report's indication that:
  - The GCAB was elected to their positions; and,
  - That the cemetery has little opportunity for columbarium memorials.
- The City may want to create a web-based portal for customers.
- Separating data collection from the Master Plan may reduce the price of the Master Plan.
- Eric Guthrie is a MI State demographer who may be able to help with the project.
- F&V's report included an illustration that Mr. Stern could not identify.

Mr. Stern will present his cemetery record findings at the May 2018 GCAB meeting.

## **B. DISCUSSION OF CITY ATTORNEY'S RESPONSE TO PROPOSED PAYMENT PLAN POLICY FOR CEMETERY PLOTS**

City Clerk Mynsberge reported:

- City Attorney Currier said more clarification is needed regarding payment for multiple plots.
- She would suggest getting rid of the second sentence in paragraph three.
- Paragraph four should be expanded to explain how plots should be paid for and used if the buyer is using fewer plots than the number purchased as part of the payment plan.

Ms. Suter suggested the fourth paragraph be changed to read:

"If multiple plots are included in a purchase agreement, the balance due on any one or more of the plots needed for interment must be fully paid before interment can take place. In the case that only a portion of the plots included in a purchase agreement are paid in full so that interment can take place, an end plot will be utilized first and others located adjacent subsequently as needed. Monthly payments may continue on the other plots."

Ms. Schreiner suggested that "money so allocated will not be shifted" be added to the end of the paragraph.

Ms. Gehringer asked that:

- The word "contractor" be removed from the last paragraph.
- The City be paid its 75% of each payment up front, and proposed this language: "The Greenwood Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund will receive 75% of the sale price for each plot sold under a payment agreement at the time of each payment, or upon the expiration date of the purchase agreement, whichever occurs first."

The GCAB was in consensus with the above language.

City Clerk Mynsberge said she would run the proposed language by City Attorney Currier and have the changes for the GCAB at the May 2018 meeting.

## **VI. CONTRACTOR REPORT**

### **A. Fourth Quarter 2017 Financial Report**

City Clerk Mynsberge reported:

- 11 plots were sold in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, which added \$24,750 to the Perpetual Care Fund.
- The Perpetual Care Fund has \$105,750 to-date.
- Lots B & C has 169 plots sold. If 31 more plots are sold the GCAB must consult the Commission about potentially opening more plots.

The GCAB reached consensus on waiting to appear before the Commission until the last 31 plots were sold.

Mr. Stern said the Russell Booth<sup>1</sup> family purchased an area of 95 90<sup>1</sup> plots but has only marked out 38 plots for use.

Ms. Schreiner asked that 169 be bolded in the Financial Report.

City Clerk Mynsberge agreed to tell the Contractor that the GCAB is proposing a change to 24 months per Chairperson Gehringer. the payment plan from 36 months to 24 months.<sup>1</sup>

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

There were no comments.

## **VIII. BOARD COMMENTS**

Mr. Stern commented that:

- In at least three different instances, the Contractor sold plots which were already occupied.
- There are ~~unnumbered~~ undated<sup>1</sup> deeds.
- There is at least one plot that ~~could not be located and numbered.~~ he could not locate and number.<sup>1</sup>
- Sections 1-17 of C may actually be in Section B. The Contractor has been selling plots in Section C which may actually be in B.

City Clerk Mynsberge confirmed that:

- The contractor did not make up their own numbering system.
- The City Clerk's office is working with Elmwood to resolve discrepancies.
- The appearance of occupied plots being re-sold were clerical errors.

Ms. Schreiner asked for examples of Mr. Stern's concerns to be brought to the May meeting.

Mr. Stern then entered the following into the record:

"I have two comments on Mr. Desmond's correspondence to the Board entered into the minutes of the Meeting of February 2, 2018.

First, whether the fee charged by the contractor to purchase a burial site as an interment fee is comparable to other cemeteries in the local market does not contradict my assertion that the contractor is making an exorbitant profit? (*sic*) I am involved in the supervision of five cemeteries in the local market and am well aware of the costs. In a like vein, whether A.J. Desmond & Sons charges more or less than other funeral homes in the local market is not dispositive as to its profitability.

Second, I disagree that "Our Board is also not in a position to question the operating costs incurred by the contractor..." That is exactly what "our" Board is charged to do. Article 1, Sec. 34-30 (h) of the Birmingham, MI Code of Ordinances states: "The Greenwood Cemetery advisory board shall ... advise the city commission in writing on all matters necessary and proper to the operation of Greenwood Cemetery and any of its activities or properties". If Mr. Desmond is unable or unwilling to perform this duty, he should resign."

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<sup>1</sup> As amended at the May 4, 2018 GCAB meeting.

Ms. Schreiner said:

- The GCAB is charged with how the contractor services the Board, the community, and the value the community is getting for the money, not raising questions about how the contractor's business is run internally.
- This was the distinction Mr. Desmond, who has served honorably on the board for many years, was making at the last board meeting.
- Mr. Stern's attack on Mr. Desmond asking Mr. Desmond to resign was upsetting.

Mr. Desmond suggested Mr. Stern consider his own behavior and actions before requesting another board member's resignation.

Chairperson Gehringer stated the board should consider the air cleared.

Ms. Peterson asked for the date of the upcoming re-appointments.

City Clerk Mynsberge said she would confirm and bring the information to the next meeting.

<b>IX. ADJOURN</b>
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The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 am.