

**GREENWOOD CEMETERY ADVISORY  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2018 AT 8:30 AM  
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, ROOM 205, 151 MARTIN**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Darlene Gehringer, Chairperson

**II. ROLL CALL**

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

Administration: City Clerk Mynsberge, Deputy City Clerk Arft

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. Approval of meeting minutes of July 6, 2018

Ms. Buchanan noted that "Elmwood" should be changed to "Greenwood" on page three of the minutes under Board Comments.

Chairperson Gehringer recommended changing "own", in the second paragraph on page three, to "are purchasing".

**MOTION:** Motion by Mr. Stern, seconded by Ms. Peterson:  
To approve the minutes of July 6, 2018 as amended.

VOTE: Yeas, 6  
Nays, 0  
Absent, 1 (Desmond)

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Approval of 2019 Meeting Schedule

Ms. Schreiner noted that July 5, 2019 may be an issue since it is the Friday before July 4. She recommended the Board consider not meeting in July.

Chairperson Gehringer suggested:

- January 4, 2019 may be a difficult meeting for many to attend, and may be difficult for City Clerk Mynsberge to prepare for, since city offices are closed until January 2, 2019.
- January, 3 2020 is too far in advance to schedule.
- The May 3, 2019 meeting should be struck since the Clerk's Office is busy at that time.
- Eight meetings in 2019 should be sufficient.

Ms. Peterson said that a special meeting could be scheduled if necessary.

**MOTION:** Motion by Ms. Buchanan, seconded by Ms. Suter:  
To approve the 2019 Meeting Schedule as amended. (Attachment A)

**VOTE:** Yeas, 6  
Nays, 0  
Absent, 1 (Desmond)

**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. Revised 2017 Annual Report

Chairperson Gehringer suggested going through the report page-by-page. She continued with the following comments:

- Advisory Board should be capitalized throughout the document.
- Page five, Item Four should have an additional sentence that says "The Cemetery perpetual care fund will receive 75% made at the end of each calendar quarter."

Ms. Schreiner said she would continue working on the language. The Board agreed to return to the item.

Mr. Stern said it was premature to delete #8 under RULES AND REGULATIONS, B. PAYMENT PLANS (pg 5) in light of the fact that there are "discussions in progress indicat[ing] the need to first establish a baseline of the property in terms of sites that are sold, sites that are occupied, and sites which remain unsold" as per page four of the 2017 Annual Report.

City Clerk Mynsberge clarified for Mr. Stern that #8 under RULES AND REGULATIONS, B. PAYMENT PLANS (pg 5) did not refer to the Master Plan.

Mr. Stern said he understood, but that he believes there are lots with more than two contiguous plots, meaning #8 under RULES AND REGULATIONS, B. PAYMENT PLANS (pg 5) would be added back in.

City Clerk Mynsberge replied that, at the last GCAB meeting, Elmwood Representative Cheri Arcome said there are no lots with more than two contiguous plots.

Ms. Schreiner said the Board's previous discussion over end-plots may ultimately be moot since the GCAB can only affect burial order for plots on a payment plan, and not for fully-paid plots which may be sold back to the City.

The Board consented to leave out language regarding end plots.

The Board returned to the discussion of perpetual care fund payments on page five.

Ms. Schreiner suggested "For plots under the payment plan for which funds have not been previously forwarded or paid to the perpetual fund, 75% of payments received to-date shall be remitted to the Perpetual Fund by [date] or with the next quarterly payment. Thereafter

payments to the perpetual fund shall be made in accordance with [whatever we were doing before or reiterate using the same language]."

Chairperson Gehring said:

- She would like a specific date and to note that it is the next quarterly payment.
- This item should change to be Item Five, and the subsequent items should be renumbered accordingly.

City Clerk Mynsberge confirmed that Elmwood's remittances are verified against City records.

Ms. Suter stated that she wants to be sure that Elmwood remits the City's 75% portion regularly.

Chairperson Gehring agreed with Ms. Suter and added that regular remittance is the ethical thing to do.

Ms. Schreiner read the final iteration:

"For plots under the payment plan, for which funds have not been previously forwarded or paid to the Greenwood Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund, 75% of payments received to date shall be remitted to the Greenwood Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund by December 31, 2018; thereafter, payments to the perpetual fund shall be made at the end of each calendar quarter."

Ms. Suter said she was alarmed to see sixty-month payment plans on page six. This sentiment was echoed by other Board members.

Chairperson Gehring recalled Ms. Arcome indicating at a previous GCAB meeting that all payment plans except for one were 24-month plans. Ms. Arcome gave no indication that there were a number of payment plans that had lasted for five years. Chairperson Gehring continued that:

- The Board is entitled to full disclosure from Elmwood and that she does not believe they are getting all relevant information.
- The Board cannot function without having all the information they need. It is not fair to the Board, to the residents, or to the City Commission, because the Board can only provide the information they have, which seems to, thus far, have been incomplete.
- Her comments regarding this matter should be included in the minutes so as to make the City Commission aware of the issue.
- The issues between Elmwood and the GCAB cannot be resolved when Elmwood does not attend the GCAB meetings.

Ms. Suter said she would like assurance that Elmwood is not doing any more sixty month terms.

City Clerk Mynsberge said she:

- Would call immediately after the meeting to confirm with Elmwood that no more sixty month terms are to be issued until further notice.
- Mistakenly did not forward this meeting's agenda to Ms. Arcome, leaving Ms. Arcome possibly unaware of the meeting.

Chairperson Gehringer noted that Elmwood has missed every meeting for the last year with the exception of the most recent one.

City Clerk Mynsberge acknowledged that was the case, and said that Ms. Arcome's attendance should be viewed as the start of a less confrontational relationship between the GCAB and Elmwood.

Ms. Schreiner opined that no one is perfect and it is possible that Ms. Arcome forgot since the sixty month terms had been paid in a timely manner and none had been issued recently.

Chairperson Gehringer said that she may come off more confrontational than she means to, and that she is not saying that Ms. Arcome intended deceit.

Chairperson Gehringer requested that:

- On page ten, under Roads, the final sentence be "The roads have been completed."
- In the introduction to the Annual Report, there should be a section that notes the GCAB is required to meet once per quarter with a subsequent note stating how many times the GCAB met in 2017.

Ms. Schreiner recommended that information regarding meeting requirements and number of meetings held be entered at the top of page three of the Annual Report, after the indented section.

City Clerk Mynsberge said:

- She would ask City Manager Valentine for ten minutes at the Long Range Planning Meeting for Chairperson Gehringer to present the GCAB's goals, at Mr. Stern's request.
- She would send a copy of the Annual Report once the updates were made, which she expected to be end-of-day on September 7, 2018.

Chairperson Gehringer requested a quarterly report for the Perpetual Care Fund moving forward. The Board concurred.

The Board agreed to have the City Clerk make the revisions and submit the Annual Report to the City Commission.

City Clerk Mynsberge said:

- The Annual Report would be included in Staff Reports at the end of the Commission's agenda.
- In the cover memo to the Commission, she will explain the Master Plan process for the GCAB including what the Board has tried, why it did not work, and what is being discussed going forward. The Commission will be made aware of all the work the GCAB has done.

**MOTION:** Motion by Ms. Buchanan, seconded by Ms. Suter:  
To approve the 2017 Annual Report as amended.

VOTE:                   Yeas, 6  
                              Nays, 0

Absent, 1 (Desmond)

B. Revised Proposed Payment Plan Policy for Cemetery Plots

City Clerk Mynsberge stated:

- Ms. Schreiner's language and revisions are clear to the layman, which achieves the Board's goals for the policy.
- The updated language from the Annual Report regarding payments should be incorporated into this policy.
- The second paragraph should read in part "Payment agreements require a 20% down payment of the total purchase price at the signing of the payment agreement. The remaining balance shall be spread into equal monthly payments for a period not to exceed 24 months. Further once allocated to one plot the funds are not transferrable to a different plot."
- The fifth paragraph should begin "For purchase agreements initiated on or after October 1, 2018, failure to pay..."

Chairperson Gehringer recommended changing part of the first sentence to read "...to allow for the purchase price of a plot(s) to be paid over a period of time.

City Clerk Mynsberge was provided written suggestions as to one or two other changes.

Ms. Suter suggested the 'and' not be in bold type.

**MOTION:** Motion by Ms. Suter, seconded by Ms. Buchanan:  
To approve the Payment Plan Policy for Cemetery Plots as amended.

VOTE: Yeas, 6  
Nays, 0  
Absent, 1 (Desmond)

C. Revised First Quarter 2018 Financial Report

City Clerk Mynsberge noted:

- The revisions to the report, and noted that the information provided to the Board by Ms. Arcome was current as of March 31, 2018.
- Elmwood has remitted the second quarter payments, and City Clerk Mynsberge will include the second quarter financial report in the next meeting's agenda.

D. Discussion of Master Plan Process

City Clerk Mynsberge reviewed the work done so far on the process. She said the GCAB needs to narrow the scope of work, and in order to do that the GCAB must clarify exactly what they are hoping to accomplish. She suggested creating:

- A preliminary list of goals;
- The cost of accomplishing each goal;
- How long each goal will take to accomplish; and,
- Who can accomplish those goals.

This will allow the GCAB to either request specific outcomes from a master planner or will reveal that this is not a master plan process, but some other kind of process which requires a different

kind of consultant. If a different kind of consultant is needed, the GCAB can go to the Commission at that time, present their findings, and request a different consultant.

Mr. Stern complemented City Clerk Mynsberge on her work with this project and on going back to original recommendations from the Cemetery Advisory Committee.

Mr. Stern recommended looking into a comprehensive data processing plan for the cemetery and requested that an item be added to the next agenda to consider it.

City Clerk Mynsberge said that, while she sees the discussion moving in that direction, she would not like to invite any outside speakers until the Board agrees upon their preferred next steps.

Mr. Stern concurred and said he would, then, like the Board to consider a comprehensive data processing plan.

Chairperson Gehringer said she would like to consider an interactive website for Greenwood that would work both on mobile phones and ~~on~~<sup>on</sup> computers. She added a few more items for consideration:

- Donor programs;
- Friends of the Cemetery;
- Benches; and
- Selling bricks.

Ms. Schreiner suggested that the shed could be a good location for memorial bricks or a small ~~putty~~ pony<sup>2</sup> wall with niches for columbaria.

Mr. Stern said that the GCAB can best determine their focus by tracking supply and demand over the next year using the comprehensive data processing plan.

City Clerk Mynsberge said the GCAB should also calculate whether the number of lots left to sell gets the Perpetual Care Fund to the level needed to provide maintenance to the cemetery, without having to rely on taxes, once it is sold out. After that, the GCAB can determine whether something like columbaria need to be added to increase sales.

City Clerk Mynsberge confirmed that the Clerk's Office is working on the digitized burial records, and that those will continue to be updated once the election season has concluded.

Chairperson Gehringer said the GCAB should plan on reviewing the cemetery management agreement with Elmwood.

City Clerk Mynsberge stated that Elmwood does not charge an administrative fee for their work on their current payment plan agreement<sup>3</sup>.

Mr. Stern left at 10:16 a.m.

<b>VI. CONTRACTOR REPORT</b>
------------------------------

None.

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

## VIII. BOARD COMMENTS

Linda Buchanan reported:

- Meeting with Ms. Suter, Ms. Laird from DPS, and an arborist from J. H. Hart to discuss the trees in Greenwood; and,
- Requesting that more trees be put in.
- There are disease-resistant elms that would work well in the cemetery.

In order to add more trees, Ms. Laird will need a map of available space in Greenwood.

Ms. Schreiner said this is not a process that should be rushed.

Ms. Buchanan suggested adding this discussion to the next agenda.

## IX. ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

## NEXT MEETING: OCTOBER 5, 2018

*Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board:*

*The powers and duties of the Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board is to provide the following 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.*

*Section 34-30 (g) of the Birmingham City Code*

*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).*

---

<sup>1</sup> *As amended during the October 5, 2018 GCAB meeting.*

<sup>2</sup> *As amended during the October 5, 2018 GCAB meeting.*

<sup>3</sup> *As amended during the October 5, 2018 GCAB meeting.*

**ATTACHMENT A**

2019 Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board Meeting Schedule  
as approved by the GCAB on September 7, 2018

**2019**

<b>MONTH</b>	<b>DATE</b>
February	1
March	1
April	5
June	7
August	2
September	6
October	4
December	6