

**GREENWOOD CEMETERY ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 2019 AT 8:30 AM
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, ROOM 205, 151 MARTIN**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Gehringer called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Kevin Desmond
Darlene Gehringer, Chairwoman
Linda Peterson
Laura Schreiner
George Stern
Margaret Suter

Absent: Linda Buchanan, Vice Chairwoman

Administration: City Clerk Mynsberge

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of meeting minutes of February 1, 2019

MOTION: Motion by Mr. Stern, seconded by Ms. Suter:

To approve the minutes of February 1, 2019 as corrected:

- Under New Business, Item A2, 4th bullet point, correct "fives" to "gives".
- Under New Business. Item C, 3rd paragraph, change "the GCAB spent a considerable amount of time spent on" to "the GCAB spent a considerable amount of time on".
- Under Unfinished Business, Item C, 2nd paragraph add "a" before "quorum".

VOTE: Yeas, 6
 Nays, 0

IV. NEW BUSINESS

None

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. 2018 Annual Report

City Clerk Mynsberge reviewed her report. Ms. Arcome of Elmwood will submit the records and activity report from the fourth quarter next week, and the City has received the disbursement from the contractor.

B. Finalization of Master Plan/Historical Collaboration Priority List

City Clerk Mynsberge reported that the Birmingham Museum's current priority is gathering biographical information for the tour program. She suggested that each Board determine its own priorities and begin working on them in order to expedite accomplishing the shared goals.

The Board concurred.

Ms. Peterson reported that the Greenwood Cemetery website does not accommodate spelling errors within search terms. The only way to return accurate information is to spell the search term perfectly. She said she knew the Birmingham Museum is working on this, and wanted to know about opportunities for occasional collaboration between the Boards on such projects. She also suggested the possibility of running an advertisement in the Birmingham Eccentric inviting people to update their biographical information with the Birmingham Museum.

Chairwoman Gehringer said she thought an ad in the Eccentric could be a good idea, and that the search function on the website should be made more flexible.

Ms. Schreiner suggested the search function could be updated with Soundex so that search terms entered that are similar to the correct spelling have a greater likelihood of returning the correct information.

Mr. Desmond confirmed that would be a good way to make the search function less strict.

City Clerk Mynsberge said she would find out the process for making the search function more flexible.

Chairwoman Gehringer said the Greenwood Cemetery website and the City of Birmingham website should also be linked if they are not already.

Ms. Schreiner suggested they could also publicize their search for updated biographical information for anyone buried in Greenwood Cemetery through the City's social media channels, such as Nextdoor and Facebook, and the Eagle.

Chairwoman Gehringer:

- Agreed with Ms. Schreiner, asking City Clerk Mynsberge to look into the aforementioned options for publicizing the search for updated biographical information.
- Noted that the Board largely had consensus on the top four priorities, and then did not have consensus beyond that.
- Explained the priority votes yielded a focus on Ground Penetrating Radar first, establishing a baseline for plots sold and unsold second, locating Potter Fields third, and a digitized map fourth.
- Thanked Mr. Stern for his work towards establishing the baseline for plots sold and unsold.

Ms. Peterson said that was not the way she would have ranked the projects but said she would follow the Board's opinion if that is what was decided.

City Clerk Mynsberge offered to email the list again, noting the first four projects in terms of their priority and asking the Board to rank the remaining projects. The first round of¹ responses clearly show the first four priorities (the rankings each received are shown in the first column):

PRIORITY	PROJECT	SOURCE	EST. COST	DATE TO BE COMPLETED
1. 1-1-1-16	Ground Penetrating Radar to verify records & <i>establish available plots</i>	Contracted professional	RFP needs to be issued	
2. 1-2-2-2-2-4	Establish baseline of plots sold and unsold	Board, Clerk, Contractor	tbd	
3. 3-3-3-8-15	Locate Potter's Field at Greenwood	GCAB Historic District Study Comm. Birmingham Museum Friends of the Museum	tbd	
4. 1-4-4-9-14	Digitized map	Contracted professional	tbd	

Chairwoman Gehringer confirmed that would be helpful.

Mr. Stern asked City Clerk Mynsberge if the Birmingham Police Department might have some records on Potter's Field, given burials in the Field were under their purview.

City Clerk Mynsberge said she would ask the Birmingham PD about that possibility.

C. Spring Tree Planting

City Clerk Mynsberge reported DPS Director Wood would be purchasing a tree or two for the Cemetery as long as the Board let her know what species they would prefer by the April 2019 meeting. She added most parties seem to agree on replacing the tree next to the east entrance, and they are waiting on confirmation from the arborist.

Ms. Peterson said Elmwood did a beautiful job of clearing the snow in the Cemetery. Chairwoman Gehringer concurred.

The location of the second tree to be replaced will be revisited as Unfinished Business at the April 2019 meeting.

D. Recommendation to City Commission to provide funds in the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 budget for Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) of Greenwood Cemetery in its entirety

City Clerk Mynsberge confirmed the GCAB would have to make a motion to move the \$20,000 allotted for the GCAB Master Plan to funding the GPR project.

¹ As corrected on April 17, 2019.

Chairwoman Gehringer asked for a motion.

City Clerk Mynsberge explained that no bidding will begin before the budget is approved, and the Board would have to have solid reasons for disqualifying the lowest bidder on the project. The budget will be voted on by the City Commission at the end of May 2019. If approved, the funds would be available July 1, 2019. Ms. Mynsberge suggested the Board work to have the RFP ready for issuing at the beginning of July 2019.

Mr. Stern said he found the presentation from GPRS disconcerting due to the presenter's frequent cautioning that GPR may not be able to locate graves from the 19th century within the Cemetery. He suggested the project proceed with a test scan in part of the Cemetery first to make sure there would be usable results, followed by staff analysis on how to proceed.

Mr. Desmond agreed with Mr. Stern, saying he also did not find the presentation entirely convincing. He noted the representative from GPRS said staking the ground would yield more detailed results, and the ground in the Cemetery has already been staked. He was not sure how much more information GPR would yield.

Chairwoman Gehringer said rod probing and staking are two different processes.

Mr. Desmond said he may have misspoken, and clarified that the GPRS representative had said uncertain results from GPR would be explored further by rod probing.

Ms. Schreiner agreed with Mr. Desmond's interpretation. She added the GCAB should be cognizant that return of investment on the project may be lower than desired because of this, and cognizant of the disruption the whole process will cause to the Cemetery. Further, according to the rankings it seems that two people on the GCAB did not think GPR was even worth considering as a GCAB priority.

City Clerk Mynsberge told the Board that if they desire funds for FY 2019-2020, they would have to adopt a resolution at this meeting to request it. She clarified that requesting funding does not obligate the Board to expend it, but will allow the flexibility to proceed with the project or to change it. She suggested the Board could ask GPRS back for clarification, or invite another GPR company to see how the presentations compare.

Mr. Stern reiterated the possibility of requesting a smaller amount of City money to do a test of GPR in the Cemetery.

City Clerk Mynsberge said she would follow up with City administration to confirm the process, but that:

- She would have to explore the process of doing a GPR test section.
- If the City Commission approves the \$20,000 request in the budget, the GCAB would have to return for permission to expend it if the amount is over \$2,500. At that point the GCAB could possibly request use of some of the funds to test a section of the Cemetery with GPR.

Mr. Stern said the GCAB should at least, then, make sure the money is in the budget so the Board has options to proceed.

Chairwoman Gehringer was in favor of having a second company present their GPR process to the GCAB.

There was consensus on that suggestion, and City Clerk Mynsberge said she would try and set up another presentation for the April 2019 meeting.

MOTION: Motion by Ms. Suter, seconded by Mr. Stern:
To request the City Commission make available in the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Budget, \$20,000 for Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) of the Greenwood Cemetery in its entirety.

VOTE: Yeas, 4
 Nays, 2 (Desmond, Schreiner)

Mr. Desmond said he did not believe GPR would yield any further information. Ms. Schreiner said she was not opposed to asking for the money, but agreed with Mr. Desmond that GPR was unlikely to yield further information.

E. 3Q Financial Report for Greenwood Cemetery

Chairwoman Gehringer said plot 12A should have been fully paid by the close of the third quarter, and that plot 10A should have been fully paid by the close of the fourth quarter.

City Clerk Mynsberge confirmed she would see if those plots were paid up once she receives the fourth quarter information from Elmwood.

Chairperson Gehringer said she would like to know why 10A and 12A remain unpaid if they still are.

VI. FINANCIAL REPORT

City Clerk Mynsberge distributed Financial Director Gerber’s most current report, reiterating that the City has received the fourth quarter disbursement from Elmwood but will not have any of the supporting documentation until next week.

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

None.

BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Stern explained that townships are covered in vacating cemeteries by Act 49 of 1895. Birmingham, in contrast, is covered by Act 297 of 1929 which outlines vacating cemeteries in cities. He noted Troy has vacated two cemeteries.

City Clerk Mynsberge asked Ms. Peterson for the article on restoring cemetery markers, saying she would forward the information to the Board.

Mr. Desmond left at 9:10 a.m.

Ms. Peterson showed the Board some of Arcadia Cemetery’s materials. City Clerk Mynsberge requested a copy of the materials.

Mr. Stern asked City Clerk Mynsberge if the Board could have a presentation on the current record keeping process for the Cemetery. He specifically shared interest in what information is collected and how it is collected. He also thanked City Clerk Mynsberge for setting up the presentations from GPRS and Finance Director Gerber at the last meeting.

City Clerk Mynsberge said she would schedule a presentation on that information. She also said she would make sure Birmingham Museum Director Pielack is aware of the fact that the City Clerk's office has the plot locations for most individuals buried in the Cemetery. In addition, the hand-drawn plot maps also indicate whether the graves are burials or cremations.

Mr. Stern said he is concerned Elmwood does not have Section H of the Cemetery mapped and digitized. He also noted that ancillary work is contractually required to be done by the contractor, meaning the City cannot, for instance, install QR codes allowing for self-guided tours around the Cemetery. Mr. Stern explained this means the City cannot provide popular services that are being adopted by cemeteries across Michigan because they are precluded by the contract with Elmwood.

The Board discussed the fact that the contract with Elmwood will expire in 2025. Ms. Schreiner suggested the most prudent approach would be to look the contract over and determine where the City might want to negotiate with its contractor differently in the future.

The Board concurred.

Chairwoman Gehringer said that while it seems on paper Elmwood does not make very much money for the services they provide the City, the records from the first public meeting with Elmwood indicate a number of Cemetery-related functions the contractor can provide which would yield them 100% of the profits such as vaults, flowers, interments, and cremations. She said that, plus Elmwood's standard 25% received from each plot, gives Elmwood the possibility to receive over \$1 million. Chairwoman Gehringer explained that, while Elmwood does a good job, she is not concerned that they do not make a sufficient profit.

Ms. Schreiner said all of that should be discussed further during any contract negotiation process.

IX. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

NEXT MEETING: APRIL 5, 2019

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).