

**Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Friday, February 5, 2021, 10 A.M.
Virtual Meeting**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Linda Buchanan, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Linda Buchanan (location: Birmingham, MI)
Pam DeWeese (location: Birmingham, MI)
Linda Peterson (joined 10:05 a.m.)(location: Birmingham, MI)
Laura Schreiner (location: Birmingham, MI)
George Stern (location: Birmingham, MI)
Margaret Suter (location: Birmingham, MI)
Joseph Vercellone (location: Rochester, MI)

Administration: City Clerk Alex Bingham; Museum Director Leslie Pielack

Guests: None

III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Review of the Minutes of January 8, 2021

Ms. DeWeese said the comment attributed to her at the bottom of page two was not actually her. Chair Buchanan recommended the attribution be changed to 'Members', since more than one member expressed similar sentiments. Mr. Vercellone recommended that the same comment being discussed be updated to read 'cemetery plot owners and visitors' instead of just visitors.

Mr. Stern asked it be noted that he had commented during Board Comments that Robert Gibbs, member of the master planning team, was interested in sitting down with the GCAB to discuss the Cemetery's future needs and capacity.

MOTION: by DeWeese, seconded by Suter:

To approve the minutes of January 8, 2021.

VOTE: Yeas, 7
Nays, 0

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Grave Pricing Evaluation and Recommendation

City Clerk Bingham reviewed the item.

Chair Buchanan recommended the GCAB provide the Commission with different pricing options and the rationale for each.

Mr. Vercellone agreed, saying that if the GCAB could provide the pros and cons for each option that might be most helpful to the Commission's consideration. He said it would also be helpful to make it clear which option is most recommended by the GCAB members.

Mr. Stern spoke in favor of other ways of raising funds for the Cemetery, including reclamation, cremation, and offering a perpetual/special care services package for graves.

City Clerk Bingham noted that a significant amount of due diligence on the part of City staff would be required for reclamation.

There was a general understanding that even a \$5,000 grave price for the rest of the inventory would not get the perpetual care fund to the \$2 million goal. Part of the reason for providing the Commission with options and rationale for each would be to allow the Commission to determine its priorities for the Cemetery and make its decision based on those. Those priorities could range from promoting the exclusivity of the Cemetery to promoting the financial accessibility of the Cemetery to closing the gap in the perpetual care fund, and/or other factors.

Chair Buchanan noted that in 2019 the GCAB recommended the price of the graves not be increased. She explained that recommendation was made at the time based on the inaccurate understanding that the Cemetery had 50 more graves in its inventory than there ultimately were. Now that the GCAB is aware it has 50 fewer available graves, it makes more sense to raise the prices to better offset the gap in the perpetual care fund.

City Clerk Bingham said she would solicit pros and cons for each option separately from each member in advance of the next GCAB meeting and provide a summary so that the GCAB could form a consensus at the meeting.

B. Review of Greenwood Cemetery Rules & Regulations

Chair Buchanan and City Clerk Bingham recommended each member rank the sections from highest discussion priority to lowest in separate emails to the Clerk. The Clerk said she would then return with the consolidated ranking and a schedule for discussing the sections over the course of a few GCAB meetings.

Ms. Schreiner asked the Clerk to also include a discussion of updates that need to be made more globally across the document's sections, citing certain aspects of phrasing as one possible example.

C. Plan for Future Landscaping

Ms. Suter asked how other Birmingham¹ City parks deal with tree-related liability issues.

Chair Buchanan clarified that the arborist need not use all the sites she recommended; rather, she just wanted those sites considered among the possible areas.

There was consensus that the GCAB members would like the option to attend the conversation between Parks and Recreation Manager Laird and the arborist.

Museum Director Pielack noted that their attendance at that meeting could also aid the GCAB's long-range planning process scheduled for Fall 2021.

City Clerk Bingham said it would be wise for the GCAB to agree on a list of questions for the arborist prior to the meeting so all relevant issues are covered.

MOTION: by Suter, seconded by DeWeese:

To direct the City Clerk to coordinate with DPS and Creative Collaborations to schedule an arborist to assess and recommend future planting sites in Greenwood Cemetery and to include all members of the GCAB in the consultation.

VOTE: Yeas, 7
Nays, 0

VI. REPORTS

- A. Financial Reports
- B. Cemetery Sales & Activity
- C. Clerk's Office Update

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

There were no public comments.

VIII. BOARD COMMENTS

Chair Buchanan noted that the Cemetery has more full burials versus cremations than the national average. She also asked City Clerk Bingham to determine with DPS what the purpose of the pole and chain is in Section F, and to see if it might be replaced with a sign or a more attractive barrier.

Ms. Suter recommended the Commission consider receiving a presentation from the company that spoke to the GCAB in 2018 or 2019 about ground penetrating radar so the Commission might get a better sense of what the process is.

City Clerk Bingham said she might be able to fold such a presentation in to a more general workshop for the Commission on GCAB topics.

¹ As updated at the March 5, 2021 meeting.

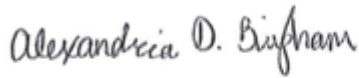
Museum Director Pielack provided a brief overview of the Museum's research on the Taylors, the first African-American couple to be buried in Greenwood Cemetery.

Chair Buchanan said she read an article recently regarding 'unmarked' graves, and said that in actuality some graves considered unmarked may have been marked with wooden markers which would have eventually disintegrated.

IX. ADJOURN

Ms. Buchanan adjourned the meeting at 11:42 AM.

Next meeting: March 5, 2021



Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk
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