

**CEMETERY COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

July 16, 2009

5:00 P.M.

Engineering/Planning Conference Room, City Hall

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ray Geigel  
Dennis Schneider  
Jerry Waak  
John Zabel

**STAFF PRESENT**

Derek Muench  
Sandy Ronski  
Valerie Mellon

**OTHERS**

R. Geigel called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

**Approval of the Minutes from May 14, 2009**

D. Schneider made a motion to approve the minutes. J. Waak seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**Results of Civil War Veterans Cemetery Walk**

D. Muench told the Commission members that he considered the Civil War Veterans Cemetery Walk on Memorial Day successful. He estimated 400 – 500 people attended. The weather was good, but a little windy for the tent. Some students were even given extra credit for attending the Walk. The Manitowoc County Civil War Round Table would be willing to assist with the event again next year. Although there was not a lot of interest in cemetery lots or niches on Memorial Day itself, the Tuesday after Memorial Day was very busy in the office.

**Progress of Memorial Tree Program**

D. Muench explained that we had sent out a mailing in mid-May that included a Memorial Tree brochure as well as information for the Cemetery Walk. He passed out a copy of an e-mail from S. Ronski showing the results of the Memorial Tree Program to date (14 sales). The program is going very well although Brandt's Family Tree has not been able to supply the trees as timely as we need them. Most people have purchased the gold package with the larger, granite stone.

**Update on chapel**

Plans for the chapel were approved by the Planning Commission last evening, so next week the ad for bidding the project will go out. D. Muench passed out a copy of an e-mail showing the timetable for the project. He read some of the provisions and conditions for the project, such as the contractor will not be permitted to work on the project when a funeral service is being conducted in the cemetery. The final completion date is October 31, 2009. When construction is complete, DPW will do the flat work around it and inside of it. The bid does not include landscaping. We may be able to do some of the landscaping in fall, depending on the completion date and the results of the bid. The plans for the Chapel went through the Public Property Commission, as well as being voted on by the Common Council.

The Council then put it to the Planning Commission, so the plans have been approved by three committees.

#### **Review decision to have only cremation spaces in section X if chapel is built**

D. Muench passed out a map of section X showing it laid out for cremation-only spaces. He thinks that we need a section that is just for cremations with the opportunity to make this more of a garden-type section by the chapel. He suggested selling the spaces in section X for \$500 (currently traditional spaces sell for \$700 and cremation-only spaces in other sections sell for \$400). The plan is to lay out the waterlines in section X yet this year, so that this section is ready to go next spring. Our intention would be to start selling spaces north of the chapel to see how well the cremation-only spaces sell. If they do not go over well, we could open up the area south of the chapel for traditional burials. The cremation-only spaces will be 40" wide by 5' long (1/2 the length of a traditional space). Two cremations will be allowed on each space.

D. Schneider likes the idea of a cremation-only section (which he says is long overdue), but he thinks that having the entire section X for cremations seems like too large of an area. He would like to open up the north portion for cremation-only spaces and not lay out the area south of the chapel at this time. In August of 2007, the Cemetery Commission approved a motion to open up the first two rows of the northeast section of X for flush markers on the cremation-only spaces. J. Zabel made a motion to open up the north portion of section X for cremation-only spaces and leave the area south of the chapel undeveloped. R. Geigel questioned whether we are going to continue with plans for flush markers. J. Zabel said that in Wildwood, they have the first four rows for flush markers and then upright markers beyond that. D. Schneider seconded the motion made by J. Zabel. Motion carried unanimously.

D. Schneider said that in the past, the cemetery employees installed the waterline. However, the cemetery no longer has as many employees as in the past. Since the waterlines are blown out before winter, they don't need to be below the frost line. In the older sections, the waterlines are really deep (some are down 6'). D. Schneider said laying out the waterline took a while, and he didn't think the employees have time to do that anymore.

J. Zabel questioned if we charge for second right of interment. S. Ronski said that we currently charge \$100. R. Geigel questioned if people were only allowed two cremations. S. Ronski said that if the space was purchased in 2006 or later that is the case. For spaces purchased earlier, we still charge for the second right of interment, but we don't have the limit of two per space. This fee is being charged on top of the opening and closing fee. D. Muench said that you can look at this two ways. On the other hand, you are generating more revenue on the same space and leaving another spot open for some one else to pay full price on. This way you are not expanding the cemetery as fast and reducing the maintenance by having less markers to trim around. J. Zabel thinks the second right of interment is cheap.

#### **Memorial benches**

D. Muench said that we are again exploring the idea of selling granite memorial benches in sections Q and X. They would be anchored to the cement. In 2008, our cost for the benches was estimated to be \$325. In the chapel, we could lay them out like church pews or make a circle pattern. J. Zabel indicated that he could sell the same type of bench. He felt that we could sell them for \$500 to \$750. D. Muench felt that it would be something nice to kick off

in spring, especially if we do another cemetery walk and can do a mailing about both things at once.

#### **“No dogs” signs**

D. Muench received a complaint from a local citizen who was irate that dogs were allowed to walk in the cemetery, and the citizen threatened to go on Open Mic, call the Mayor, etc. if D. Muench didn't handle it. The cemetery staff has noticed an increase in dog poop on the ground, baggies with dog poop in the port-a-potty, etc. The policy was never amended in our Rules & Regulations booklet, which states that live animals are not allowed in the cemetery.

Jamie Lee, previous Cemetery Manager, had the cemetery staff take the signs down, but it was never approved by the Cemetery Commission. J. Lee did that in order to generate sales. D. Muench would like to have the signs put back up. He doesn't feel that dogs belong in the cemetery. Right now, it's difficult to enforce the policy without the signs.

D. Schneider doesn't think it looks right for dogs to lift their leg and pee on someone's headstone or flowers. R. Geigel explained which parks in the City allow dog walking. He feels that we will not be encouraging sales for pet cremations by not allowing dog walking in the cemetery. V. Mellon said that walking the dogs on the cemetery road is one thing, but she would feel bad if a dog came and peed on her father's stone. D. Muench said that it's a case where a few people have ruined it for the rest. It's too difficult to enforce keeping them on the road versus the grass. You're just better off keeping them out altogether.

J. Waak suggested the signs would be more effective if a reference to the City Ordinance number was listed on the sign. D. Schneider said that the old signs said “No pets allowed” in order not to discriminate just against dog owners and were at the entrances. D. Muench said that he would have no problem getting some additional signs made with a reference to the City ordinance in smaller lettering.

#### **Other business**

J. Waak wanted to comment that he felt the landscaping that was done by section Q is very nice. The trees were trimmed up and hostas were planted underneath in a bed of woodchips. J. Waak said that it not only opens up the section but dresses it up. D. Muench said it was an inexpensive project, since the hostas were free. A cemetery employee was at the recycling center where someone had discarded them.

S. Ronski said that we also sold our first vase for the columbarium. J. Waak said that it looks very nice. It can be seen from the main road into the cemetery.

*The next meeting date will be August 20<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m. R. Geigel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. D. Schneider seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:09 P.M.*

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Derek Muench, Cemetery Manager