

**CEMETERY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

September 10, 2009

5:00 P.M.

Engineering/Planning Conference Room, City Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ray Geigel
Dennis Harrigan
Ted Dirkman
Jerry Waak
John Zabel

STAFF PRESENT

Derek Muench
Sandy Ronski
Valerie Mellon

OTHERS

R. Geigel called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

Approval of the minutes from August 20, 2009

T. Dirkman made a motion to approve the minutes. R. Geigel seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Update on chapel

D. Muench told the Commission members that in order to work with the lowest bidder to reduce the cost, we would need to be under the \$25,000 bid threshold. He said they met with Gene Maloney, and the pergola idea, with an open air top, was suggested. The bank is on board with the idea, but we will need to re-submit a plan for it. Gene will provide a design for this at no charge, since none of the bids came in under \$30,000. The pergola is estimated to cost \$15,000-\$20,000. We could then take the \$6,600 for the design from the trust. That would leave a substantial amount left over for landscaping, seating or a permanent podium or altar. Gene said that bushes or stone vases would be a cheaper way to make a "wall" than to have a stone wall. The pergola could have vines growing on it.

R. Geigel questioned why we need to have steel for the chapel. He said that he was really disappointed and suggested that maybe we should go with a different architect. D. Muench said that we already have \$6,600 invested in this, and theirs was the only bid that we received to do the design. V. Mellon told the commission that at this point, we rejected all bids, because they were all over our budget. R. Geigel suggested we contact the Home Builders Association. T. Dirkman said that Gene has to remember who the boss is, and if we are telling him that we don't want steel, Ted doesn't know how Gene can say that he's not doing it. We just want an all wood structure.

D. Muench said that if we can find someone to do the pergola for less than \$25,000, then we don't need to go out for bids. R. Geigel said the whole point of the chapel was for it to be an open air structure but with a roof on it. D. Muench said that he bank wants to release the trust funds, and he suggested that maybe we could sign some sort of contract committing to construction of the chapel that we may have a chance of getting the funds and be able to prolong this process. The construction is most likely not going to happen this fall, but rather next spring. T. Dirkman suggested contacting home builders to construct the chapel using

Gene's plan but with different materials. He suggested contacting Bach on Rapids Rd., since he specializes in fences, gazebos, & pergolas. *R. Geigel left at 5:20.*

D. Muench recommended going with the partial brick wall for the pergola, because it defines the area. T. Dirkman agreed with going with the brick if we do a pergola. He thinks it would look pretty there. D. Muench said he didn't have a problem with the pergola, since he doesn't think that people will use an open air chapel during the winter or when it rains. He doesn't think the roof serves a significant importance right now.

V. Mellon said that Gene had asked for a couple of weeks, and he would come back to us with some well thought out ideas, so she proposed that the Commission meet again in two weeks regarding this issue so she could bring back his ideas with some good cost estimates. One of Gene's samples the Commission was shown cost \$22,000 for the kit with the stone walls, delivered but without erection. T. Dirkman thinks that we could get a cheaper or better pergola built locally if it was not from a kit. He thinks it should be built from a spec. D. Muench said that if we weigh our options, we are sacrificing a roof, but we are getting a brick wall, and he thinks that is a good substitution. V. Mellon said she is not sure what the Commission members really want. T. Dirkman said that Gene's structure was nice, but that the price was too high. Gene overbuilt it. If Gene knew the steel was going to be expensive, he should have looked for a different product to put in there or eliminated something else. D. Muench said that Gene was very adamant on the steel.

J. Waak questioned the Commission members and asked how they foresee the structure being used. D. Harrigan said that due to the limited size of the structure, there are only a limited number of people that are going to be able to be underneath it. He said that when people go to the cemetery, they want to go to the actual burial site. He said that for burials in the cremation only section, people will use the chapel. D. Muench feels that the biggest users of the chapel will be the walkers that are in the cemetery each day. T. Dirkman and J. Waak thought that putting the structure over the columbariums would enhance them and help them to sell. J. Zabel thought that would make the area too congested. T. Dirkman said that if we want to have a chapel for services, then it should have a roof. V. Mellon said that the chapel will be a feature of section X that people will use (instead of having just a plain section) and that people will pay a premium to be buried in a garden area. The chapel will be a meditation area. D. Harrigan said that the pergola will cater to the cremation only section, otherwise people who have burials on the east side will probably not travel to the west side of the cemetery to use the chapel.

D. Muench envisions putting an "altar" in the chapel to place the cremations on or possibly putting in benches. There will probably be a posted sign along the walkway or on the chapel recognizing the chapel as the Donald & Eunice Dow Memorial Chapel.

J. Zabel suggested that we follow V. Mellon's suggestion to meet again in two weeks. T. Dirkman asked if he could get a copy of the original plans for bidding.

View map of proposed layout of section X with waterlines & possibly vote on layout

V. Mellon showed the Commission members an aerial view map of section X, and explained that Steve Kipping, from the Engineering Department, had laid out the waterlines on the computer in a couple of different options. The waterline shifts over depending on what layout is chosen. Because we don't know how well the spaces will sell, D. Muench said that

the best way to layout the section is to put cremation only spaces north of the chapel and traditional spaces south of the chapel, which puts a bend in the waterline. If we want, we can always make the traditional spaces into cremation only spaces, since each traditional space is the same length as two cremation only spaces. There would be more wasted space if we laid it out as cremation only and then converted to traditional spaces. The waterline will effect how the section is laid out. S. Ronski said that the row of markers north of the chapel will not line up with the row of markers south of the chapel. D. Muench said that if we decide to do traditional burials south of the chapel, then the rows won't line up anyway. D. Muench said that we would like to get this in during the fall yet. T. Dirkman made a motion to layout the section for cremation only spaces north of the chapel and traditional spaces south of the chapel. J. Zabel seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

V. Mellon said that she has been talking to the City Attorney about the ability to sell lots in X if we do not have a certified survey. It is her impression that we cannot sell lots until we have a certified survey. T. Dirkman said that the only way you can do that is to set up a trust until the certified survey is done. V. Mellon said that in the past we have never had a certified survey done. The cemetery has generally been laid out by cemetery or engineering personnel. Steve Kipping brought this issue to V. Mellon's attention, since it is in the Wisconsin State Statutes. T. Dirkman said that some places have been grandfathered in. T. Dirkman recommended that we go with a certified surveyor, since it takes liability off of the City. He said that the surveyor may let the employees put in a certain number of pins. T. Dirkman said that you could look into the code and see if municipal cemeteries are exempt or not. *J. Waak left at 6:03.*

2010 fees

D. Muench said that we are proposing to raise some fees in order to make our 2010 budget work. He is proposing to raise the Saturday surcharge from \$100 to \$150, since Saturday burials seem to be increasing. Per J. Zabel's suggestion, D. Muench is proposing to increase the surcharge for two or more interments on one space from \$100 to \$150. Since the cost of cement and other costs are increasing, he also proposes increasing the foundation fees from \$95 to \$105 for a single and from \$145 to \$160 for a double.

T. Dirkman suggested charging half the cost of the grave space for a second right of interment. D. Muench said that having additional burials on the same space helps the cemetery out by utilizing space that is already purchased. The faster we sell lots, the more maintenance there will be by having to trim around markers, etc. and the faster we will need to develop the new cemetery. You can maximize revenue by encouraging people to be buried on already purchased spaces and leave other spaces open for new families. D. Muench doesn't want to deter people from putting a second burial on a space but he also doesn't want people to get a bargain out of it.

T. Dirkman questioned how we were doing on the budget for 2009. S. Ronski indicated that lot sales are going okay, but burials are way down. D. Harrigan said that is because the death rate is down.

S. Ronski indicated that in 2008, we had 22 burials that incurred the second right of interment. J. Zabel said that he feels very firm about increasing that charge. D. Harrigan suggested making the Saturday surcharge \$200. The Commission could not vote on the changes to the fees, because there was no longer a quorum.

Other business

J. Zabel asked if the cemetery has been contacted by any private firms asking to take over the maintenance. D. Muench indicated that he had talked to someone at a convention last year, but he was not aware of anything recently.

The next meeting date will be September 24th at 5 p.m. T. Dirkman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. J. Zabel seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 6:15 P.M.

Derek Muench, Cemetery Manager