

**CEMETERY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

January 22, 2015

6:00 P.M.

Engineering/Planning Conference Room, City Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT

Ald. Jason Sladky
Ted Dirkman
John Bilka
Eric Zabel

STAFF PRESENT

Dan Koski
Chad Scheinoha
Sandy Ronski

OTHERS

Ald. Sladky called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of the minutes from January 23, 2014

J. Bilka made a motion to approve the minutes. E. Zabel seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

Annual election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

J. Sladky made a motion to nominate T. Dirkman as the Chairperson. T. Dirkman was unanimously approved as the Chairperson.

Ald. Sladky made a motion to nominate J. Bilka as the Vice-Chairperson. J. Bilka was unanimously approved as the Vice-Chairperson.

Payment Plans

S. Ronski passed out some possible guidelines for a cemetery payment plan drawn up by the DPI Business Manager, Karen Dorow. It would be tracked in the City's Springbrook program and could not be longer than one year in length. The Director of Public Infrastructure, Dan Koski, or his designee would approve the individual payment plans. A \$35 initial set up fee would be charged, and one-twelfth of the total would need to be paid as a downpayment, but there would not be any interest charged during the payment period. A \$100 cancellation fee would be withheld from the refund in the case of defaults, etc. The City would retain the rights to the space until it was paid in full, and the space would need to be paid in full before a burial was interred or a marker placed.

T. Dirkman suggested that in the future we could look to a third party to extend the payment plan out to three years. T. Dirkman made a motion to proceed with the payment plan as presented. Ald. Slady seconded the motion.

Annual Review of Cemetery Fees

S. Ronski passed out a sheet comparing some of the local cemetery fees. No changes to the current fee schedule were proposed or discussed.

Perpetual Care Fund & Future Expenditures

C. Scheinoha said that the Finance Department recommended that the cost of a lawnmower the cemetery budgeted for be taken from the perpetual care fund. C. Scheinoha asked the commission if the perpetual care funds could be used for water breaks in the cemetery.

T. Dirkman said that a perpetual care fund is typically set up to maintain the cemetery in the future when there is no revenue or land left, etc. The interest and opening/closing fees is typically what you work off of for operating expenses.

The balance in the fund in 2014 was \$30,614 and \$12,800 was taken out for the lawnmower. After some additional sales, the fund currently has a balance of \$21,904. Currently, 10% of every lot or niche sale goes into the perpetual care fund.

T. Dirkman asked if the lawnmower and water main breaks were budgeted for. D. Koski explained that the lawnmower did go into the City's entire list of capital items to allocate funds for, but did not make the cut.

T. Dirkman suggested that we look at the wording of what type of expenditures were allowed from the perpetual care fund, so that the cemetery could always maintain itself into the future. There was a discussion of possibly setting up an emergency fund to cover water line breaks. Ald. Sladky stated that it would be difficult to get any more special funds passed through Council. T. Dirkman stated we should try to save the perpetual care fund for the future as best we can. We already know that we will have future expenses to develop the "new" cemetery property.

Updates to the Rules and Regulations booklet

A booklet showing the proposed revisions was handed out to commission members. C. Scheinoha stated that a Business Process Improvement event was done for leaf pickup and some changes were suggested regarding the decorations on gravesites.

Discussions were held regarding the possibility of setting up a fund for pre-payment of opening /closing fees and regarding obtaining permission to place or add items to a marker if the person paying for the work is not the lot owner.

J. Bilka made a motion to approve the changes to the Rules & Regulations booklet as presented. Ald. Sladky seconded the motion. Ayes – Bilka, Sladky. Nays – Dirkman, Zabel.

T. Dirkman made a motion to strike the line prohibiting the collection of pre-paid opening/closing fees and adopt the remaining changes to the Rules & Regulations booklet as presented. J. Bilka suggested removing the length of the payment plan in order to open it up to the possibility of one with a longer time limit. T. Dirkman amended his motion to include striking the wording limiting the payment plan to one year. J. Bilka seconded the motion. Motion carried. Ayes – Bilka, Dirkman, Sladky. Nays – Zabel.

Memorial Bench Program

S. Ronski explained that cemetery staff is attempting to create a memorial bench program (similar to the cemetery's memorial tree program) to have customers purchase granite benches to be placed at the Donald V. & Eunice E. Dow Memorial Chapel in section X and by the columbariums in section Q. The cemetery staff would like all the benches to be the

same. They anticipate selling 24 benches over the next 10-20 years. T. Dirkman suggested a park bench style looking bench by the columbarium and a flat bench by the chapel. C. Scheinoha said he talked to the City Attorney about whether or not we could go with one supplier. The Attorney said that we should not be referring customers to one supplier unless they were the low quoter for the project.

E. Zabel said that he would be willing to take on the customer service aspect of selling the benches and make a “donation” to the cemetery’s perpetual care fund at the end of the year based on a percentage of the sales. That way, he said that he can dictate his price and not compete with anyone, and the cemetery does not need to spend the time on sales. D. Koski said that we would need to get this approved by the City Attorney. T. Dirkman said that due to the conflict of interest with a Cemetery Commission member, we would probably have to put the project out for quotes. E. Zabel said that the prices could be adjusted annually, if needed. S. Ronski said that, if there was a different low quoter for the benches in X than the ones in Q, the quotes could be awarded separately for each section. T. Dirkman stated that the contracts should be one year in duration due to the fluctuation of prices.

T. Dirkman suggested bringing this issue back to the commission after picking out bench styles. He said that at his company they review every inscription that is done at their cemeteries. C. Scheinoha indicated that staff will work on this program to get some more detailed information for the quote. J. Bilka suggested that right to place a bench be sold for a certain amount and specifications be given for the bench. Individuals would then get their own provider, and they would be given suggested language that can be placed on the bench. Ald. Sladky stated the money for the spot could then be deposited into the perpetual care fund.

New Ideas to Fulfill the Commission’s Duty

T. Dirkman said that to get to where you want the cemetery to be, you have to compete with the private sector. Unless you sell another product, you have no where else to get money except from selling land or raising fees.

T. Dirkman said that there are management companies who would go out and sell spaces, but they are also going to want to sell the marker, the vault, the opening/closing fees, etc., and they will take a cut of those sales. They want the complete package in order to make money. Fort Howard does that in Green Bay. If we don’t think like that, then we are just going to continue down the same old road. Another option would be to do some sort of fundraising.

C. Scheinoha asked about advertising. T. Dirkman thought that Calvary and Knollwood did most of their advertising around Memorial Day, although they may do some through the local churches. Ald. Sladky asked about advertising at a funeral home at the time of need. S. Ronski said that the 5-year average for immediate need lot sales was 35%. T. Dirkman said that there is a state law that funeral homes and cemeteries have to be separated, so you have to be careful about giving the funeral home incentives to send customers to Evergreen Cemetery.

Adjournment

Ald. Sladky made a motion to adjourn the meeting. J. Bilka seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:33 P.M.