

Cemetery Advisory Board Meeting

March 4, 2015

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Groat at 4:30 p.m.

Present: Brodie Rockenbaugh-Parks and Grounds Superintendent, Carolyn Steepe-Public Service Clerk, Donald Boerger, Vicki McKinnon, Bill McKinnon, and Jack Groat.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes for the meeting on December 3, 2014 were approved as submitted.

Agenda:

Rates, Perpetual Care Fund, Long Term Land Acquisition:

Mrs. Groat said from our meeting in December that we have decided our money would best be spent in a Land Acquisition fund rather than Perpetual Care Fund. Mr. Rockenbaugh asked how you want to go through the Strategic Plan. Mrs. Groat said to submit his suggested changes to Mrs. Jones for her to correct and then send out to us for review and then we will discuss it. Mrs. Groat asked if that would save time. Mr. Rockenbaugh said he believes so, because it was very time consuming to review.

Mr. Rockenbaugh asked if everyone had a chance to look at the rates. Mrs. Groat said we did, and we talked about the tone will be that residents not pay any more than they are paying, except to even out that some areas are arbitrarily more valuable than others. She said that is one goal of this committee is to keep rates extremely reasonable for residents. Mr. Rockenbaugh said one of the things that Ms. Steepe does on a regular basis is work with lot sales. Mr. Rockenbaugh said there are some things that he and Ms. Steepe have noticed and would like to verify. Mr. Rockenbaugh asked Ms. Steepe to speak on some of the things that she has noticed and brought up to Mr. Rockenbaugh and they have discussed with Mr. Andrako.

Ms. Steepe said the resident rates and the nonresident rates are pretty decent. Resident rates run from \$300.00 to \$500.00 and nonresident rates run from \$400.00 to \$600.00 for a single lot. Our opening and closing costs are \$400.00. If it is an overtime rate or Saturday it is \$550.00. We charge \$175.00 for cremation opening and closing. In the new sections we are going to have special places for cremations. She said most of the time people will buy a single lot and put more than one cremation remains on it. You can put up to three on it, so it is really more cost effective. The opening and closing for that would be \$175.00, unless it is a Saturday which is \$225.00. She said in the area where they have the infants there are still 86 spaces available, and we only charge \$225.00 for the land, opening and closing and a marker. She does not feel that we charge enough for that area. Mrs. Groat asked if Ms. Steepe would like a motion to raise the rates in the infant lot. Mrs. Groat told Mr. Rockenbaugh it would then go to Finance Committee with the recommendation from the Committee. Mrs. Groat asked Ms. Steepe what her

recommendation for raising the rates would be. Ms. Steepe said she would recommend raising the rates in the infant area to \$300.00 from \$225.00. Ms. Steepe said she would just like us to recoup a little more of the cost than we are actually getting. Mr. McKinnon asked if that would recoup the costs. Ms. Steepe said it would be pretty close because you are talking about a 2ft. by 2ft. section. She said it does not take as long to dig it and to fill it in as a regular plot. Mr. Rockenbaugh said if you look at the cost it basically pays for the opening and closing, but not the cost of the land it is deeded to. Mrs. Groat asked if we have a program for a needy family or for a way that we can do a payment program or do you work aggressively to help people who are in a financial need? Ms. Steepe said it really has not come up that we have had a problem with that, sometimes we do wait for the insurance company to pay off. The funeral home will guarantee that we will get paid, and then when the insurance money comes in. She said we do work with families in that respect. We do not expect them to fork it all out if there is insurance money that will take care of it.

Mrs. Groat said she is looking for a motion to approve the increase for the infant lot to \$300.00. Mr. McKinnon said he makes the motion, Mrs. McKinnon seconded the motion. Rev. Groat asked how deep they do you dig for an infant burial. Ms. Steepe said you are still going at least 3 feet down. Rev. Groat asked so you are still using the backhoe. Ms. Steepe said yes. Rev. Groat said whereas with cremation you use a shovel. Mr. Rockenbaugh said correct. Mrs. Groat asked if there were any more concerns about the motion on the floor. She said we are talking about moving the 86 infant spaces from \$225.00 to \$300.00 total fee, (opening/closing, marker, and land). Ms. Steepe added there is no distinction between resident and nonresident. Mr. Boerger asked if this would be ok. He is concerned about the cemetery losing money. He said even though the time of death is sad, it is still a business. He asked Ms. Steepe, if she was ok with keeping the rate the same between the resident and nonresident. Ms. Steepe said she does because we so seldom use them. She said for the amount of time we use those spaces, it does not make a difference. Mr. Rockenbaugh said this is more of a community need. Mrs. Groat said you will not find people out shopping around for cemeteries for an infant.

Mrs. Groat said all those in favor of raising the rates of the 86 infant plots available from \$225.00 to \$300.00 say "aye". Everyone voted "aye".

Mr. Rockenbaugh said they wanted to also discuss disinterment. The City currently charges between \$500.00 and \$550.00. Mr. Rockenbaugh said it takes a lot of work to remove the vaults. Ms. Steepe added that they have to be hand dug; you cannot use a backhoe on it. Mr. Rockenbaugh said the average rate for other cities for disinterment is \$956.00 for residents and \$1,028.00 for nonresidents. Our rates are \$300 for residents and \$400.00 nonresidents. Mr. Rockenbaugh said the process to do this does not vary that much from city to city. Ms. Steepe said she feels that they should double the rates for this to \$600 for resident and \$800 for nonresident. Mrs. Groat asked on what basis, manpower? Mr. Rockenbaugh and Ms. Steepe both answered yes. Mrs. Groat said that the manpower required for this, these numbers would be a break even amount? Mr. Rockenbaugh said yes. Rev. Groat asked what kind of lift is used to get the vault out of the grave. Mr. Rockenbaugh could not comment on that, but said you are talking about

having to get up underneath the vault to remove it. Mrs. Groat asked how often do we have these disinterment, she said a ball park figure? Ms. Steepe said we had one last year in 2014. Mrs. Groat said so we are not talking about big volumes. Ms. Steepe said no, we are not. Rev. Groat said he feels that we should raise it to \$1,000.00. Mr. McKinnon asked why the difference between resident and nonresident; he thinks we should make it across the board the same thing. Mr. Rockenbaugh said that is a very valid point. Mr. McKinnon said the labor does not change based on whether they are a resident or not.

Rev. Groat said he would like to make a motion to raise the disinterment to \$1,200.00, Mrs. McKinnon seconded the motion. Mrs. Groat asked for any more discussion, and asked if this is ok with Mr. Rockenbaugh. Mr. Rockenbaugh said yes. Mr. McKinnon asked if a law enforcement agency has to disinter a body, who pays for it? Mr. Rockenbaugh was not sure.

Mrs. Groat asked all in favor of raising the disinterment rate to \$1,200.00, say "aye". Everyone voted "aye".

Ms. Steepe said you would not want to charge \$1,200.00 for cremation disinterment. She asked if you would want to set a price for cremation disinterment. Mrs. Groat said she does not see that is the same. She feels that they should keep the charge of \$175.00 for the disinterment of cremains. Mr. Rockenbaugh said it is all new ground for him. Mrs. Groat said we can always go back and re-discuss any of this.

Mr. Rockenbaugh said the next topic they would like to discuss is location specification of Our Lady of Lords. He said in the Strategic Plan it references for St. John's Catholic Cemetery, and we have always referred to it as our Lady of Lords Catholic Cemetery. Mrs. Groat said she would suggest Mr. Rockenbaugh speak with other staff people and change that language because St. John's is Lutheran. Rev. Groat said St. John's could be Catholic. He said if you stop to think about it Our Lady of Lords is the Lady of Fatima, a recent Saint. He said they might have had a St. John's and renamed this congregation after the new Saint. Mr. Rockenbaugh said they will contact the Catholic Church. Mrs. Groat said since we do not own that Cemetery we do not service them correct? Ms. Steepe said they sell their own lots but we do the opening and closing for them.

Ms. Steepe said there are restricted areas in the Cemetery that you cannot use only for cremains. We have no pricing on them. They are where a drive way has come in and the lot is only big enough for cremains. Mrs. Groat asked Ms. Steepe to come to the next meeting with Mr. Rockenbaugh, and to look up how many of these "restricted" lots we have. Ms. Steepe said she would be happy to do that.

Mr. Rockenbaugh said he had a chance to go to Lakeview Cemetery in Cleveland and Ms. Steepe went to Woodlawn Cemetery. We were able to see the columbarium. He said he would like to research how much a columbarium costs. Rev. Groat asked what columbariums are. Mr. Rockenbaugh said they are decorative walls that you put the cremains in. Mr. Rockenbaugh said the ones in Lakeview were very nice, granite and

very nicely landscaped, like a memorial garden. Mr. Rockenbaugh said we have certain areas in the Cemetery that this would work really well at. Mrs. Groat asked if it was a wall or something you walk into like a mausoleum. Mr. Rockenbaugh said they were not a mausoleum, the ones in Lakeview were in the shape of an "I" and on each side of it you had access to the cremains. He said there is a place for people to put flowers in the wall, and there is a memorial plaque. Mrs. Groat asked if we were still at the planning stages of the new area of the cemetery that we could do that. Mr. Rockenbaugh said he believes that we would look at areas in the current cemetery and use what we have.

Mr. Rockenbaugh said he is not sure how the things will go in the future whether we need to build up or out. Mr. Boerger said with the green burial, he researched different prices and different cities Master Plans. He went through all those cities that are in the packet that we are equal with and researched their Master Plans. He said a lot of cities are doing the walls, but they are only pillars. The walls only come up waist high on a person.

Mrs. Groat asked what this the group's feelings on a more cremains friendly area? Mr. McKinnon said it is going to come to that. Mrs. Groat asked Mr. Rockenbaugh to continue to review the columbarium. Mrs. Groat also said pricing might be good to research. How do you price the different levels of the columbarium. Ms. Steepe said she went to Woodlawn Cemetery in Dayton that has full body and cremains. She said in some of theirs they would go all the way up the wall. They had stands in the center covered in glass so you could actually see the urns and occasionally someone would put a picture in there. She said there are a lot of different ways you can do this.

Mrs. Groat asked about the vandalism aspect. Ms. Steepe said she did not see any where they were dealing with vandalism; the mausoleum was big and they have added on to it a couple times; it had stain glass windows. Mr. Rockenbaugh said same with Lakeview; it was a large area and it was confined.

Mrs. Groat asked Mr. Rockenbaugh to keep in mind cost effectiveness but to continue his research.

Ms. Steepe said another thing that they have talked about is a sprinkle garden. This would be an area where people sprinkle their ashes, and maybe we take a donation of x amount of dollars or maybe people want to donate a bench or a tree for this area. Mrs. Groat said a sprinkle garden with donation is a beautiful thought. Mrs. Groat asked if there was in the new part that we haven't opened yet- a place where the sprinkle garden would make sense, over where the cremains are being placed. Ms. Steepe said that would be a really good space because there are still some infant spaces there and the cremains spaces. She said we know we are not going to need that many infant spaces, so that would be a place. She said there are some mature trees close by the area. Mrs. Groat asked if she could hear from the committee, do you like a sprinkle garden? Mr. Boerger said it could be a beautiful area. Rev. Groat said he could see Master Gardener's doing something in that area. Mr. Rockenbaugh said they have worked close with the Master Gardeners and they are always looking for a project. Mr. Rockenbaugh said it could be a

very nice area as long as everything is thought out. He said that this is in our goals of making the cemetery more than a park: a place where people can go to see different species of trees, reflect on their loved ones, and just have quiet reflection.

Mrs. Groat said we had talked about the service for the mowing of the cemetery, what is the status? Mr. Rockenbaugh said we just saw a purchase order issued to Ameriscapes, so we are locked into that this year. Mrs. Groat asked when they will start. Ms. Steepe said give or take April. Mr. Rockenbaugh said probably in April.

Mrs. Groat said we need to figure out the following information:

1. If law enforcement disinters who pays.
2. Work on restricted lots for cremains.
3. The cost and structure of columbariums
4. Concept of a sprinkle garden within the space we allocated for cremains
5. Strategic Planning revision.

Mrs. Groat asked if Mr. Rockenbaugh and Ms. Steepe could setup a time for the committee to tour the cemetery at the convenience of their staff prior to Memorial Day.

The next meeting for the Cemetery Advisory Board will be June 3, 2015 at 4:30 p.m.

Mr. Rockenbaugh said May 6, 2015 at 3:45pm to tour the Cemetery. The Committee will meet at the office Cemetery.

Adjournment: Mrs. Groat adjourned the meeting at 5:35pm.