

Cemetery Advisory Board Meeting

June 3, 2015

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

Present: Brodie Rockenbaugh-Parks and Grounds Superintendent, Mike Andrako-Public Service Director, Donald Boerger, Vicki McKinnon, Bill McKinnon, and Dave Cook.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes for the meeting on March 3, 2015 were approved as submitted.

Agenda:

Long Term Financial Planning:

Land Acquisition. Mrs. Groat said long term financial planning is a passion of Mr. Emery. It was one of the reasons that Cemetery Advisory Committee was brought back together after several years. Mr. Emery and I are on the same page with starting a long term planning financial item for the budget. This committee will finalize how this planning will be completed. Mr. Emery explained to Mrs. Groat that Council would have to approve expenditures out of that fund. She said maybe with the recommendation of this board. She said there would not be any raise in rates but there would be a line item to start accumulating over the next couple of years. Mr. McKinnon asked if that is where the money would come from. Mrs. Groat said it would come from standard budget general funds. Mr. Andrako explained that the code currently states that the charge for existing rates needs to be put into a maintenance fund. He said we are changing the maintenance fund into a land acquisition fund. We are going to put the 10% into that fund; which we have been doing. Mr. Andrako said we have stopped using the maintenance fund a few years ago, and just included into the Parks & Grounds budget. When we started doing that we stopped taking the 10% and putting into that fund again. The fund currently has roughly \$10,000.00. He said we will continue to add to that fund, but at some point they will create a new fund called land acquisition fund and move everything to that fund. Mr. Andrako said right now we do have a holding place for the money. It is not in with the general fund, it is its own fund and we are currently putting 10% of all lot sales into the fund. Mrs. Groat said the money will not be available for at least 25 years down the road.

Mrs. Groat said we are almost ready to send the suggested rate changes to Council. She asked Mr. Andrako give an update on the status of the rate changes. Mr. Andrako said he was not in attendance at the last Cemetery Advisory meeting but the information he was given was it was the Advisory Boards wish to increase the cost for infant lots. He said currently we have lots that are too small to be a normal lot, and there is no way to charge people for those grave sites. For those grave sites we created a residents and non-residents fee. The resident fee would be \$100.00 and the non-resident fee would be \$200.00. Mr. Reams suggested that the non-residents fee be increase to \$400.00, his thinking was that \$200.00 was still not enough to keep non-residents from shopping

around. Mr. Andrako said the lots are not big enough to do a full body, so we have approximately 80 lots for infant burials. He said we only do two or three a year, so the 80 should last us a long time, and this would give us the ability to charge for those.

Mr. Andrako said the second suggestion that he understood from the notes of last meeting was the disinterment fees are the same as the opening and closing fees. The disinterment, if we ever had to remove it, we would have to dig down by hand, we cannot use equipment. We use equipment for the opening and closing of a grave, but disinterment is done by hand. He pulled the disinterment fees and compared them with other cities. The resident fee mean was \$956.00 and ours is currently \$300.00. He made the recommendation that the disinterment fees be increase from \$300.00 to \$950.00. Mrs. Groat asked if that had gone before the Finance Committee. Mr. Andrako answered yes, that is where Mr. Reams made the recommendation for the raise in the infant burial. He said Finance Committee was good with the other suggested rate changes.

Mr. Andrako said the disinterment and the infant burials were the two changes. The third change was the foundations. Mr. Ingram said that our foundations were a lot cheaper than what they needed to be, and the City should be charging more for those. Mr. Andrako did a comparison with other cities, and the average was \$.057 per square inch, so we would like to change ours to \$0.55 per square inch, with a minimum charge being \$150.00 (based on a standard size). Mr. Ingram was in agreement with that change, so Mr. Andrako made that change.

Mr. Andrako said in talking with Mrs. Groat, we decided before bringing this to Council, that each of the Advisory members review the suggested changes in the handout. He said we will revisit this in August, before we go forward. The last thing he wants to do is bring multiple revisions to Council. Mrs. Groat said the cemetery looks great and with the mowing through the summer, it will continue to look like this. She said whatever we talk about doing today, will be postponed until August/September.

Mr. McKinnon asked if Mr. Aslaner answered who pays for disinterment when a Law Enforcement agency is requesting it. Mrs. Groat said Mr. Aslaner said it is the agency who asked for the disinterment.

No one could remember the last time a disinterment was performed.

Mr. Cook said the Cemetery looked good for Memorial Day. He has seen a lot of head stones being knocked off and put back up. This is the worst year since 1988, so whoever is mowing needs to slow down and pay attention. Mr. Rockenbaugh said they will address that with the company.

Mr. Cook said General Beightler is buried out there, and Rev. Jack Groat has had a special flag made and would like to put it out there. Based on the size of the flag the shrub would have to remove in order to fit and based on the new rules that come in if it would even be allowed, because it is going to have to be concreted in so it is not stolen. He is not sure if this committee should be hearing this or if he should talk to the Cemetery

staff. Mrs. Groat said she was not sure where the location he was talk about was. Mr. Cook said it was on the back section facing the freeway. Mrs. Groat restated Mr. Cook's question if the shrub could be removed and if the flag Rev. Groat made could be placed where the shrub is now. Mrs. Groat asked if it has already been created. Mr. Cook and Mrs. McKinnon answered yes, it is very nice. Mr. Cook said Rev. Groat had it made to show a two star flag on his grave at all times, since he was a two star General in World War II. Mr. Rockenbaugh asked Mr. Cook to send him the dimensions and a couple pictures so he could look at it. Mr. Cook said after he picks it up he will bring it to Mr. Rockenbaugh to look at. Mrs. Groat said if that cannot be allowed, do we have exceptions? Mr. Cook said once you take out the first shrub the second will look off center. He said they would have to get with family and see what they would like done, or just take out both shrubs. Mr. Boerger asked if the family was aware of the flag being built. Mr. Cook said no, it was something Rev. Groat thought up on his own, and after it was built realized it was a lot bigger than what he intended. Mrs. Groat asked Mr. Rockenbaugh to research this issue. Mr. Rockenbaugh agreed to look into it.

Mr. Rockenbaugh distributed a handout to the Board members. He said it is a list of items that he and Carolyn Steepe have been working. He said there are plots that they are getting ready to sell. During Memorial Day weekend, he was checking the cemetery and had a lot of people approach him. He took their information and passed it along to Ms. Steepe and she has a growing list. They have started removing shrubs outside of the rules that they talked about. Mr. Rockenbaugh discussed the sprinkle garden which was a topic that was brought up at the previous meeting.

Mr. Andrako praised Ms. Steepe for her interest in the Cemetery and the amount of time she is putting into the Cemetery is really benefiting the City. He encourages her to do as much research and learn as much about the cemetery that she can. She is becoming our resident expert. Mr. Rockenbaugh said her interaction with questions and if he has a question, he will usually go to Ms. Steepe. He said she has trained him on selling the plots and the deeds. She has a great ability to interact with people and diffuse situations when needed.

Mr. Andrako said he was at the service at Memorial Day, and whoever was the mc brought up Lane Stillings being Mr. Rockenbaugh's predecessor. He would like to get that changed. Mr. Cook said he is vice-chairman of the committee and will get it changed.

Mr. Boerger said some places do historical markers, which are just little plaques that are placed on the tombstone. He said he would think that you would call families and asked if they would like this done they need to pay for it. He was not sure who does that. Mr. Rockenbaugh said there are probably very special and unique stories that tie into people buried there. Mr. Boerger said that is where community pride starts is in the history, and if you do not have it, then you do not have community pride.

Mrs. Groat said she would like to give Mr. Andrako and Mr. Rockenbaugh a few months, and for the Board to take the revisions that Mr. Andrako has given and be able to

say yea or nay. She asked if August or September would work better for them. Mr. Rockenbaugh said September. Mr. McKinnon said September 2 starts the Richwood Fair.

The next Cemetery Advisory Board meeting is Weds. September 9, 2015 at 4:30pm.

Adjournment: Mrs. Groat adjourned the meeting at 5:12pm.