

Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: May 16, 2024

Commissioners Present: Jennifer Diaz, Martha Dallas, Alexandra Millar, Mary Wesley (Nancy Kirby not present)

Staff Present: Holli Bushnell

Meeting was called to order 4:38pm at by Chair Jennifer Diaz

I. Approval of Agenda

Diaz moved to adopt the agenda, both Alexandra Millar and Mary Wesley moved to second, all were in favor

II. Approval of minutes from 4/18/2024

Diaz moved to approve the minutes, Millar seconded, all were in favor

III. Public Forum

Public forum was opened at 4:39pm. As no members of the public were present or wished to speak public forum was also closed at 4:39pm.

IV. Green Burials

Martha Dallas shared that she looked through her sub-committee notes and can provide the commission with information on where they left off. According to her notes, the sub-committee left off with a discussion of changing city ordinance so that vault is no longer required for full burial. The next step would be for the commission to recommend the change to the ordinance committee. At the time, too many questions came up regarding the change of the ordinance and what it would mean for burials and staff, and the commission wasn't ready to vote. Mary Wesley added that Cemetery and Grounds Manager Steve Bachand was able to have many of his questions answered when the subcommittee met with expert Lee Webster. Her sense, however, is that cemetery staff are concerned about removing vault ordinance and having that result in a landslide of green burial requests that can't be accommodated in areas of Lakeview that were never intended for the specialized type of burial.

Alexandra Millar added that the meeting with Webster was very productive for all present and lots of issues were discussed. Ultimately, she came away with the understanding that green burial will not be possible in any section without language change. The commission needs to



recommend the ordinance change, then the proposal goes to city attorney's office, the city council, the ordinance committee, and then finally back to the council for final approval.

Holli Bushnell shared that in there is a possibility that a full change to the ordinance may not be needed. A green burial area could be designated and the ordinance could be lifted for just that area, sparing staff their concerns about the rest of the cemetery.

Dallas asked that if Section 8 is going to have green burial accommodation she would like to get a better idea of the process for development. She asked that a timeline of work be provided as well as a plan for having section specific ordinances in place before it opens. Wesley concurred, asking for this to be an item for the next agenda. Dallas also felt that creating protocols and procedures for how Burlington handles green burial is going to be key. Wesley asked how those procedures are developed and if the commission should be involved or just act as support.

Dallas suggested contacting Patrick Healy at Green Mount in Montpelier as he as offered to consult with us on how they developed their green burial area.

V. Commission Report

Bushnell shared the draft she had generated of the Commission Report for FY2024. All commissioners provided feedback. Commissioners will sign the final draft at the next commission meeting. Millar asked if this was this supposed to happen every year, and Bushnell confirmed that it is a yearly requirement, but that the previous few years reports were sent to the council without signatures.

VI. Staff Updates

Bushnell updated the commission on the status of the annual flagging of veteran's graves before Memorial Day. She noted that several volunteers from previous years were not able to return and asked if any commissioners would be willing to step up and place flags. Dallas agreed to flag Elmwood Cemetery and Millar and Wesley will take the remaining sections at Lakeview.

VII. Commissioner Updates

Millar asked about commissioner stipends and Bushnell suggested contacting Lori Olberg at the Clerk/Treasurer's Office. Diaz asked about seasonal park passes for commissioners and Bushnell promised to look into it. Wesley reminded the commission that Preservation Burlington and the Friends of Lakeview will be holding an open chapel day and a cemetery tour on the Saturday before Memorial Day. She hopes to attend.

VIII. Adjournment

Diaz moved to adjourn, Dallas seconded, and all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 5:22pm. The next meeting will be held June 20, 2024 at 4:30pm, at a location TBD.