

Greenmount Cemetery Road Repair, September 15, 2015.

Photos from Deryk Roach:



Minutes of City Council Work Session

9/2/15

Councilors present: Jane Knodell, Selene Colburn, Adam Roof, Sara Giannoni, Tom Ayres, Kurt Wright, Sharon Bushor, Chip Mason, Karen Paul, Joan Shannon

Councilors absent: David Hartnett, Max Tracy

Others present: Eileen Blackwood (City Attorney), Mayor Miro Weinberger, Brian Lowe, Jennifer Kaulius, Alicia Freese, Charles Norris-Brown, Genese Grill, Paul Schnabel, Brian LeClair, Joe Speidel, Lainey Rappaport, April Werner, Deb Flanders, Matt McMahon, Allison Curran, Bradley Yandow, James Lockridge, Jean Waltz.

President Knodell called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm

Agenda—Wright moved to adopt with amendment of adding a public forum as item 1.5; Mason seconded. Unanimous.

Knodell made some initial remarks explaining the background of this meeting and the prior council's request to explore committees and how to handle them with two fewer councilors. It has been decided that each committee would not meet unless it had something to do. Each committee was to report items it wanted to work on, and tonight is for the rest of the council to give feedback on those ideas.

Public forum opened at 5:36.

Charles Norris-Brown spoke to Plan BTV South End and BCA involvement

Genese Grill spoke to citizen concerns and voice and governance of BCA

Lainie Rappaport came representing Cemetery Commission to ask that Cemetery Commission not be merged with Parks and asked Councilors to attend Commission's 9/17 meeting.

[Started recorder at 5:44 while Lainie Rappaport speaking]

Alison Curran is newest member of Cemetery Commission and spoke in opposition to merging Cemetery Commission into Parks.

James Lockridge spoke to governance of BCA and role of PACC

Closed at 5:50 pm.

2. Committee Reports: Priorities

Councilor Mason asked whether tonight is just hearing reports or weighing in on them. President Knodell responded that whole council is reviewing committee work plans and giving input.

Charter Change Committee: Councilor Wright reviewed the issues in the report. Knodell asked for councilors to give input. Bushor thought committee agendas would go to council first

and then back to committee, rather than from Administration directly to committee. Wright said he thought committees were going to propose what they wanted to work on and then discuss them tonight. Knodell said it's consistent for the Administration to come to committee to ask them to talk about something. Bushor disagrees. Mason has concern about weighing in on bag tax or CEDO commission tonight. Knodell agreed council doesn't need to talk about these tonight. Shannon noted that committee identified noncontroversial matters that didn't seem to require full discussion by council and other issues required council discussion. Paul has no issue with items 1-4. Colburn supports item 4. Ayers is comfortable with items 1-4. He suggested folding arts and culture into the Parks Commission. The committee's list of topics was endorsed.

Community Development and Neighborhood Revitalization Committee: Councilor Colburn spoke to the level of activity of the committee and its involvement of citizens. She then reviewed the issues in the report. Bushor asked about UVM MOU and Agreement (Housing and budgetary). Knodell referenced her July memo in which she asked current members of HR Committee (Mason, Paul, Roof) to serve as ad hoc committee to advise the mayor on renegotiation. Shannon noted purpose was to reduce redundancy, and this list seems to meet that goal; there is no commission that addresses these issues. She also expressed that if there is a full report on something like reducing homelessness or NPA support, it should be discussed at the full council first. Colburn said they've been approached by the NPA's for a forum to discuss the NPA support issues. There was discussion on whether those issues should come first to the council or go to this committee. Colburn said the NPA's have requested more conversation with the committee about the issue. Paul has no problem with the committee's agenda. The committee's list of topics was endorsed.

Ordinance Committee: Councilor Mason reviewed the issues in the report. Wright with Hartnett's agreement would not have the smoking issue on the agenda. There are a lot of other things on the agenda, and there are bigger issues in our parks than smoking. Shannon noted that smoking ban in parks was referred to the committee by council—in fact, all of these issues have been, except maybe form based code. There was some discussion of the process for considering the form based code, zoning rewrite and whether it would go to the Ordinance Committee or directly to the council. Knodell said that a group will be organized to discuss this. Colburn asked to hear from PPNNE about how the new ordinance is working. Paul seconded Shannon's comment that no smoking was started in Parks Commission and referred by council, so should be considered by the committee. The mayor noted that as part of permit reform review, it is intended to look at some of the issues around historic buildings materials, so it would be helpful for the committee to wait to see what comes out of the permit reform work. Knodell asked whether this would come to council or to committee, and the mayor indicated this was yet to be decided. The committee's list of topics was endorsed.

Parks, Arts & Culture: Councilor Colburn reviewed the issues in the report. Wright said Hartnett is asking for monthly updates on the New Moran project to the committee. Knodell asked whether the library issues were redundant with the Library Commission. Colburn said they don't know yet, but the committee would not continue to address them if they were. Shannon asked why the committee would take a role with the library when they hadn't been

asked to do so, as that seemed redundant. Colburn responded that the library is currently staffing the committee and that there have been multiple financial issues and collaborative issues with Parks, but if people feel the committee should wait for a specific request, she is ok with that. Shannon said she'd rather wait for a specific request. Paul said the committee was initially just Parks, but over the last several years, they have expanded to Arts and now culture, which involves the library. The Library Director has said she is looking for council-level feedback. So, if she wants it, Paul believes the committee should respond. Paul and Colburn emphasized that most of the energy of the committee is going into the Waterfront projects. Shannon feels strongly that if there is council-level feedback wanted, the issue should come to council. Shannon and Bushor both believe the strategic plan should come to the full council. Wright agreed. Knodell, however, said she would be thinking why a committee isn't reviewing that. Knodell suggested that the council come back to this. She asked the mayor to encourage department heads to approach the committee chair if they feel they're going to both commission and committee on the same things. Paul said the idea of committees is to get some flavor from the 3 councilors on a committee before coming to the council. She feels the chair has been good about not requiring department heads to come and waste time. The mayor noted that Rubi did not express great concern. Bushor feels strongly the full council needs to be aware of strategic plans.

Public Safety Committee: Councilors Giannoni and Knodell noted that this committee has been previously discussed. As to the specific report, Uber was removed from the report and mental health and substance abuse was added. She said she hopes to have the thoughts from the last two public fora published soon.

3. Discussion: Cemetery Commission. Shannon moved, Colburn seconded motion to accept communications 3.01 to 3.03.

Shannon explained that when this resolution was introduced, she thought the Cemetery Commission had been consulted, but they were not. She offered to go to Cemetery Commission to discuss. The commissioners have a special interest in the cemetery. Right now, there are subcommittees on commissions for specialized topics. The key is that the Parks Commission gives citizen oversight of the entire department. This allows the commission to have a broad view of all the resources in the department, and also allows those with a special interest in the cemetery to meet those goals. Shannon said she doesn't want to make a decision until it can be discussed with the Cemetery Commission. There's no big rush. Knodell noted this was pushed to the 10/13 meeting. Bushor noted that this has been considered over the years, and she has opposed it but was open to this change this time. Now she is again opposed—4 meetings a year is not a lot—and isn't interested in pursuing any more. Wright agreed with Bushor. Shannon said the chair was amenable to discussing whether an expanded Parks Commission with additional seats and subcommittee would meet the cemetery needs. Ayres asked about whether it's accurate title 18 governs. Shannon said if so, it can be changed by charter. Mayor said the Administration doesn't have a strong position on this, but discussion with the cemetery commission would be good. Knodell agreed. Colburn agreed. Knodell said this will come back

to the council's 10/13 meeting. Shannon will vet ideas with the cemetery commission at its 9/17 meeting.

Wright moved, Roof seconded, to adjourn. President Knodell adjourned the meeting at 6:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Blackwood, City Attorney

July 27, 2015

Dear Members of the Burlington City Council,

The Chittenden County Historical Society (CCHS) has become aware that the City Council is considering a resolution to merge the Board of Cemetery Commissioners and the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners, presumably for the purpose of streamlining citizen input and saving money, since both park and cemetery functions (as well as others) fall within the same administrative unit in the City. At the 50th anniversary annual meeting of the CCHS, held on July 12, 2015, with 45 of our >150 members present, we discussed this proposal and unanimously voted to express our deep opposition to this action. All of us have valued the proud institution of cemetery commissions established in Vermont law and operating across the State. The volunteers making up these commissions are dedicated to preserving and beautifying their public cemeteries in order to preserve the dignity of these sacred spaces. They serve because they have a particular interest and focus on the burying places in their communities and ensuring that families have a quiet places of retreat to bury and remember their loved ones. They are not focused on recreational facilities, as vital as these also are to every community.

It is certainly true that cemeteries can serve passive recreational functions for walking, jogging, yoga or meditation, researching genealogy and history, enjoying horticulture, even quiet picnics. But it is understood by all that these activities are secondary to the primary purpose and should never take precedence over private graveside services, burials, family visits and patriotic commemorations. The Burlington cemeteries (Greenmount ~ 1790, Elmwood 1801, and Lake View 1867) literally "embody" our history. They developed within the tradition of "garden cemeteries" begun at Mt. Auburn near Boston in 1831 and soon cities, especially in the northeast, were laying out paths, drives and lavish plantings as well as architectural features, to make their cemeteries inviting places for the living and the dead. Active recreation, contests, food concessions and the like, have no place in our cemeteries. We have parks for that and need park commissioners to focus on those distinct activities.

Parks and Recreation commissioners are bound to have their focus on bicycle paths, hiking trails, community events and festivals, waterfront activities, camping, ball fields etc. These are qualitatively different from the preoccupations of a cemetery commission. Please do not compromise the unique stewardship responsibility of the Cemetery Commission. They only meet a few times a year. Surely their elimination will not save meaningful money. This false economy will assure that less attention is paid to the rightful primary purpose of the cemeteries as well-kept, beautiful and tranquil places for our forbears, and eventually ourselves, to rest.

Sincerely,

Lori Olberg

From: Charles Simpson <simpsochr@plattsburgh.edu>
Sent: Saturday, July 11, 2015 11:52 AM
To: Lori Olberg
Subject: Merger of the Cemetery Commission with Parks & Rec Commission

Dear Mayor and Council Members:

Having just attended a burial yesterday in Massachusetts, I was again reminded of the important emotional services that a sensitively-run cemetery provides for residents and family members. Awareness of these needs entails a specific point of view, not one easily merged with the perspective required by commissioners seeing the functioning of the city's parks and secular open spaces.

Please maintain the Cemetery Commission as an independent body. If the weight of city business is too great for the present number of council members, perhaps a rethinking of the down-sizing of the council is appropriate.

Sincerely,
Charles Simpson, Ward 6

Author: Danna Waldron, Chair, Cemetery
Commission

History of Cemetery Commissions and Commissioners:

In 1863, the Vermont Legislature passed an act providing that public burial grounds might be put under the control of commissioners rather than a selectboard (known to us today as Councilors) if so voted by the town.

In 1864, the "town" of Burlington voted yes for commissioners and a cemetery commission, with commissioners elected by the voters.

Lawrence Barnes, F M Van Sicklen, T H Canfield, G G Benedict, and Samuel Huntington were elected the first commissioners. The commissioners were described as conservative in their management and faithful to their trust of maintaining the burial grounds of loved ones. They have, with limited means at their disposal, succeeded in giving outward expression to the feeling of respect and loving memory which our citizens hold to those who have passed away.

Of important note is the twelve year service of another commissioner, Captain Dan Lyon, whom for twelve years had practically entire charge of laying out and beautifying Lakeview Cemetery and improving Elmwood.

This information has been taken from the Annual Report for the City of Burlington, published in 1890 and available with Google Books online.

The question I googled was how long have cemetery commissions existed in Burlington, VT? It is clear the commissioners dedicated themselves to the care and management of the cemeteries in VT. In some ways, we have let our early commissioners down because we are not taking heartfelt care of our cemeteries as was mandated in those early years by the individuals and groups that donated money to the cemeteries.

Volunteerism has been a strong feature with Vermonters for decades, centuries. Volunteers give of their time, energy, and effort for what is valued, appreciated, and loved.

The current commissioners feel the same passion and responsibility for our cemeteries as our first commissioners felt. We give freely of our time, and we currently meet only four times a year with special meetings scheduled when appropriate. Meetings usually last an hour and a half. Where does the efficiency factor come in?

Our Mayor applauds citizen participation and involvement. So do the commissioners!

The cemeteries are consecrated land in our cities. We do not fit under Park and Rec. we know there is not a firm plan if the resolution passes. What we have now works. I reiterate, we are talking four meetings a year. The Commission also benefits from the historical knowledge and information about our cemeteries that Annie Dalton shares at our meetings. How will this beneficial knowledge continue to be shared? The cemetery commission also has under its care the burial plots of some of Burlington's influential families. Civil War heroes are under our care as are so many notable Vermont men and women. Citizens in our community were shocked to learn this resolution was being presented for discussion and voting.

We can't afford to have our cemeteries floundering without a commission (that oversees their destiny and protects them). Don't forget 1863 was the year the Vt Legislature passed the act to exercise the option of establishing the cemetery commissions. Burlington voted yes in 1864 to do just that! 1863-2015 surely is a passage of many years! Commissions have not been

absolved for many years! That in itself is a powerful statement. Commissions are a part of the fabric of Vermont towns and cities. The state organization over seeing Vermont's Historical Cemeteries is viable and powerful because of the dedication of cemetery commissioners from all over the state.

Disbanding the Burlington Cemetery Commission would be like doing away with Vermont's country stores and covered bridges. Talk about what is essential to the fabric of our Green Mountain State...Cemetery Commissioners who love what has been a long standing tradition

So the questions come up..

Who will walk through our cemeteries and be cognizant of broken fences, toppled statuary, vandalism.

Who will stand up for tree events be located not in Lakeview?

Who will be vocal and question why repairs have not taken place?

Who will think long range and approve continual care for the cemeteries?

Who will lovingly walk the grounds of our cemeteries

Who will kindly observe the trees and ancient hydrangeas and read the stories on the gravestones?

We are a group of dedicated volunteers. We love our Queen City and our love is symbolized in our collective effort to safe guard and protect our cemeteries.

Please allow us to do our job.

Lori Olberg

From: Donna Waldron <waldrondl@icloud.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2015 8:20 PM
To: Lori Olberg
Cc: Joan Shannon; Jane Knodell
Subject: Re: Cemetery commission

Dear Councilors,
Thank you for this decision.
Regards,
Donna

Sent from my iPad

> On Jul 13, 2015, at 9:27 AM, Lori Olberg <lolberg@burlingtonvt.gov> wrote:

>

> Sure thing

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Joan Shannon [<mailto:jshannon@burlingtontelecom.net>]

> Sent: Monday, July 13, 2015 9:23 AM

> To: Donna Waldron

> Cc: Jane Knodell; Lori Olberg

> Subject: Re: Cemetery commission

>

> Donna

> Jane and I would be happy to postpone action until October.

>

> Lori

> Can you please amend the action on our agenda to postpone until a meeting in October?

> Thanks

> Joan

>

> Sent from my iPhone

>

>> On Jul 12, 2015, at 5:01 PM, Donna Waldron <waldrondl@icloud.com> wrote:

>>

>> Dear Councilors,

>> Thank you both for replying to my inquiry.

>> The Cemetery Commission has an extra meeting on August 13th. We will be discussing the important role the commission plays and formulating our response on the topic.

>> Hoping the issue can be tabled until October.

>> There is one very pressing concern...who will represent the best interests of our cemeteries as the commission now does and how will that happen?

>> Thank you,

>> Donna Waldron

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>>

>> Sent from my iPad

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>>> On Jul 10, 2015, at 12:32 PM, Donna Waldron <waldrondl@icloud.com> wrote:

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>>>

>>>

>>> Sent from my iPad

>>> Dear Councilor President Knodell and Councilor Shannon, I am hoping

>>> you both can educate me on the topic of eliminating the cemetery commission as I do want to understand the rationale behind the original resolution. I currently am the chair of this commission and do want to be enlightened. As you know, the commission members were taken aback when Jesse shared the news with us last night.

>>> I also want to add putting off the decision to review/vote on the resolution until August is commendable. Certainly in a democratic society input allows reflection and better decision making.

>>> Thank you for addressing my concern.

>>> Donna Waldron

>>>

Lori Olberg

From: Jane Knodell
Sent: Friday, August 28, 2015 3:51 PM
To: Lori Olberg
Cc: Jane Knodell
Subject: Fw: Cemetery Commission Resolution

Here is that other communication!! Please post when you can. thanks.

From: btrutor@burlingtontelecom.net <btrutor@burlingtontelecom.net>
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2015 10:40 AM
To: Mayor's Office; Bushor, Sharon; Sara Giannoni; Chip Mason; Ayres, Tom; Selene Colburn; David Hartnett; Maxwell Tracy; Kurt Wright; Karen Paul; Adam Roof; Jane Knodell; Joan Shannon
Subject: Cemetery Commission Resolution

City Council President Knodell:

Our Cemetery Commission Chair Donna Waldron has shared your email with the Commissioners and I appreciate your prompt response. I am appending your email below and am responding to your points. These responses are mine, in capacity as Cemetery Commissioner, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the other members.

First, your email:

From: Jane Knodell <jknodell@burlingtonvt.gov>
Date: July 10, 2015 at 3:47:28 PM EDT
To: Donna Waldron <waldrondl@icloud.com>, "jshannon@burlingtontelecom.net" <jshannon@burlingtontelecom.net>
Cc: Jane Knodell <jknodell@burlingtonvt.gov>
Subject: Re: Cemetery commission

Dear Donna

First, I want to apologize for not letting the Commission know that this was coming. This is coming from the City Council, not the Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department or from Jesse. As Council President, it was my responsibility to reach out to you to explain our thinking, and get your thoughts and concerns, and I failed to do that.

Here's where this is coming from. The City Council held a work session in May to talk about ways that we can eliminate unnecessary and redundant work in City Council Committees. There are two fewer of us than there used to be, and we are aware that several department heads have multiple council committees, commissions, and boards that they work with. All of these groups are staffed by department staff -- setting up meetings, agendas, attending the meetings, getting minutes out, etc etc.

Process is good, but -- speaking for myself -- too much process is . . .

too much process. Our department heads have only so many hours in a day, so if we can reduce process while still benefiting from ample public participation and input, that means we can do more for the citizens of Burlington without spending more money. That seems a good thing.

One idea that came up was having the Parks and Rec Commission take on the responsibilities of the Cemetery Commission. Joan has an idea about how we might move forward on this that might feel better to the Commission, and

ensure we have a strong "cemetary" perspective and sensitivity on the Parks and Rec Commission. I will let her weigh in on that (and of course any other aspect of this issue!).

We are also eliminating one of our own committees, deactivating committees that don't have business that seems a priority right now, and trying to avoid having committees and commissions do the exact same things. Where we now have committees, could we use our commissions? I suspect the answer in many cases is Yes.

I hope this is helpful. Please feel free to share this email with your colleagues on the Cemetery Commission.

Yours sincerely
Jane Knodell

Item 1: 'Too much process'

The Cemetery Commission meets with the Cemetery Supervisor 3 times a year for a 2 hour meeting; 6 hours per year. Generally speaking, the Supervisor consumes 1 hour of the 2 with requests by the Supervisor for Commission action, reports, Q&A with the Commission, and requests by the Commission for Supervisor action. It is unclear to me what efficiencies would be gained by moving these same three hours to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Item 2: Resolution to abolish Cemetery Commission Would you please send me the resolution? I have not seen it. You indicate that it abolishes the Commission but that there is no other side of the coin, i.e., that there is no alternative planned other than "one idea...ensure we have a strong "cemetary" perspective and sensitivity on the Parks and Rec Commission". Supervisor Bridges indicated at our Thursday meeting that the resolution abolishes the Cemetery Commission and hands the alternative to the Mayor to decide. I am quite confused here. Title 18 of Vermont Law is very explicit. The cemeteries, by statute, are to be managed by the City Council or the Cemetery Commissioners. Burlington decided 100 years ago to go with Cemetery Commissioners. Parks and Recreation is not an option by law.

Jane, I hate this! I hate this with a passion. I am sitting here at my keyboard, on a beautiful Burlington Sunday morning fussing and fretting, nit-picking and playing attorney. I don't want to do this. I want to go to Greenmount Cemetery and look at the rich symbolism carved 150 years ago into the stones of our great-great grandmothers, and think about what they were doing on their Sunday

Again speaking for myself, what we have here is 'failure to communicate'. The Cemetery Commission is required by law to make an annual report to the City Council and to the citizens. We haven't done that this year, and that is on me as Commissioner. I failed. At our next meeting I will emphatically recommend that we produce such report with all due haste, and I am quite convinced that you will be satisfied with your Cemetery Commission's efforts and results.

Respectfully,
Barry Trutor
Cemetery Commissioner

cc:
Cemetery Commissioners
Jesse Bridges, Director of Parks and Recreation NPAs



BURLINGTON
**PARKS
RECREATION
WATERFRONT**
Cemetery Division

Cemetery Commission Meeting Agenda
— REVISED AFTER POSTING (IV A & B added) —
September 17, 2015, 3:00 PM
Lakeview Cemetery, 455 North Avenue

- I. Approval of Agenda
- II. Approval of Minutes from May 14, 2015, July 9, 2015 & August 13, 2015 Meetings
- III. Old Business
 - A. Consideration of City Council Resolution to discontinue Cemetery Commission as an entity separate from the Parks Commission.
 - B. Tabled from July 9, 2015 mtg.: request to re-define resident status for lot purchase.
 - 1. Follow up on addition of “no dogs” sign at Greenmount.
 - 2. Follow up on fence repair at Greenmount.
 - 3. Follow up on Martha Keenan reporting to the Commission concerning which category Chapel repair falls under. Deryk Roach is aware of Chapel repair needs, and is on the team working to prioritize maintenance & repair projects.
 - 4. Election of Officers.
 - 5. Greenmount road repairs.
 - 6. Request for CAO to discuss Perpetual Care account.
 - 7. Status of Chapel sign installation.
 - 8. Letters of Appreciation: Trutor & Waldron will work on.
 - 9. Verizon proposal.
 - C. Tabled from August 13, 2015 mtg.: Request from staff for Commission approval of mausoleum site.
- IV. Superintendent’s Items
 - A. **Lakeview road and roof repair update.**
 - B. **Greenmount road & fence repair update.**
- V. Commissioner’s Items
- VI. Office Report
- VII. Adjournment

Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: September 17, 2015, 3:00 pm

Commissioners Present: Rita Church, Allison Curran, Lainey Rappaport, Barry Trutor, Donna Waldron

Staff Present: Anne D’Alton, Cemetery Office Assistant

Public Present: Joan Shannon & Max Tracy (arrived at 3:15), City Councilors
Sarah Dopp, past President of the Chittenden County Historical Society

Attachments: Additions to Agenda from Jesse Bridges and Deryk Roach, Parks Dept.
Photos of road repairs at Greenmount Cemetery
Letters & emails concerning discontinuing the Cemetery Commission (5)
Minutes of City Council Work Session, 09.02.2015

- I. Agenda reorganization
 - A. The meeting began at 3:00 by Commission Chair Donna Waldron introducing Agenda Item III A, bringing this issue to the beginning of the meeting in the interest of the public attending in order to speak to this issue.
- II. Approval of Minutes from May 14, 2015, July 9, 2015 and August 13, 2015 Meetings
 - A. (addressed later in the meeting): unanimously approved.
- III. Old Business
 - A. Consideration of City Council Resolution to discontinue Cemetery Commission as an entity separate from the Parks Commission.
 - ◆ Joan Shannon said that she loves cemeteries, and understands the difference between parks and cemeteries. However, commissions are to oversee departments, so there should be just one commission for the Parks Department. The separation of Parks and DPW is an example of fiefdoms defending their territory at the expense of the City. Parks should be responsible for looking after the interest of the cemeteries. Both entities could profit from hearing each other’s issues during the same meeting. The Parks Commission could have a Cemetery Committee with 3 members, like the Harbor Committee. Shannon just learned about State Statutes pertaining to cemetery commissions, but notes that City Charter is in effect, too. Any change would require public approval. She does not want to fight for her idea, but believes it is in the City’s best interest. Apologized for not informing the Cemetery Commission of the resolution that City Council Chair Jane Knodell asked her to sponsor, to merge the Cemetery Commission into the Parks Commission—she assumed that the Cemetery Commission had reviewed this resolution.
 - ◆ Waldron noted that having the Cemetery Office Assistant at the Cemetery Commission Meetings is very helpful, providing communication between the commissioners and the staff concerning history and procedures—this would be forfeited by merging with the Parks Commission. She believes the Parks Commission already has a lot of responsibility, and it wouldn’t be practical to add the responsibility of hearing, reviewing and deciding



about Cemetery issues. In addition, there may not be time for these issues to be adequately addressed. Waldron pointed to a poster she'd made, displaying history, articles and photos about Cemetery issues not getting addressed. She noted that she understands the fiefdom issue, and asked if the capital spending plan being devised by Martha Keenan is helping to ameliorate this problem. Shannon said yes, Department heads are now working together better.

- ◆ Lainey Rappaport said the Cemetery Commission does not understand what benefit would be gained by merging the Cemetery Commission into the Parks Commission. There are presently a lot of issues in the City's cemeteries that are not being addressed, such as littering (including needles, trash, poop, vomit), unsupervised Corrections Crews, dogs.
- ◆ Waldron expressed an interest in improving the situation for the City, but the Cemetery Commissioners are concerned that the Parks Commission wouldn't have the interest or time to notice or be concerned about these problems enough to try to find solutions.
- ◆ Shannon believes that the merge would give a stronger voice to Cemetery issues, because the Cemetery Committee would be present at the Parks Commission meetings when budget decisions were being discussed. She reiterated that she did not want to fight for this change, though.
- ◆ Max Tracy noted that he hasn't been involved in this conversation, but agrees with Waldron that it would be better to keep the Cemetery Commission separate from the Parks Commission, or the cemetery issues would be lost. The littering issues are getting worse. Also, if people want to be involved in City government, they should be allowed—their voice is needed.
- ◆ Sarah Dopp shared a letter from the Chittenden County Historical Society expressing strong opposition to changing the Cemetery Commission into a committee on the Parks Commission. She noted that the interest of people serving on boards is very individual, so if the merge occurred, different types of people with different objectives would need to meet together. This would cause 3 negative results: the Commissioners would have to go to twice as many meetings (Parks Commission meetings plus Cemetery Committee meetings), Cemetery Commissioners would have to listen to Parks issues that they wouldn't be interested in, and because the Cemetery Division is such a small part of the Parks Department, their issues would get lost at Parks Commission meetings.
- ◆ Shannon sees Dopp's point, but notes that there is value in broadening perspective.
- ◆ Waldron suggested that if the City Council wanted to get rid of a commission, why not the Fence Viewers? Shannon said they are looking into that.
- ◆ Rappaport noted that Jesse Bridges had said one reason to merge the Cemetery Commission into the Parks Commission is that he would have 4 less meetings to attend per year, but she didn't think this would be true if he would need to attend the Cemetery Committee meetings.
- ◆ Waldron thanked Shannon for her apology.
- ◆ Trutor stated clearly that he is not interested in Parks and feels strongly about maintaining the Cemetery Commission. He doesn't want Burlington to be the first Vermont town to abolish its Cemetery Commission. He suggested sending a Cemetery Commissioner to the Parks Commission meetings to demonstrate that the Cemetery Commission is not a fiefdom, and to show that the merge would not work.
- ◆ Rappaport said she'd contacted the Mayor and most of the City Councilors, and they didn't know about the proposed change.



- ◆ Shannon said there's no need to belabor the point: it's clear that the Cemetery Commissioners want the Cemetery Commission to remain as it is. Bridges has a lot of work to do pertaining to the Parks Department, and the Cemetery Commission should be mindful of this. He is spread thin, but does a great job.
- ◆ Dopp agreed that having a Cemetery Commission representative on the Parks Commission could be beneficial to the City's Cemeteries, and this should be explored.
- ◆ Rita Church stressed that even though the Parks Department is big, the Cemeteries are important, too, and this needs to be recognized. Volunteers have donated lots of time and money to improve the Cemeteries, demonstrating how valuable the City's cemeteries are to the public. This philanthropy spans generations: Lilian Carslisle (who helped restore the Chapel) and her daughter, Diana (who is a member of the Friends of Lakeview Cemetery, responsible for Chapel, Gazebo and Fountain restoration at Lakeview); Glenna Light (who initiated the Chapel restoration project) and her daughter Deborah (who has applied her extensive computer skills and attention to detail to help correct and transfer to electronic format the Cemetery's records, and recreate lost records-- a job much more extensive than that which can be handled by the one half-time office assistant assigned to the Cemetery Division); Jane Ewing (President of the Friends of Lakeview Cemetery) and her daughter Colleen Montgomery (who helps place flags on Veterans' graves).
- ◆ Tracy urged Commissioners to reach out to the City Councilors, letting them know their concerns. The Councilors have a lot to do, too, so they cannot keep track of everything that is going on. They welcome and will make time for issues the public brings to them.
- ◆ Church expressed the need for the Parks Department to consult with the Cemetery Commission about prioritizing the cemetery repairs Bridges promised would be done with the additional money being deposited to the Parks budget since the Commission agreed to his request to reduce the percentage of lot sales deposited to the Perpetual Care fund from 55% to 5% for 3 years.
- ◆ Waldron asked if the item about expanding the Parks Commission to be addressed by the Charter Change Committee, chaired by City Councilor Kurt Wright, is connected with the resolution to merge the Cemetery Commission into the Parks Commission. Shannon responded no, that proposal has come up because so many people want to be on the Parks Commission, and they are making sub-committees.
- ◆ Shannon assured the Cemetery Commission that the City Council does not want to make a change without the support of the Commission, and that she will tell the Charter Change Committee that she found no support for the proposed resolution. She recognized that this resolution must have felt to the Cemetery Commissioners like a lack of appreciation for the Commissioners and their work, but this is not the case. She and Tracy left at about 3:45.
- ◆ Alison Curran reported that she attended the September 2, 2015 Work Session of the City Council during which the resolution to merge the Cemetery Commission into the Parks Commission was discussed, and the City Councilors in attendance said they did not feel this merge was necessary.
- ◆ Rappaport expressed concern about the Greenmount entrance gate needing welding. Annie D'Alton responded that Jeff Shedd, Assistant Cemetery Supervisor, has had a temporary welding done, and is waiting for the Parks Department to schedule it.

B. Items tabled from July 9, 2015 meeting

- ◆ Agenda Item III.B.4, Election of Officers



- Chair: Rappaport nominated Waldron, Curran seconded. Trutor expressed a high regard for the leadership Waldron has provided, and urged her to continue as Chair. Church, Rappaport and Curran agreed. The motion passed unanimously.
- Vice-Chair: Church nominated Trutor, who said he'd be willing to continue in the position, but expressed his desire for others to have the opportunity to serve. But Curran and Rappaport said they were too busy at this time. All in favor of Trutor continuing as Vice-Chair.
- ◆ Agenda Item III.B.2 & 5
 - D'Alton referred to Deryk Roach's email report & photos of Greenmount road & fence repair. Because the fence was cut immediately after being mended twice, Roach moved on to the next proposed solution: to install a gate, so at least the integrity of the fence would be maintained.
 - Trutor asked if fence cutting had ever been reported to Police; D'Alton didn't know. He feels this should be done every time the fence is cut, to build a case. He doesn't like the idea of a gate, feels it will be left open. The State Law requires intact fence, he wants to keep people from bicycling over graves, and believes there must be a solution. He has tried using See-Click-Fix with no response.
 - Curran feels it would be best to accept that people are going to cut through the cemetery, and an open gate would be better than damaged fence.
 - Church worries that a bicyclist might get hurt or damage monuments.
 - Curran suggested talking with the Police about the problem, asking their advice.
 - Rappaport said she has reported issues at Greenmount to the police, and learned that there is a process to follow to get needles picked up.
 - Waldron will invite the Chief of Police to a Commission Meeting.
 - Trutor feels that Bridges has misunderstood the Commission's intent-- they know they are not in charge of day-to-day business. Also, he does not feel that the fiefdom problem brought up by Shannon relates to the City Cemeteries.
- ◆ Agenda Item III.B.9: Verizon Proposal
 - Waldron believes this is no longer under consideration, so the Commission does not need to see the proposal.
- ◆ Agenda Item III.B.7: Chapel Sign
 - The Friends of Lakeview Cemetery are working on this.
 - Rappaport would like to see a new sign on the Elmwood gate.
- ◆ Agenda Item III.B.1: Signage for no dogs in City Cemeteries
 - Rappaport feels this could be communicated to the public via Front Porch Forum, and a story in Seven Days. Waldron will follow up, including bikes & skateboards.
 - D'Alton noted that the public does care about preventing inappropriate activities in the Cemeteries: someone reported that Ridin' High had posted a skateboard event scheduled at Lakeview for a Sunday. D'Alton called and told them that this wasn't allowed and they said they would cancel it.
- ◆ Agenda Item III.B.8: Letters of Appreciation for Jim Woodman and Deborah Hardy for cleaning Civil War Veteran markers, and Don Jackson, coordinator of Civil War General gravesite tour.
 - Trutor will write first draft and Waldron will add to it.
 - Trutor feels Jane Ewing should get one, too, for all the work she has done on the Commission. Also Joan Shannon and Max Tracy.
- ◆ Agenda Item III.B.6: Request for CAO to discuss status of Perpetual Care account



- Trutor will write a letter to Bob Rustin, Burlington CAO, inviting him to a Commission meeting and asking him to get the Perpetual Care money invested responsibly so that the significant income that it would generate could be added to the Cemetery budget and used for resolving the many maintenance issues deferred by Parks due to lack of fund allocation. The Commission needs a clear statement of the status of the fund and plans to invest the money.

IV. Superintendent's Items

- A. Bridges emailed a report stating "the first part of the roads will be paved and the roof will be fixed as part of the capital plan this fall. This is funded by interest from the perpetual care fund."

V. Commissioner's Items

- A. Include on Agenda for next meeting (October 7, 2015):
 - ◆ Follow up on Martha Keenan reporting to the Commission concerning which category Chapel repair falls under. Deryk Roach is aware of Chapel repair needs, and is on the team working to prioritize maintenance & repair projects.

VI. Office Report – none.

VII. Adjournment

At 4:30 pm Waldron moved to adjourn, Trutor seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Next Commission Meeting: Wednesday, October 7, 2015, 4:30 pm at Cemetery Office.