



Cemetery Commission Meeting Agenda

June 17, 2021, 4:30 PM

MEETING CONDUCTED VIA ZOOM

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When: Jun 17, 2021 04:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Topic: Cemetery Commission

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- I. Approval of Agenda
- II. Approval of Minutes from 5/20/2021 Meeting
- III. Public Forum
- IV. Cambrian Rise Update
- V. Parks Commission Chair Visit
- VI. Lakeview Portraits updates
- VII. Cemetery Bees
- VIII. Mowing/Wild Areas
- IX. Perpetual Care Fund
- X. Staff/Director Items
- XI. Commissioner Items
- XII. Adjournment



Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, June 17, 2021, 4:30 pm

Commissioners Present: Rita Church, Jennifer Diaz, Nancy Kirby, Alexandra Millar, Mary Wesley

Staff Present: Cindi Wight – BPRW Director, Holli Bushnell – Cemetery Staff

Meeting was called to order at 4:41pm

I. Approval of the Agenda

Jennifer Diaz moved to approve, Nancy Kirby seconded, all were in favor.

II. Approval of Minutes from 5/20/2021

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

III. Public Forum

Public forum was opened at 4:42pm, as no members of the public were present or wished to speak public forum was closed at 4:42pm as well.

Items IV. Cambrian Rise Update and V. Parks Commission Chair Visit were tabled as representatives for each item were not present.

VI. Lakeview Portraits Update

Diaz contacted the BCA Commission who encouraged her to connect with Sara Katz. Katz and Diaz were able to meet and discuss the project. Katz explained that the commission would have to work with both the city administration and city council to obtain approval for the project, and that the process might take many months. The commission would need to hold public meetings to get community feedback on the subjects of the portraits. Ultimately, this project could get very political very quickly and would be a tremendous undertaking for the cemetery commission. Additionally, Katz was unable to identify a space for the permanent installation of the portraits, either at City Hall or elsewhere. In all likelihood, this project could be a few years in the making.

Ultimately, Katz felt that, should the commission choose to pursue this project, BCA would need to take the lead. Doug Lazarus would need to work with BCA on the content, and they wouldn't be able to consider it for a year to 18 months. At this time, on the recommendation of Katz, Diaz does not feel it would be wise for the commission to pursue this project.

Rita Church thanked Diaz for her diligent investigation and agreed that the project seems to be beyond the current commission's scope. Mary Wesley also thanked Diaz for reaching out to BCA. She felt it pertinent to provide Lazarus with this feedback from BCA to help aid him in future community projects. Ultimately, this project is much larger than the commission initially thought. While it's something the commission would like to pursue, it's bigger than our current capabilities.

VII. Cemetery Bees



Kirby reports that she was approached by a young man who was interested in putting hives in Greenmount for pollination purposes. Holli Bushnell commented that a friend of hers, Tucka Saville, is interested in placing hives in Elmwood as part of her small commercial honey operation. Saville was also interested in assisting the city in starting an urban honey program.

Cindi Wight stated that we would need to issue a request for proposals, allowing individuals to apply to lease park space for their hives. The city requires RFPs to insure that projects are fair. Wight also felt that Elmwood would be a good pilot site for the project. Additionally, Wight was able to reassure the commission that the city has liability coverage on all RFPs.

Alexandra Millar commented that the ideal time to move hives is in early to mid-spring (March and April), so it may be too late in the year to establish new hives. Millar also commented that hives could be done in conjunction with her work on the native pollinator project. She asked if anyone has used any parks like this before. Wight confirmed that this was a new concept and that most of these leases have been for concessions or bike rentals. Millar asked if we could look into the legal ramifications and Wight confirmed she would run it past our lawyers and contact our insurance. Holli Bushnell will get preferred locations for hives from Jeff Shedd.

VIII. Mowing/Wild Areas

Leading up to and over the Memorial Day holiday commissioners and both cemetery and general parks staff were contacted on multiple occasions concerning the mowing at Greenmount cemetery. Ultimately, a local news outlet chose to do a story on what they called a “lack of upkeep” which prompted additional upset from the community. Volunteers came together and mowed and cleaned up Greenmount over the course of 3 days, but the issue of the level of care at the cemeteries remains. Some folks would prefer cemeteries be completely mown at all times while others find the longer grass/wilder look more appealing.

Millar noted that there are a wide range of possibilities. No mowed areas often need to be mown once yearly. At Lakeview, a management plan for wild areas – planting intentional landscaping, more design oriented plants, is in development. Millar believes that a lot of the upset had to do with people who didn’t know there was an intention around the wild areas. The commission and staff need to communicate with people about this program so they don’t misunderstand it.

Kirby commented that in 2020 she strategically mowed paths for people to walk through Greenmount, but left many areas wild. The city appreciated her work so much they awarded her Volunteer of the Year. She knows people utilize the space and is happy to help to care of it.

Millar commented that simple signage would be a beneficial addition. She noted that cemeteries have had a particular role in our culture for the last 50 years and there’s a section of the population that have a very rigid idea of how to use the spaces. Wight commented that, in her research of this issue she found that Memorial Day is when people visit cemeteries more than any other time of year. She asked if near the end of May is that a time we could do our once yearly mow so that the spaces look nice for the crowds. Millar returned that she will ask teams (Bee City and other native planting/pollinator folks) when it would be a good time. If you mow too early you seed all the invasive plants. June is ideally the time of year to mow, but Millar was not sure if a month would make a difference. She also commented that this information can be added to the management plan for the next year, and see if Memorial Day works for an appropriate time to mow. Diaz commented that in her own experience, mowing the fall reduces grow-back of invasive plants. Millar will check on this. Millar also felt it’s important to define what our vision is and what’s possible in these spaces.

Wight asked if Millar could spearhead this project and Millar agreed. She would like to tour Greenmount with Kirby and the frequent volunteers to get a better idea of what would be appropriate for Greenmount.



IX. Perpetual Care Fund

Wight explained that every year the cemetery takes \$10,000 from the interest of perpetual care fund to go towards maintenance of Greenmount and Elmwood. Several volunteer groups have asked for supplies this year, and Wight asked the commission to consider moving additional funds from perpetual care to pay for these projects. These funds would be specifically allocated for volunteers and would require commission approval for use. Ideas would need to be in by specific date and the funds would be available for a single fiscal year. This would be entirely volunteer driven work with some assistance from staff in terms of permits.

Bushnell suggested getting volunteer coordinators for each of the three cemeteries to vet projects. Both Kirby and Diaz were enthusiastic about this idea. Millar expressed concern that some of the current volunteer projects overlap with work done by city staffers, and Wight assured her that the funds would be available for projects as long as they were volunteer driven – even if staff ends up being involved.

Kirby moved to move \$5000 from the perpetual care fund to the FY22 budget for volunteer projects. At this time there was no second and the motion did not pass. Wight will provide a more refined concept at the next meeting.

X. Elmwood Fire

Church contacted the fire marshal and reports that we were very fortunate – this fire could have been significantly worse but was caught early. The marshal recommends immediate removal of the brush pile by the Elmwood Ave gate as it presents a major fire hazard. It is still unclear if the fire was arson, accidental, or, potentially, lightning. As conditions have been very dry lately it could have been something as small as a cigarette butt that started the blaze.

Wight commented that she has seen burned spots on the bike path. She posited a possible connection between that and the fire at Elmwood. Kirby stated that she has been keeping a close eye on Greenmount while it's been so dry.

Any additional update on the fire will be provided at a future meeting.

XI. Staff/Director Items

There were additional staff or director items at this time.

XII. Commissioner Items

Church commented that Lakeview looked particularly stunning on her visit earlier that day. She mentioned that there is still an issue with a lack of trash receptacles and asked if we had an update on those items. Wight will check on this. Church also mentioned the passing of a former superintendent's wife and noted that she was the only commissioner present at the burial. She requested note cards that could be used for both thank you notes to volunteers and condolences. Wight was enthused about this idea and asked Bushnell to reach out to Diana Wood to develop these.

Mary Wesley reports that Millar has put in a proposal for another green burials service learning project through UVM.

XIII. Adjournment

Diaz moved to adjourn, Millar seconded, all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:24pm