



Cemetery Commission Meeting Agenda

April 15, 2021, 4:30 PM

MEETING CONDUCTED VIA ZOOM

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- I. Approval of Agenda
- II. Approval of Minutes from 1/21/2021 Meeting
- III. Public Forum
- IV. FY-2022 Budget Update - Cindi
- V. Green Burial Updates
- VI. Student Project Update/Planting Work Day - Alexandra
- VII. Cemetery Dog program - Cindi
- VIII. Staff/Director Items
- IX. Commissioner Items
- X. Adjournment



Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021, 4:30 pm

Commissioners Present: Rita Church, Alexandra Millar, Mary Wesley

Commissioners Absent: Jennifer Diaz, Nancy Kirby

Staff Present: Cindi Wight – BPRW Director, Holli Bushnell - Office Assistant

Public Present: None

Meeting was called to order at 5:03pm

I. Approval of the Agenda

Alexandra Millar moved to approve the agenda. Mary Wesley seconded. All were in favor.

II. Approval of Minutes from 2/18/2021

Millar moved to approve the minutes. Rita Church seconded. All were in favor.

III. Public Forum

Public forum was opened at 5:04pm. As no one wished to speak, public forum was also closed at 5:04pm

IV. Green Burial Review and Discussion (moved from item V)

Commissioners reiterated what was discussed at the previous meeting, including the membership of the sub-committee. Church commented that undertakers/funeral homes should be an active part of this discussion and suggested that the sub-committee reach out to folks in the area to see if they are interested in participating. Wesley requested that Holli Bushnell send her the contact information for Ruby Perry and Andy Simon. Once she has this information she will reach out to schedule a meeting of the sub-committee. Millar asked if that meeting could involve creating a plan of action and focus on the next steps. She also felt that setting a timeline or establishing a time commitment for the sub-committee would be helpful. Millar has also connected with a former advisor of hers at UVM who focuses on green burial, death, and dying. This individual is interested in potentially being part of the sub-committee. Bushnell will create a shared Google Doc for the sub-committee's use. She will also reach out to area funeral homes and crematories about their potential participation.

After some discussion, the commission decided that the sub-committee would begin by trying to understand the possible green burial options given our current ordinances, what changes might need to be made to expand those options, and at what level those changes might need to be made (city, county, state). The goal will be to examine a variety of green burial options, explore their differences, and develop options that could be implemented in the near future without requiring a change to the ordinances.



V. FY2022 Budget Update

Cindi Wight explained to the commission that they need to approve the proposed \$10,000 from the perpetual care fund for the FY-2022 budget. She explained that the commission can decide to approve the use of more funds, but, as there is no project requiring funding at the moment BPRW does not anticipate needing to request additional funds. Section 8, the next big project at Lakeview, has been temporarily deferred while the planning team works on the bike path/rail line realignment. Should the planning team complete this work sooner than expected, a budget adjustment can be made to allocate funds for Section 8 development. Millar moved to approve the use of \$10,000 for the FY-2022 budget, Wesley seconded, and all were in favor.

Church commented that it's wise to continue to invest in such a way to grow the largest amount of interest. Millar asked if it might be good to have a little extra in the floating funds for spring projects. Wight responded that adding to the floating fund could be an early spring agenda item as it's possible there may be a decision on a project at that time. Wesley asked if there anything in floating fund right currently. There is \$45,000 being saved for section 8 engineering/phase 1. Millar asked if there might be a small budget for plants. The group she is working with has been able to pull plants from other spots in the city, but it would be nice to have an intentional budget/more flexibility. Wight answered that VJ Comai may be able to allocate some of his funds to the cemetery plantings. Millar mentioned that Dan Cahill is who she has been working with for cemetery plantings. Wight responded that cemetery plants should be on both Cahill and Comai's radar, but agreed it might be good to have a line in the cemetery budget for plants.

Church asked if might be possible to get new trash containers. Wight responded that the Waterfront is also looking for trash barrels, and it may be possible to include barrels for the cemetery in with those. Wight also added that there may be some benches available that we might be able to place in the cemeteries.

VI. Student Project Update/Planting Work Day

Millar explained that this semester's students have been working on a continuation of wildlife and bird tracking project as well as designing native pollinator habitats at Lakeview. They are almost finished with the semester and will be presenting their designs soon. Millar also informed the commission of 2 upcoming planting day. The students will be planting trees and shrubs on 4/23 on the slope behind the office, and there will be around 90 new plants going in. Grow wild identified this area as well as several others as a potential place where beneficial habitat could be added that would help reduce required maintenance.

The Conservation Board and Parks Commission has scheduled a joint planting day at the entrance gardens and other cemetery gardens identified by VJ and Jeff. The date isn't set yet, but it will likely be in May and is open to all. Cahill is working on details. A report of how this work fits into trends across the country, climate change adaptability, and BTV climate change goals will be provided. Church asked who is responsible for flowers at entrance. Wight responded that Jeff Shedd and Steve Bachand maintain the gardens and they are initially planted by the Trees team. Wight also took a moment to remind everyone that the flower beds are now perennial gardens instead of annuals for environmental reasons.

VII. Cemetery Dog Program

Wight brought the commission an example of an extremely successful and lucrative dog program at the congressional cemetery in Washington, DC. Dogs allowed by permit, the space is heavily controlled/monitored, and they have a huge waiting list. BPRW has seen an uptick in folks using Old North End playgrounds as dog walking/play space. As Elmwood is fenced, maybe we could welcome



dogs there in a controlled way. There would be rules and requirements, possibly volunteer hours, and fees for use. Dogs would have to be licensed with the city to use the program which would increase dog licensing (a goal of the city clerk's office). This could bring quite a bit of needed revenue. Wight commented that in order to move forward with this project the commission needs to support it/direct it. She asked if anyone present was interested in moving forward.

Millar asked what enforcement looks like at the congressional cemetery. Wight commented that they are able to provide staffing because of their funding.

Millar went on to further explain that people already use Lakeview as a space for dogs and that the rules we already have are hard to enforce due to lack of staff and ease of access. Wight responded that BPRW knows people are using Lakeview this way and wondered if it would be good to try and harness the use or regulate it.

Millar commented that she is on board to create a program that creates intentionality about dogs in cemeteries. If we started with Elmwood with one entry point to see how it goes. She asked about gaging community response and seeing if they could be responsible for enforcing the guidelines themselves. Wight mentioned that it might be good to reach out to the downtown area city council reps, Max Tracy, Perri Freeman, and Brian Pine. She would be happy to dig a little more.

Church asked about the liability of a biting incident. Wight answered that signage absolves the city of responsibility. Church was also concerned that people who have lots/markers in the cemeteries might get upset if dogs impact their spaces. She also commented that folks who don't like dogs might be upset when they come to visit their loved ones and find dogs in their space. Wight acknowledged that it's a complicated issue, but felt that exploring options at Elmwood might be a good first step. Dogs are going to mark their spots, it's something to consider.

Wesley asked if there is a need for more dog parks/places to take dogs in Burlington. Wight answered that if you could enforce it, an on leash park at Lakeview would be extremely helpful and needed for the city. Additionally, there is no dog park in the Old North end where Elmwood is located. There is interest in further exploring this option, however it may become part of a larger conversation about parks.

Nancy – dumping at Greenmount

VIII. Staff/Director Items

Bushnell brought an item from Nancy Kirby who contacted her ahead of the meeting. She wanted to inform the commission that dumping of pallets, pressure treated lumber, and other assorted detritus continues at Greenmount. She will be locking the gate during the day to prevent this action from continuing.

Bushnell also informed the commission that she was contacted by Doug Lazarus, an area artist who is interested in creating an art piece at Lakeview. Bushnell explained that, while she and Lazarus had discussed the possibility of his work focusing on famous residents of Lakeview, she was more interested in doing something on every day Burlingtonians buried in the cemetery. Wesley was excited about the project and said she would be interested in discussing the project further, especially looking beyond the notable figures. Wight asked if Wesley would be able to guide the artistic side of the conversation with Lazarus, and Wesley responded that she could bring her experience to those questions. Millar commented that she'd like to hear more about the project. She commented that it may be important to consider the placement of these displays around Lakeview out of respect for active burials. She also asked if we might be able to use other spaces in the cemetery such as the bike path fence for these displays. Wight suggested that sections 6 or 8 might be good option for a display. She also wondered how long will exhibits be up. Church commented that security and vandalism might be



something taken under consideration as well. Bushnell asked if she should put Lazarus on the next agenda. The commission agreed.

Wight informed the commission that City Councilor Joan Shannon and area architect Misty Kaplan have expressed interest in restoring the Lakeview office building. There is some money in the budget for it, but not enough for a full restoration currently. Wight, Shannon, Kaplan, Bachand, Deryk Roach, and Bushnell toured the building to examine possible changes that could and should be made. BPRW will be asking the architect currently working on 311 North architect to look at Lakeview office and make an assessment. The most interesting part of Shannon's proposal includes adding and apartment upstairs. This space would be open to the community for rental (not just city employees). It would bring revenue to cemetery that could help with upkeep. The architect will help figure out what is historic on the building. Following that they will develop a basic scope of work with the funds available.

Millar asked if it might be better to add office space at Lakeview instead of the apartment. Wight returned that offices are a potential option, but BPRW doesn't really need more space at this time

IX. Commissioner Items

There were no additional items from any commissioners at this time.

X. Adjournment

Millar moved to conclude the meeting and all were in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 6:35pm. The next meeting will be held via zoom and in person on 5/20/2021 at 4:30pm.