



BURLINGTON
PARKS
CEMETERIES

Cemetery Commission Meeting Agenda

JANUARY 19, 2023, 4:30 PM

MEETING CONDUCTED VIA ZOOM AND
IN PERSON AT 645 PINE STREET FRONT CONFERENCE ROOM

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- I. Approval of Agenda
- II. Approval of Minutes from 10/20/2022 Meeting
- III. Public Forum
- IV. Presentation from City Dog Task Force
- V. Staff/Director Items'
 - a. Burial and Lot Purchase Rate Increase – Steve Bachand
 - b. VOCA work day at Elmwood – Steve Bachand, Holli Bushnell
 - c. General Update – Holli Bushnell
- VI. Commissioner Items
- VII. Adjournment



Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, January 19, 2023, 4:30 pm

Commissioners Present: Rita Church, Jennifer Diaz, Alexandra Millar

Commissioners Absent: Nancy Kirby, Mary Wesley

Staff Present: Cindi Wight – BPRW Director, Holli Bushnell – Cemetery Staff, Steve Bachand – Cemetery and Grounds Manager

Meeting was called to order at 4:36pm by Jennifer Diaz

I. Approval of the Agenda

Cindi Wight informed the commission that the Dog Task Force will not be able to present and the item was struck from the agenda. Diaz moved to adopt the agenda with Wight's modification, Rita Church seconded, and all were in favor.

II. Approval of Minutes from 10/19/2022

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

III. Public Forum

Public forum was opened at 4:40pm. As no members of the public were present the forum was also closed at 4:40pm.

IV. Burial and Lot Purchase Rate Increase – Steve Bachand

Cemetery and Grounds Manager Steve Bachand proposed a 10% increase for all burial and lot purchase rates based on current inflation rates. Additionally, Bachand proposed a 20% increase in burial rates over the winter months (November 1 to April 30) to compensate for the higher cost for winter burial. Diaz asked how Bachand came up with the rate of increase and Bachand explained that the information was taken from Consumer Index and calculated rates for all the various supplies (diesel, etc...) required for burial. The concept of a winter rate was taken from other Vermont city/town run cemeteries which also set a higher winter rate for burial.

Cindi Wight asked when the last time we increased our rates. Holli Bushnell reported that the last full increase took place in 2017. Wight concurred that the costs for the cemetery to perform its major functions continues to rise and feels that rate increases need to be looked at more regularly. Bachand agreed, stating that this is something he will be looking at yearly and that, while we've never passed on the higher costs we incur in the winter to our customers we can no longer afford to do so. Diaz queried if Lakeview is closed in the winter, and Wight explained that we only fully closed for the winter in 2020/2021 and now we only close on Saturdays (the cemetery is always closed to burials on Sundays). Bachand added that we do have Holiday rates set at the same as weekend rates, so that information was included even though the cemetery is closed on Saturdays in the winter.

Church asked if the cemetery had to increase the rates for infant burial and lot purchase as the hardship to individuals is already so high with the death of a child. Bachand explained that he was just trying to be consistent with a 10% raise across the board, but agreed to keep the rates for infant and



child burial and lot purchase the same. Diaz asked about the need to increase the rates for columbarium/mausoleum interments. Bushnell explained that burial rates are set by the type of remains, not the amount of work involved in the burial. The rates are the same for above ground and in ground interment they just change with the type of remains being interred (full casket versus cremains). Diaz asked if anyone has questioned that practice and Bachand stated that the rates have not been questioned by customers.

Church asked how the rate change will affect people coming from out of state. Bushnell explained that the resident rate is set for Burlington City residents only. All others purchasing lots pay the non-resident rate. Church stated her concern that not enough leg-work had been done in terms of researching the rate change, but also sees the need to act sooner rather than later especially because rates have not been raised in 5 years. Bushnell agreed to send a copy of the old price sheet to the commission along with the new prices for comparison.

Diaz called for a vote, all were in favor of the price change and the motion passed.

After some debate it was agreed that the price increase will begin on February 1, 2023. Any individual who has already begun to purchase a lot or plan a burial will be grandfathered in to the old rate.

V. VOCA Work Day at Elmwood – Steve Bachand, Holli Bushnell

Bushnell explained that, following the exceptional work that Vermont Old Cemeteries Association performed in the Home for Destitute Children Section at Lakeview, we decided to ask for further assistance from them in doing additional righting and repair work at Elmwood Cemetery. Tom Griffin from VOCA was very enthusiastic about helping with the work. He will be coming up in March or April to walk Elmwood with Bachand and staff and identify work that needs to be completed. He has a work day with his volunteers in Milton on 6/10/2023 and has asked that Burlington Commissioners attend that work day to make contact with his volunteers. The Elmwood workday will be 7/15/2023 from 8 to noon. The goal is the begin building a volunteer program here in Burlington that we can continue without the assistance of VOCA.

VI. General Update – Holli Bushnell

Bushnell detailed a project she had been working on with Mario Artaza, the Consul General of Chile, who reached out to her in relation to the 200 year anniversary of diplomatic relations between Chile and the United States. Heman Allen, nephew of Ethan and Ira, was the first US ambassador to Chile beginning on 1/23/1823, and Mr. Artaza requested that Bushnell assist him in placing a wreath on Heman's grave and photographing and recording the ceremony. That media will be used as part of the year-long celebration. Bushnell will be sending a media request to Wight in hopes of publicizing the event.

VII. Commissioner Items

Millar reports that she has had some contact with UVM students who are working on a green burial project, but does not have the final results of their work.

Church does not have an update from the Friends, but reports that they were very happy with the state of the chapel at their last meeting.

Wight cut in to report that work on the Lakeview office building will hopefully be starting soon and will be separated from the grounds work in conjunction with Cambrian Rise.

Bachand reports that both the working foreman and maintenance manager positions have been filled and that the department is now fully staffed as of 1/17/2023.



VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:38pm. The next meeting will be held on 2/16 in the Sharon Bushor Conference Room at City Hall to accommodate the Dog Task Force Powerpoint Presentation.

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