



KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL  
MAYOR

CITY OF SALEM  
MASSACHUSETTS  
CEMETERY COMMISSION

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BETH GERARD, CHAIR

**BOARD MEMBERS**  
PATRICIA DONAHUE  
KATE HANSON  
ANTHONY O'DONNELL  
JACOB ST. LOUIS

**MINUTES OF THE CEMETERY COMMISSION**  
**March 16, 2022**

A meeting of the Salem Cemetery Commission was held on March 16, 2022 at 6:00 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system. Present on call were: Chair Beth Gerard, Members: Patricia Donahue, Kate Hanson, Anthony O'Donnell and Jacob St. Louis; Cemetery Superintendent Robert LeBlanc and Commission Clerk Joanne Roomey.

**1. Approve Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes for January 19, 2022**

Ms. Donahue made a motion to approve the Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes for January 19, 2022. Seconded by Mr. O'Donnell. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

**2. Re- Organization of the Cemetery Commission - Chair**

Mr. O'Donnell made a motion to keep Ms. Gerard as Chair. Seconded by Ms. Donahue. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

**3. Superintendents Report – Robert LeBlanc - OLD**

Interment activities within the cemetery since the last meeting

- (1) Cremation burials
- (8) Full burials

- On February 10, 2022 Anthony O'Donnell was reappointed to the Cemetery Commission for another three years, going through to 2025. Thank you, Anthony for your continued support and community involvement!!!
- Mr. LeBlanc met with the paving contractor, E.J. Paving, who did the work at Greenlawn Cemetery last year and they walked the cemetery roads to get estimates for this year's paving. The route that was selected and recommended in the Master Plan could be referred to as

the Funeral Route. This is the road that starts at the North Street gate and leads down Rose Ave, parallel to Orne Street and then cuts down below the chapel and crosses the main cemetery and intersects with Harris Circle. This is the most used road and will serve the funeral process the best. Mr. LeBlanc was advised that the price of petroleum will be very high this year and the preliminary proposed quote for the work could be as high as \$75 - \$85,000 for cubic feet of paving. Once the contractor is selected for the City contract, he will get a firm number.

- On March 3, 2022 Mr. LeBlanc was informed by City Hall that the new state directive concerning Open Meeting Law and in-person meetings of public Boards had been amended. The new Law states that all Boards will meet in person starting on July 15, 2022. Mr. LeBlanc contacted the Community Life Center on Bridge Street and requested a room for the first scheduled meeting for July. This request was accepted, but due to prior Board meetings, our scheduled time will be a 6:30 start time instead of our usual 6pm. More details will be put out from City Hall about how these meetings can be conducted.
- The Massachusetts Cemetery Association will be holding their annual meeting on April 8, 2022 in Foxboro, and Mr. LeBlanc has registered himself and Kelly Ryan to attend the meeting. This is a good opportunity to meet with vendors and to network with other cemeteries.
- Mr. LeBlanc has received a letter from the Arboriculture teacher at the Essex Tech., looking for a location to bring some of the students to perform some light pruning to practice their trained skills. Mr. LeBlanc has responded and said that Greenlawn Cemetery would be happy to host some workdays for the students. He will meet with the instructor to go over a scope of work for the pruning.
- The contract for burial services at the cemetery has been expired for quite some time now and a new contract was implemented. This service needed to go through the M.G.L. Chapter 30B process for procurement. The request for quotes was advertised for two weeks, one bid was received, and the contract has been awarded to Mscisz and Sons of Danvers, the contractor who has been doing the work, and performed well over the past contract period. This contract will be for one year with an option to extend for another two years.
- The Friends of Broad Street Cemetery have written to ask if they can work with a local headstone conservator to wash and clean some of the selected headstones at the Broad Street Cemetery. I have asked them to prepare a scope of work and include Patti Kelleher, Staff Preservationist, to make sure that the contractor was qualified, and the work was acceptable. Mr. LeBlanc will work with Patti and the Broad

Street Neighbors to get all the details and keep the commission informed of the proposed work.

- This past week, Iron Tree Co. was at the Charter Street Cemetery to perform a canopy clean of some of the large trees at that location. This was a recommendation from the Charter Street project from last year and the opportunity was available to get in to do the work. The pruning came out well and all the broken or dead branches were removed, and the trees cleaned up for the year. Mr. LeBlanc would look to do this operation on an annual basis, as it has been a while since any tree work had been performed there and the volume of visitors that now tour the cemetery.

#### **4. Update Cemetery Fee Schedule/ Review- **Vote****

Kelley Ryan explained the proposed changes to Greenlawn Cemetery pricing list which was very modest. They have not increased any pricing since 2014. Due to prices for deliveries going up as well as other costs, the commission decided to increase the fees which will go into effect April 1, 2022.

Ms. Hanson made a motion to approve the proposed changes for prices to the Greenlawn Cemetery Pricing List effective April 1, 2022. Seconded by Mr. St. Louis. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

#### **5. Friends of Greenlawn Request for April 30<sup>th</sup> Event**

Christine Lutts wants to have a fund raiser with Pulitzer Prize-winning American composer and performer Caroline Shaw with an all-women quartet to play in the chapel in honor of Ancestry Day. They would use the Dickson Chapel from 12:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. and will only give out 50 tickets. She will pay the musicians from the donations/tickets and will put the rest towards the restoration of the stain glass windows.

Kelley Ryan said in the past, they have not rented out the chapel because it is not ADA approved, no bathrooms and the building is not up to code. There are liability issues and they do not want to put anyone in jeopardy. Mr. LeBlanc also reiterated concerns regarding the building being very fragile.

Mr. LeBlanc went with Patty Kelleher from Planning to check out the chapel's interior and exterior. Ms. Kelleher wants a full building assessment. She is hoping to get some grants to fund the project.

Ms. Donahue said if it wasn't for the Friends of Greenlawn no one would have recognized the chapel as a "hidden gem". They have worked there for years without rules and regulations and done very well, especially with the

restoration to the rose window. The goal is to protect and preserve the chapel to make it usable and workable for the public.

The commission proposed to Ms. Lutts to have the musicians play in the garden area and just leave the chapel doors open. Mr. LeBlanc offered a tent in case of rain and suggested getting some porta potties and figure out parking.

The commission decided to table this for a special meeting that will be held on March 30, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom to discuss what they have to do to make the chapel safe with no liability issues.

## **6. Dickson Chapel- Stained Glass Window Assessment Work – Vote**

Mr. LeBlanc contacted Julie Sloan, a stained-glass consultant, who has worked in stained glass since 1982. He asked her if she would be interested in restoring the stained-glass windows in the Dickson Chapel. Proposals from Ms. Sloan:

1. Brief report of age and conditions, what you need for repairing windows \$6,600.
2. Full condition analysis would be \$8,330 take into recommendations and costs estimates.
3. Proposal the WHOLE thing to the assessment window by window, manage the bid process \$20,000.

Mr. LeBlanc said we could use the \$8,599 that was taken from the Dickson Chapel Fund to use towards the assessment.

Mr. O'Donnell made a motion to approve the use of \$8,330 for the assessment report on the stain glass window for the Dickson Chapel. Seconded by Ms. Donahue. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

**7. Greenlawn Cemetery Master Plan – Discussion and review**

Mr. LeBlanc explained his top three choices regarding the Expense and Revenue Summary from the Master Plan.

**EXPANSION EXPENSE & REVENUE SUMMARY**

Site	Development Cost	Number of Interments	Projected Revenue
A-Althea-Clematis Paths/Hemlock-Ash-Thorn Triangle <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Choice</b>	\$600,000 - \$650,000	600 in-Ground Cremation Burials	\$429,000
		120 Columbarium Niches	\$300,000
B-Burke Lot <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Choice</b>	\$750,000 - \$800,000	335 Double-Depth Full Casket Plots	\$956,425
C-West Chapel Slope <b>1<sup>st</sup> CHOICE</b>	\$960,000 - \$1,100,000	1,200 Columbarium Niches	\$3,000,000
		66 Double-Depth Full Casket Plots	\$188,430
		Unlimited Scattering	Unlimited

The commission agrees with Mr. LeBlanc’s first choice **C-West Chapel Slope**.

Mr. LeBlanc read a letter dated 3/1/22 from Mayor Driscoll suggesting amending the regulation of only allowing deceased individuals to be buried in the cemetery if they are residents of the City at the time of their passing or if they are former resident who moved away within five years.

Amend to: allow lots, up to two, to be sold for the burial of former Salem residents who many not have resided in Salem at the time of their death, but who spent a significant portion of their life in Salem to be buried in Greenlawn with family that is already interred there.

Ms. Donahue suggested to be like Peabody and make NO exceptions. Mr. O’Donnell said to keep the rules as current, but maybe amend them on the way. He believes if you’re a taxpayer in Salem, you should be able to buy a grave. Mr. LeBlanc said the situation drives the policy, until the situation is better than we can change the policies. He would also like to address the regulations regarding preselling lots. He said there is about ten years left in Greenlawn and thinks in five years we should start looking into

land somewhere which would be able to open up and have a less severe policy.

The commission agrees that this is a high priority topic and wants to table it until the next meeting.

**8. New Business**

Folks have requested interment activities within the cemetery to date for the year together with month to month for cremations and burials and the total of new graves sold.

Dr. Delisio from SSU wrote two pieces regarding the arboretum and requested any time a tree is going to be taken down, could she get some remanence of the tree like seedlings or cones for her research.

- 9. Adjournment:** Ms. Donahue made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Ms. Hanson. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Roomey  
Commission Clerk

**Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A §18-25 and  
City Ordinance Sections 2-2028 through 2-2033**