



KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL
MAYOR

CITY OF SALEM
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CEMETERY COMMISSION

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BETH GERARD, CHAIR

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

MINUTES OF THE CEMETERY COMMISSION
May 18, 2022

A meeting of the Salem Cemetery Commission was held on May 18, 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 and Jacob St. Louis; Cemetery Superintendent Robert LeBlanc and Commission Clerk Joanne Roomey. Absent was Anthony O'Donnell.

1. Approve Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes for March 16, 2022

Ms. Donahue made a motion to approve the Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes for March 16, 2022. Seconded by Mr. St. Louis. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Superintendents Report – Robert LeBlanc

- Interment Activities within the cemetery since the last meeting:

(9) cremation burials
(3) full burials

New Graves Purchased since 1/1/2022: 10

Requests for Chapel Usage: 5

Dog Related issues/Calls: 20

Residency Clarifications (research beyond documents provided): 4

- Landscape improvements were done by cemetery staff at the Orne St. entrance. New granite cobble stones were installed around the front circle. The cobblestone boarder was set in stone dust and backed up with asphalt. Six new arborvitae trees were planted near the maintenance garage area and the employee parking stalls. This is a recommendation from the 2022 Master Plan. The tree garage has a new overhead door and sheet metal work was replaced and repaired on the garage to improve the exterior appearance. Hard packed gravel was

installed in all parking areas to better define the parking spots for staff and the neaten up the appearance of the area.

Last week the fountains were installed in both the ponds at Greenlawn Cemetery. These are the new fountains that were purchased through Perpetual Care funds last year. Solitude Lake, the pond maintenance contractor performed the installs to help with aeration of the ponds. The ponds are also going to be monitored and treated through October to control the invasive aquatic plants and maintain water quality.

- All the shrub and flower beds at Greenlawn and Charter St. Cemetery have been raked clean and fresh bark mulch added. Twenty-five yards of screened loam have been applied to the bare spots and grave burial sites throughout Greenlawn, seeded and fertilized for the spring.
- Three days of tree pruning were performed by a local tree contractor at Greenlawn to address some of the dead and broken branches. This is an on-going process between the DPS tree crew and contractors to help maintain the tree canopy. The scope of the work is to remove dead wood and to give the selected trees some structural pruning. Four trees have been identified as needing to be removed. These trees are close to the main roadways and paths and present a potential hazard to pedestrians and cars. The Salem tree crew will spend one day a week at the Greenlawn cemetery to keep up with this much neglected pruning operations.
- During the first three weeks of May, the cemetery staff were asked to assist with the Salem Parks Department in keeping up with grass cutting in the parks. To make up for the reduction in staff, the cemetery crews will be asked for overtime opportunities to catch up with work at the cemetery.
- Two new concrete bench pads were poured during the month of May. New benches that were ordered in the winter have been assembled and will be placed at Greenlawn before the Memorial Day weekend. This brings the total to five new benches with improved sitting areas over the past eighteen months. More benches will be added or replaced to improve the sitting areas throughout the cemetery this year. All these projects have been performed by in-house staff and are a significant improvement.
- The annual flowers have arrived from Kane's Flower World and will be planted around the mulched beds and entranceways for Memorial Day. This spring addition to the flora at Greenlawn are part of the Trust Fund allocations that the Cemetery Commissioners approved last fall.

- The Cemetery Department took delivery on a brand-new Ford F-150 in April. This is part of the Capital Improvements Program through vehicle replacement program at DPS and contributed in part by Perpetual Care Funds approved last fall by the Cemetery Commission.
- A contract is being finalized for the lawn maintenance at the historic cemeteries. This is an on-going operation, supervised by the cemetery superintendent and it allows the cemetery staff to focus more man hours at the Greenlawn Cemetery for upkeep and daily operations. The staff will still perform weekly tasks at the other cemeteries, such as litter control, mulch bed weeding and general clean-up.
- Over twenty letters of support, including one from this Board were received by Community Preservation Act Committee for the restoration project of the stained-glass windows in the Dickson Chapel.

3. Acceptance of Bench Donation- Mrs. Aubertin – Vote

Mrs. Aubertin has made a bench donation of \$1,950 through the Park and Recreation Department for her husband, who is a veteran, which will be placed in the veterans' section behind the Dickson Chapel. The commission will write a letter of appreciation.

Mr. LeBlanc will contact the Finance Director to see if the donations can go through the Cemetery Department and not the Park and Recreation Department.

Ms. Hanson made a motion for the acceptance of a bench donation from Mrs. Aubertin. Seconded by Ms. Donahue. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

4. F. Carrol Sargent Arboretum Update- Dr. Lisa Delissio

Dr. Delissio updated the commission on the progress of the F. Carrol Sargent Arboretum. 200 trees were tagged and identified. There were questions regarding maintenance issues of apples and the clean-up involved in the grounds during the fall. Dr. Delissio assured the commission that most of the trees that she is referring to are crabapple trees and there were no crabapple trees near graves, and the fruit they produce are little, about 2" round.

The commission discussed having some type of MOU agreement and Dr. Delissio said she had a sample Exchange Agreement that she would like to use. Dr. Delissio will follow-up with quarterly reports and will come back in August or September.

There were several comments from attendees: Charlie Lipson, Richard Stafford and Margaret Fleming regarding data collections and balancing the cemetery with an arboretum.

5. Salem Cemetery Residency Policy. Present Status/Amendments

Ms. Gerard read a letter of recommendation from Mayor Driscoll regarding amending the Cemetery Residency Policy.

Ms. Donahue was concerned about the elderly population and people having to go into nursing homes than their residency would be wherever the nursing home was. She suggested changing it to 10 years residency requirement and adding an exception to include a clause for former residents who have resided in care facilities.

Public comments: Christine Lutts, from Friends of Greenlawn Cemetery, was concerns about the west slope of the chapel and the possibilities that there may be rare trees about there. Also, she noted that since it is a registered historic place, there are restrictions of the number of feet from the chapel that you can do certain things. The commission will follow-up with Patti Kelleher. Polly Wilbert also had the same concerns as Ms. Donahue regarding seniors.

The commission wants to develop a comprehensive policy that updates all the previous ones and suggested expanding the space before they amend the policy. They will follow-up with the mayor and put the vote on hold until the next meeting.

6. Dickson Chapel Building Review

Mr. LeBlanc met with Fire Chief Dion, BOH David Greenbaum and Michael Lutrzykowski, Director of Facilities and toured the building. There is a lot of work that has to be done concerning the condition of the building and ADA compliance. Mr. LeBlanc will draft a clear policy to address capacity, rules for groups to use it for weddings, funerals, or luminaires. The commission will invite someone from Building, Fire and Board of Health Departments to the next meeting.

Public comments: Charlie Lipson wanted to know when Mr. Dickson's gift was and if he put any restrictions on it? He also commented on having a fee schedule or donation funds. Polly Wilbert said in 1894 there was language when the city accepted the chapel and believes the City Clerk would have that information. Christine Lutts, volunteering with a group for 10 years is very confused why they are blocked from fundraising. Margaret Fleming believes that burials take precedent even at the last minute, no one can schedule a wedding or event that could be bumped. Philip and Edith spoke about collaboration between the commission and FOG to restore the building.

7. Greenlawn Master Plan - Discussion and Review

Table to the next meeting.

8. New Business - None

- 9. Adjournment:** Ms. Donahue made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Louis. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 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