



DOMINICK PANGALLO
MAYOR

CITY OF SALEM
MASSACHUSETTS
CEMETERY COMMISSION

57 ORNE STREET
SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS 01970
TEL. (978) 745-0195
FAX (978) 741-7041

JACOB ST. LOUIS, CHAIR

BOARD MEMBERS
BETH GERARD
KATE HANSON
ANTHONY O'DONNELL
PHILLIP JOHNS

DRAFT
MINUTES OF THE CEMETERY COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 13, 2024

A meeting of the Salem Cemetery Commission was held on February 13, 2024, at 6:00 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system. Present on call were Chairperson Jacob St. Louis, Members: Kate Hanson and Phillip Johns; Raymond Jodoin, Director of Operations; Conor Morgan, General Foreperson, Cemetery/Tree Division, DPS and Commission Clerk Joanne Roomey. Absent were Beth Gerard and Anthony O'Donnell.

1. Approve Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes for November 21, 2023

Mr. Johns made a motion to approve the Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes for November 21, 2023. Seconded by Ms. Hanson. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was carried unanimously.

2. Superintendent report from Conor Morgan about Cemetery operations

Please see the following interment activities within the Greenlawn Cemetery:

January: 6 Sales; 8 Boxes; 9 Burials; and 2 Cremations

February: 4 Sales; 1 Box; 4 Burials and 1 Cremation

Mr. Morgon said the developments in the cemetery have been focused on repairs to the Dickson Chapel. They have gotten various pricing quotes, one under \$10,000 but was stopped because of bad weather. They investigated possibilities to patch up the southwest corner of the chapel that was damaged from frost and water. To heat the stone and do the repairs through the winter, it would be more than \$10,000. They are going to make those repairs as soon as the temperature rises.

As far as the Burke Lot goes, they have been marking out graves. There are 14 spaces that could be used to create burials. The orientation marks out the root protection of the trees you're going to maintain and then marks out the potential lots you can excavate outside of those lots. One issue is you can mark a line of graves along the fence with the headstones along the fence, but it's impossible if that is behind the root area because the grave digger wants to position his machine at the foot of the grave and dig the grave. You cannot dig at the head of the grave. They are going to remove the maple tree and make graves there. There have been

normal operations in the cemetery in the wintertime. When there is no snow, they clean up leaves and internments.

3. Cemetery Interment Fee Discussion

Mr. Morgan explained that they did a comparison with surrounding cemeteries regarding their fee schedule to see if they are charging the same prices for the same services. The Cemetery Department has not had any increases for the past couple of years. He said other cemeteries do not have columbarium or a scatter garden. Kelley Ryan has done the research for interments and pricing and will get the information to the Cemetery Commission by the next meeting.

The commission wants the Master Plan from Martha Lyons that has the 2019 Fee Schedule together with the capital improvements for the past two years and funds. Mr. Morgan will supply that for the commission. The commission wants to focus mainly on:

- Fees/Pricing
- Policies/Procedures
- Sales
- Markers, are they the same
- Maintain the natural state of the existing trees

They also discussed column burials versus in the ground burials, cremations, and scattering gardens. They said column burials are more expensive, maybe because of the ongoing perpetual care. Mr. Jodoin explained that some of the pricing includes taking care of the lots, grave diggers, and future maintenance. The city has some of the equipment, expertise, and the staffing to do some things, but other things they need to get a subcontractor. The commission will continue this discussion when they have more information. Click on the link below for more information regarding the Greenlawn Cemetery pricing list as of 3/16/22:

https://www.salemma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf7986/f/uploads/greenlawn_cemetery_pricing_list_2022.pdf

4. Discussion about Dickson West Side Chapel Slope Expansion

Mr. Jodoin said they had their public forum meeting and most of the conversation was around the fee schedule. They are going to hold off on the Dickson Chapel discussion until they get a better understanding regarding the fee schedule, breakdown of internal cost and reaffirming that if this area is the right direction they want to start with.

Mr. St. Louis said initially when we discussed this project our interest in the West Chapel Slope was primarily the revenue because we were eventually going to develop all these locations. This revenue was going to help pay for those. Another big factor was would it be multiple types of internments. The commission agreed to revisit this discussion when they got more information regarding the fee schedule.

5. Burke Lot Update

Mr. Morgan said the development of the Burke Lot has continued in the following ways. The detailed plan of “Root Protection Areas” versus new lots was finalized. It was agreed that the first lots that could be exploited were located along the Orne St. A crucial tree #72 needed to be removed and the stump ground to allow these lots to be surveyed and marked out. The tree was removed by city staff and the stump ground by Mayer Tree Service. Approximately 30 lots can now be immediately realized. This is in addition to up to 30 infill lots.

Mr. Jodoin added that they are still researching the new expansion and wanted to pay special care to the root protection zone. They agreed on the arboretum status and want to get lot numbers assigned and make sure they have special care for double and single lots.

Mr. Jodoin said he wanted to discuss the regulations of standards for headstones as it pertains to the Burke Lot. Mr. Morgan said there is a standard of one head marker, one foot marker and a veteran plaque. They will get an update regarding any “standardization” for the markers as far as measurements, etc.

6. Trust fund discussions

- Starting to discuss this year’s budget and the impacts to the trust funds.

Mr. Jodoin will be requesting from the Trust Fund Commission the reconciliation of the trust funds. He should be able to have enough information for the next meeting regarding the Operating Budget for FY25 for the commission’s approval. Mr. Jodoin will send information to the commission that was generated for last year's budget for a comparison.

7. New Business: The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 9, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. via ZOOM.

8. Adjournment: Ms. Hanson made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Johns. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 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