

Cemetery Commission Meeting

Meeting Date: July 9, 2015

Commissioners Present: Rita Church, Barry Trutor, Donna Waldron, Lainey Rappaport

Staff Present: Jesse Bridges, Parks and Recreation Department Head (arrived at 5:45)
Deryk Roach, Parks and Recreation Facilities Maintenance
Anne D’Alton, Cemetery Office Assistant

Attachments: Chittenden County Cemeteries – Lot Pricing for Residents & Non-Residents

The meeting was called to order by Donna Waldron at 4:28 pm.

I. Approval of Agenda

A. Tabled.

II. Approval of Minutes from January 15, 2015 and April 13, 2015 Meetings

A. Tabled.

III. Old Business

A. Office Report tabled from May 14, 2015 meeting:

- ◆ Discussion of changing definition of “resident” when determining whether a lot owner should pay resident or non-resident price.
 - Annie D’Alton discussed the issue that comes up often when selling lots: non-resident lot purchasers complain that they should pay the resident price because person to be interred lived in Burlington. Proposed a change to allow resident price in such cases. Referred to handout showing results of canvassing Chittenden area Cemeteries on whether or not they discriminate between residents & non-residents, and if so, how they determine residency.
 - Barry Trutor asked D’Alton to scan Commission Meeting Minutes since 1993 (when Burlington Cemeteries first started charging more for non-residents) to find out their rationale for charging more to non-residents, and how they defined “resident” (which is currently defined as residency of lot owner); also to write up a proposed change in rule.
- ◆ Pontem data entry is revealing greater scope of work needed to complete Cemetery records—many errors & inconsistencies. D’Alton gave some examples. We are very fortunate to have 2 long-term, energetic and detail-oriented volunteers (Deb Light and Gail Asbury), but progress is extremely slow.
 - Donna Waldron indicated that moving the Office Assistant position to full-time does not seem feasible, so finding more volunteers would be important. However, at 20 hours per week, D’Alton has trouble getting routine work done, let alone training & supervising volunteers (which is probably not even in her Grade 12 job description).
 - Lainey Rappaport suggested student interns, but it takes a long time to train people to use Pontem, so would this would not be effective.



IV. Superintendent's Items

- A. Deryk Roach reported for Jesse Bridges about the process of handling work order requests in the Parks Department: To help make sure requests do not fall through the cracks, as can happen with emailed requests, Parks started using a networked system, "Facility Dude", in August of 2014. Deryk is working with Martha Keenan to include Cemetery as a requestor.
- ◆ Waldron noted Martha Keenan was going to get back to the Commission concerning which category Chapel repair falls under. Roach is aware of this, as he is on the team working to prioritize maintenance & repair projects. He supervises 25 Parks employees to get this work done in City facilities that do not have their own maintenance staff.
 - ◆ Waldron asked if Penny for Parks money can be used for Cemetery repairs. Roach said he didn't think so, but Bridges would need to answer that. There are several sources of funding for maintenance work; PforP provides about \$300,000 per year, and the City's Capital Improvement budget is about \$2 million.
 - ◆ Jeff Shedd informed Roach that Cemetery staff have no time to handle any work beyond mowing at this time of year, so Roach is working on allocating other Parks resources to some of the needed maintenance work.
 - ◆ Trutor asked about Greenmount fence & road repair; he observed a man using break in fence and not cleaning up his dog's feces. When Roach indicated the fence repair is in line with several other fence repair jobs, Trutor noted that Greenmount should get priority due to legal issues described by Vermont Statutes. Discussion about how to repair it followed: Trutor asked that it be fixed asap, in the same manner as it has been fixed before, and if it is broken again, *then* a new method should be tried—the main point is that the issue be addressed in a more timely manner—it's been broken for two years.
 - ◆ Rappaport asked that "no dogs" signs be installed because many people don't know of this rule. Roach indicated that former Commissioners did not want to spoil the aesthetics of the Cemetery with signage. Waldron suggested using Front Porch Forum to educate the public about rules. Deryk said she could coordinate with Diana Wood, a Parks employee involved with marketing and communication to the public. Rita Church said she would approve of signs, but in her experience they don't help. Roach said this could be true, but we can't expect the public to obey rules they don't know about. It would be helpful to indicated where dogs ARE allowed, in the same message. Church suggested using 7 Days. Roach noted that the City Ordinance pertaining to dogs is changing.
 - ◆ Trutor and Waldron thanked Roach for listening to the Commissioners' concerns and frustration with lack of resolution on maintenance issues.

V. Commissioners' Items

- A. Status of Cemetery Commission (Bridges arrived at 5:45)
- ◆ Bridges reported that, as she noted in an email to the Commission, Jane Ewing proposed about a year ago to dissolve the Cemetery Commission and instead have a Cemetery representative on the Parks Commission. The City Council has been discussing a merge, and a resolution sponsored by Councilors Shannon & Knodell has been written.
 - ◆ Trutor expressed strong opposition, asking Bridges what could be gained by abolishing the Cemetery Commission, and what has the Commission done wrong. Bridges responded that the Commission has not done anything wrong, that it would not be abolished, and that the merge would be an efficiency measure. Argument ensued.
 - ◆ Rappaport expressed the belief that the Cemetery is different from the City's parks, and Parks Dept. Commissioners would not necessarily understand the needs of Cemeteries.



Bridges noted that other Commissions with varied interest have merged. Trutor said that this may be so, but it may not be for the best.

- ◆ Ewing's term has ended, and although she expressed interest in continuing on the Commission if reappointed by the Council in August, she is not a Commissioner at present. Rappaport noted that the merge was her opinion, not that of the Commission. All four current members are opposed to the merge.
- ◆ Trutor felt Bridges should have kept the Commission informed about this matter, but Bridges noted that he just heard about the resolution. Church noted that Ewing proposed her idea before any of the other three present Commissioners were appointed to the Commission, so they were not aware of it.
- ◆ Waldron expressed dissatisfaction that the Cemetery Commission was not consulted by the City Council, and has not had an opportunity to air their views on the merge.
- ◆ Bridges wrote an email to Knodell expressing the Commission's opposition to the merge, and request for an opportunity to express said to the Council.

B. Commissioner Trutor's Items

- ◆ Election of Officers: Tabled.
- ◆ Greenmount fence & roads (see IV.A., Superintendent's Items)
- ◆ Request for CAO to discuss Perpetual Care account: Tabled.
- ◆ Status of Chapel sign installation: Tabled.
- ◆ Letters of Appreciation: Trutor & Waldron will work on.
- ◆ Verizon proposal: Tabled.

VI. Office Report

- A. Tabled.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm.

The next meeting will be Thursday, August 13 at 4:30 pm.