



ADMINISTRATION & ENGINEERING—WATER—SEWER—FACILITIES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

September 21, 2023 8:30 A.M.

Melrose City Hall, Cassidy Room Conference Room, 562 Main Street, Melrose, MA 02176

Attendance:

Chairman, Daniel O'Neill (DO)

Cemetery Administrator, Denise Slane (DS)

Commissioner, Eileen Hamblin (EH)

City Council, Mark Garipay (MG)

Commissioner, Susan Cann (SC)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m. A motion to call the meeting to order was made by DO and was seconded by SC. All in favor.

Review of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of August 17, 2023 were reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes as read was made by SC and seconded by EH. All in favor.

Public Comment

A motion to open the meeting for public comment was made by SC and seconded by DO. All in favor. Floor opened at 8:33.

Resident Mark Garipay (Moreland Rd) spoke about the Ripley School property as a resident. He stated that he supports the building of a new Public Safety building, but that he does not support the use of cemetery land for this build without some type of land swap to ensure that future burials will be available for residents in the town they live in.

A motion to close the meeting for public comment was made by SC and seconded by EH. All in favor. Floor closed at 8:35.

Financial Report

The financial report for August 2023 prepared by Denise Slane was reviewed. A motion to accept the report was made by EH and seconded by SC. All in favor.

Old Business

Livermore Mausoleum

EH has not received a call back from the contact on this matter and requested to table this item until she gets in touch with the contact.

Paving

DO updated the commission on the roadways set to be paved. At this time Hillside would be the first choice, but for budgeting purposes they may do Lakeside, Fountain and Elm instead. Three more roadways are scheduled to be completed next year. He also stated that paving needs would be reviewed/discussed with the Cemetery Foreman, as he is the one that leads the funerals in and knows the areas that need immediate attention.

Update on Digitalization Project

An update from Jane Pitts was presented to the Commission.

Discussion of Grave Sales 90% / Perpetual Care (P/C) 10%

DS notified the commission that she has not heard back from the other municipal cemeteries she called about this. DO stated that a decision on this item should be made in the near future due to the fact that once there are no more graves available to for sale that funds/deposits into perpetual care will cease and then only what is made from interest will be available to the cemetery. Further discussion was had about the possibility of a columbarium being installed for cremations instead of using land that could be used for casket burials. SC asked if maybe a walk through could take place in the future to determine where this might go and where future burials could go. DO said that he would discuss this with the Cemetery Foreman and DPW. It was suggested that this item be tabled and discussed further at the next meeting.

Discussion of Ripley School Land

It was discussed that the ballot is to allow the city to redo four buildings. If passed they would have to propose where these buildings will go. EH asked if the debt exclusion passed would it be the City Council that approves the bond. MG stated that the City Council would be the ones to review and approve the bond. It was discussed that if the Cemetery Commission agrees to a land swap of the Ripley School property, that a survey would need to be done first to determine the number of graves that would be given up for resident burials and that the land they swap for would need to be an even swap to accommodate the same number of graves or more for future burials. It was suggested that this items be discussed at a future meeting to establish guidelines for this.

New Business

Veterans Markers

DO discussed that due to a recent inquire to the cemetery about grass growing over Veterans flat makers they are looking into solutions to have the graves cleared with the help of volunteers. He stated that there are only three crew members at the cemetery and that they do a wonderful job but they are responsible for all the grounds work and interments and this is a large cemetery with thousands of burials. DO discussed reaching out to the Northeast Vocational school as they have a horticultural program and that maybe some of the students could come and help as part of their program. They would be supervised by an instructor. DO also stated that Veterans that live in Melrose may also be willing to help out. He will look into these possible solutions and discuss it at the next meeting.

Items not reasonably anticipated by Chairman at time of posting.

EH discussed that she attended a service over the weekend at The Gardens in West Roxbury and was talking with the Superintendent. They discussed how The Gardens also developed their own software solution for the tracking of interments. EH suggested that we look at the website for The Gardens to see if there might be something on their program we would like to include on ours.

EH made a motion to adjourn, SC second the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:29 a.m.
All in favor.