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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

ADMINISTRATION & ENGINEERING–WATER–SEWER-FACILITIES

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Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

November 16, 2023 8:45 A.M.

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

Attendance:

Chairman, Daniel O'Neill (DO)

Commissioner, Eileen Hamblin (EH)

Commissioner, Susan Cann (SC)

Cemetery Administrator, Denise Slane (DS)

DPW Deputy Directory, Jim Troup (JT)

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 8:45 a.m. A motion to call the meeting to order was made by DO and was seconded by EH. All in favor.

Review of Minutes
The minutes of the meeting of October 19, 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 EH and seconded by SC. All in favor.
Floor opened at 8:46.
There were no residents in attendance.
A motion to close the meeting for public comment was made by EH and seconded by SC. All in favor.
Floor closed at 8:46.

Financial Report
The financial report for October 2023 prepared by Denise Slane was reviewed. A motion to accept the report was made by EH and seconded by SC. All in favor.
An overview of cemetery accounts was also submitted for review.

DO asked to discuss old business items first, then move onto new business, all in favor.

Old Business

Paving
DO asked for an update. JT stated that paving is in the process of being done, roadways have been marked out and that they are on track to finish the paving according to schedule.

Discussion of Grave Sales 90% / Perpetual Care (P/C) 10%
DO is waiting for information on this from Legal. This will be discussed further at a future meeting.

New Business

Violation Letters
Violation letters were sent to several families due to the condition of their graveside causing a safety issue for Cemetery staff and visitors. All the families have addressed the violations accordingly.

Tree/Shrub Issues
The Cemetery office has received complaints about trees/shrubs planted at graves. These complaints are being addressed as they come in. SC asked if a letter could be sent to all families with trees/shrubs on their graveside reminding them that the planting of trees/shrubs is not allowed in the Rules and Regulations. DO stated that in the past the issue was not addressed immediately and in some cases was allowed. DS suggested that moving forward reminders be posted as part of the Spring and Fall cleanups. All agreed this would be a good idea moving forward. DO also stated that families are also notified upon purchasing graves that the plantings are not allowed.

Buy Back of Lot
It was discussed that there is a family that would like to sell their graves that they purchased in 1990 back to the Cemetery. The family moved out of state a few years ago and will not be using the lot. The family would be reimbursed the original purchase price of the graves.

Motion:	EH made a motion to allow the sale of the graves back to the cemetery at the original purchase price.
2nd Motion:	SC second the motion
Further Discussion:	None
Vote:	3-0-0 PASSED

DS will notify the family of the Commission's decision and will begin the buyback process.

Discussion and Vote for Burial Request
DS presented a request for burial. A family member called about having her brother's cremains interred, but stated that they do not have a copy of the cremation certificate and that the brother passed in 2013. They contacted the funeral home that handled the services and they no longer have it on file (they destroy them after two years). The funeral home did state that they would write a letter for the family stating that they handled the services and that the brother was cremated. The family is requesting permission to burial their brother's cremains without the cremation certificate.

Discussion and Vote for Burial Request (con't)

Motion:	EH made a motion to allow the family to bury the cremains with the letter from the cemetery and not a cremation certificate due to it being destroyed.
2nd Motion:	SC second the motion
Further Discussion:	None
Vote:	3-0-0 PASSED

DS will notify the family of the Commission's decision.

Discussion and Vote on Cemetery Fee Charge

DS is waiting for information on this from Legal. This will be discussed further at a future meeting.

Items not reasonably anticipated by Chairman at time of posting.

Cemetery Digitalization Project

SC gave an update on the digitalization project and stated that equipment will need to be purchased for the cemetery office in the future to continue to maintain the program moving forward. JT stated that when the needs are determined that a request and purchase order will need to be setup and submitted to him so that he can begin the approval process. It was also discussed the IT would be a part of this process.

Cemetery Commission Meeting 2024

A tentative 2024 meeting schedule was handed out.

EH made a motion to adjourn, SC second the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 a.m.
All in favor.