



ADMINISTRATION & ENGINEERING—WATER—SEWER—FACILITIES

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

April 18, 2024 8:51 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)

Co-Chair, Eileen Hamblin (EH)

Mayor Jen Grigoraitis (MJG)

Commission Member, Susan Cann (SC)

Absent: Deputy Director DPW, Jim Troup (JT)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:51 a.m. A motion to call the meeting to order was made by DO and was seconded by EH. All in favor.

Introduction of Mayor Jen Grigoraitis

Mayor Jen was introduced to the commission members. MJG gave an update on some of the items that she is aware the commission is working on. The Public Safety Building – The Ripley School is currently under lease to SEEM until 2026. They will work on a timeline with SEEM once further discussions/decisions have been made. MJG stated the city is looking to hire a project manager that would oversee this project, work with city departments, and provide updates on this project. DO stated that the commission will work together with the city in reference to the cemetery land that Ripley currently sits on as part of future expansion. DO supports a new Public Safety building but the commission agrees that plans must be considered for future expansion of the cemetery for residents. MJG also stated they are in the process of securing funding for the digitalization project the cemetery is working on.

Public Comment

A motion to open the meeting for public comment was made by SC and seconded by EH. All in favor. Floor opened at 8:50.

Resident Mark Garipay spoke – he stated he was attending to speak as a resident and not as a city councilor. Mark stated that he feels the commission should not vote on a loss of land. He feels the commission should hold off on voting until an agreement can be made about how the cemetery will be expanded for residents for future burials and agree on some type of land swap. He also stated that he knows there are areas of the cemetery where burials cannot take place because of the water tables and once there is no land to sell the cemetery will have a loss of incoming funds that help support the cemetery operation. He once again encouraged the commission to not hold a vote on the land until an agreement can be made, as he believes all Melrose residents have the right to have their final resting place in the city if they so choose.

A motion to close the meeting for public comment was made by DO and seconded by EH. All in favor. Floor closed at 8:55.

Review of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of March 14, 2024, were reviewed. A motion by EH was made to accept the minutes. Seconded by SC. All in favor.

Financial Report

The financial report for March 2024 prepared by DS was reviewed. A motion to accept the report was made by EH and seconded by SC. All in favor.

Nominations for Commission Members

Nominations were opened at 8:57.

Nomination for Commission Chair:

Susan Cann nominated Daniel O'Neill to be the Commission Chair, motion was second by Eileen Hamblin. Daniel O'Neill accepted the nomination. Vote to appoint Daniel O'Neill as the Commission Chair. Eileen – yes, Susan – yes. Dan accepted.

Nomination for Commission Co-Chair:

Dan O'Neill nominated Eileen Hamblin to be the Commission Co-Chair, motion was second by Susan Cann. Eileen Hamblin accepted the nomination. Vote to appoint Eileen Hamblin as the Commission Co-Chair. Dan – yes, Susan – yes. Eileen accepted.

Nominations closed at 8:59.

New Business

Spring Cleanup

DS gave an update on the status of the spring cleanup. The department is on schedule with work orders, stonework, etc., foundations will be started sometime next week (weather pending).

Walkway Repair

DS gave an update on the status of the walkway repair. The Cemetery Foreman is working to have the repairs completed.

New Truck Request

DS presented the request for a new dump truck as requested by the Cemetery Foreman. The dump truck is currently experiencing a lot of repairs lately. The Cemetery Foreman wanted the commission to be aware of this issue and provided a copy of what the needs of the cemetery would be if a new truck has to be purchased. DO stated that he will talk with JT about the dump truck repairs.

Old Business

Cemetery Digitalization Project

The status report from Jane Pitts, Planning Department, was presented and reviewed.

Columbarium Research

EH provided pictures of columbarium walls in other area cemeteries. It was discussed that the commission agrees this would provide additional options for future cremation interments. DO stated cremation interments are becoming more popular, and a columbarium wall would provide additional space without having to use land/graves that could be used for casket burials. The commission will continue to research this project and provide updates at a future meeting.

Discussion of Veteran's Graves/Markers

The commission is working on a project to have the Veteran's markers throughout the cemetery maintained. This would include grass cleanup around the markers and raising them if needed. DO will continue to investigate options for this and discuss them with the Cemetery Foreman. It was stated that the Veterans officer get more involved in helping support the upkeep of the graves, as this is a large undertaking, and the cemetery only has a staff of three people that handle the upkeep and interments. DO will talk with Veterans Services on how they can work together to come up with a solution. Updates will be given at a future meeting.

Ripley School Project

The commission members all agreed that they would not be taking a vote on this item until a solution can be made that would provide Melrose residents with options for the future. All commission members stated that they support the building of a new Public Safety building, but that their job is to consider the needs of the residents and what the needs of the cemetery will be in the future. They will continue to work on this item and reports will be given at future meetings.

Items not reasonably anticipated by Chairman at time of posting.

90/10 Split

DO stated that the commission is still working to find out when the 90/10 split of land sales and perpetual care went in effect. DO stated the commission is waiting for a few more answers and then they will move forward with this item. DO stated updates to this split will help support the cemetery upkeep in the future. Updates on this item will be given at future meetings.

DO made a motion to adjourn, EH second the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 a.m.
All in favor.