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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

ADMINISTRATION & ENGINEERING–WATER–SEWER-FACILITIES

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Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

December 19, 2024 8:45 A.M.

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

Attendance:

Chairman, Daniel O'Neill (DO)

Commission Member, Susan Cann (SC)

Co-Chair, Eileen Hamblin (EH)

Cemetery Administrator, Denise Slane (DS)

DPW Director, Elena Proakis Ellis (EPE)

DPW Deputy Director, 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 17, 2024, were reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes was made by SC and seconded by EH. Minutes accepted.

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.
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 and November 2024 as prepared by DS were reviewed. A motion to accept the reports was made by EH and seconded by SC. Reports accepted.

New Business

Vote and Discussion on 2025 Meeting Schedule

The meeting dates for 2025 were reviewed. Meetings will remain on the third Thursday of each month at 8:45 AM. It was noted that meetings are subject to change due to scheduling issues that may arise.

Motion: made by EH to accept the 2025 meeting schedule.
Motion Second: by SC
Further Discussion: None
Vote: 3 yes - 0 no- 0 absent - VOTE PASSED

DS will post the new meeting on the webpage and schedule them on the city calendar.

Vote and Discussion on Buy Back Request

DS presented a request to the commission from the Executor of an Estate to buy back two double-depth graves that were purchased in the 2016 Lottery. The total buy back is for the original purchase price of $7,600.00 (2 – graves at $3,800.00 each). The Executor explained that deceased were interred elsewhere, closer to where current family members now live.

Motion: made by EH to purchase the two double-depth graves back from the family at the original purchase price of $7,600.00.
Motion Second: by SC
Further Discussion: None
Vote: 3 yes - 0 no- 0 absent - VOTE PASSED

DS will notify the requestor and submit the request for the buyback to Audit.

Discussion of Resident Requirements for Sale of Graves

DS stated that recently a former resident passed away and that the family requested they be able to purchase a grave for her to be interred in Wyoming Cemetery. The former resident did meet the requirements to be able to purchase. However, as stated in the Rules and Regulations, it is the responsibility of the family to prove the residency, which they were able to do. Gately Funeral Home requested that in the future perhaps a commission member could do this. It was discussed that the Rules and Regulations remain the same and the family and/or funeral home is required to gather this information and provide it to the cemetery. DS stated that she does inform families of ways they can prove the residency. JT stated that perhaps we could add these steps on how to obtain the information to the Rules and Regulations. EPE also stated that we can investigate other ways to be able to help families find this information. It was discussed that we will look into this and discuss it at a future meeting.

Review and Discussion of Land/Perpetual Care Split

DS gave a brief update on the discussion she had with the City Auditor, Kerrianne Golden (KG). Both DS and KG agreed that it would be best for KG to come to a meeting to discuss and review what the commission is looking to do. Kerrianne Golden will be attending the January 2025 commission meeting.

Review and Discussion of Fee Comparison

DS present a spreadsheet of what she has received so far for fee comparisons. It was a lot of information, and the decision was made that the commission members will review all the information over the next few weeks and hold their discussion on this at the next meeting.

Old Business

Cemetery Digitalization Project

Jane Pitts from Planning gave a presentation of the digitalization project showing everything that has been completed so far. She demonstrated how we are currently accessing all the information that has been scanned and verified. Showing how people will be able to verify if someone is buried and where the locations/maps are within the cemetery. She stated that the hope is to finish the next phase within the next 6-8 months. It was discussed that once we are ready to go live that we hold a soft launch. More updates will be given at future meetings.

Items not reasonably anticipated by Chairman at time of posting

No items to discuss.

DO made a motion to adjourn, SC second the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:01 a.m.
All in favor.