

Missoula Cemetery Board Meeting  
Thursday, February 4, 2016  
12:00pm  
Missoula City Cemetery Office

**Minutes**

**Present:** Sharee Fraser, Mary Lou Cordis, Carol Gordon, Ron Regan, Mary Ellen Stubb, Lani Moore

**Absent:** Marjorie Jacobs, Pat McHugh

**Approval of board minutes:** January 2016 - Unanimously approved as submitted.

**Public comment.** Mrs. Cordis paid tribute to the passing of Donna Shaffer. Mrs. Shaffer was a long-time north side resident, a past city council member, and a north side business owner. She was a driving force in getting a walking path on the Scott Street bridge and was very supportive of this cemetery.

**Financials.**

Revenues. Reviewed.

Expenditures. Mr. Regan said equipment repairs were about done. All fabricating work was done by the maintenance staff which saved the cemetery about \$23,000 in the cost of new parts.

**New or Continuing Items.**

**Irrigation Pump.** Mr. Regan reported three bids were received. A committee of three people reviewed and scored the bids: Ron Regan, Cemetery; Jack Stucky, Vehicle Maintenance; Pat Brook, Wastewater. Camp Well Drilling won the bid at a price of \$67,906. The cost will be charged to the cemetery care fund. The pump is submersible so an air conditioner will no longer be needed in the pump house. The cemetery is expected to save money on electricity. The pump was last worked on in 1970 and was in great need of replacement.

**New Columbarium Walls.** Mr. Regan reported there has been a run on niche sales lately. At the beginning of last year there were 55 available for sale, today there are only 15 left unsold. Therefore, the cemetery needs to purchase new walls from the niche wall fund out of the upcoming budget. There a few ideas for placement of the new walls: 1) In the flower bed areas by the fountain. This area was designed to replace the existing flower beds with more walls when needed. 2) In the A Blocks near the baby section. Mr. Regan stated that as generations of burials move further toward the back of the cemetery, families want to be closer to loved ones so this area may generate a lot of interest. 3) By the chapel. This area has the ability to have water features and lighting for possible flag displays. The area by the cross is going to open so a columbarium by the chapel would draw people to the area. The goal is to draw the attention near where people are currently buying. These walls all depend on cost and how much the board wants to spend from the niche wall fund.

These walls would have true double and single niches. True doubles are larger and allow room for urns while singles require a small book urn. The double niches down by the fountain were the first to sell out. Mr. Regan said research would begin on cost and colors.

Another idea is to find a piece of granite to place at the chapel for memorials. We could train and invest money in a plotter so stencil cutting and sandblasting could be done by cemetery staff which would save the public money.

**LAND: Northside Urban Renewal District.** Nick Kaufman, WGM, dropped off the latest map showing the proposed development on and surrounding cemetery land. The proposal includes housing development in the back pit area along with a trail and roads going through the cemetery. There was much discussion over why the cemetery land was being targeted for development. Mr. Regan explained that cemetery staff had researched this extensively and WGM had done their own research. There is not a question as to how the land was purchased or the intended purpose of the land. Records clearly show the land was purchased using cemetery care fund money and that the intended use was for future development of the cemetery. The glitch is that none of the original deeds

have restrictions on them stating for cemetery use. There is much documentation supporting the intended purpose but not a restriction on the legal documents. WGM suggests the board write a letter stating their concerns over development and how it would affect the cemetery. The board wrote the following letter to Nick Kaufman of WGM:

*Dear Sir,*

*We, the Missoula City Cemetery Board of Trustees, wish to express our concerns over the initial proposal of development involving land purposed for cemetery use. The cemetery has a sacred obligation to the public to care for the remains of the citizens who built this community by preserving and maintaining this land with respect and honor for their final resting place.*

*We are not in opposition of development of the area surrounding the cemetery, however, future development must remain focused on the purpose of Missoula City Cemetery. Development must happen in a respectful manner for past, current, and future families whose loved ones are laid to rest here.*

*The cemetery master plan for future growth has not been considered in the proposal. The cemetery developed a master plan in the 1950s which continues to be considered in all future development. We, the board of trustees, have been entrusted by the public with the stewardship of preserving this sacred site into perpetuity. We continue to honor our oath of preserving and maintaining the dignity and future growth of cemetery.*

*Some of our main concerns are as follows:*

- ***The permanent loss of land** intended for the purpose of cemetery growth results in the inability of the cemetery to meet the future burial needs of our community as our community continues to grow.*
- ***Transitional use** of land purposed for the cemetery potentially results in permanent loss. It is not a matter of if the cemetery needs the land, but when.*
- ***Trails and Housing Development** increases the risk of vandalism, noise, and unleashed dogs.*
- ***Lack of** privacy, dignity, and respect for families during their time of loss or visitation of loved ones.*
- ***Preservation of community history** past, current, and future.*
- ***Losing a safe environment** for the Police Department SWAT training and certification of canines and motorcycles.*

*Again, we are not in opposition of development, however, development must respect the sacred purpose of the cemetery.*

*Sharee Fraser  
Chairperson*

*Carol Gordon  
Co-Chairperson*

**MOTION: Mrs. Cordis moved to send this letter to WGM, all city council members, and Missoula Redevelopment Agency followed with phone calls from cemetery board members stating our concerns over proposed land use. Mrs. Gordon seconded. Approved – 3 ayes, 2 absent.**

**Adjournment** at 2:45p.m. Next meeting will be March 3, 2016.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Ellen Stubb