

Missoula Cemetery Board Meeting
Thursday, October 6, 2016
12:00pm
Missoula City Cemetery Office

Minutes

Present: Sharee Fraser, Mary Lou Cordis, Kim Seeberger, Marjorie Jacobs, Ron Regan, Mary Ellen Stubb, Lani Moore

Absent: Pat McHugh

Approval of board minutes: September 2016 - unanimously approved as submitted.

Public comment. None.

Financials. Revenues reviewed. Balances as of September 30, 2016: Current revenue = \$48,268.95

Fund balances = Care Fund \$262,680.22 Niche Fund \$88,449.54 Memorial Fund \$8,605.12

Expenditures reviewed. Mr. Regan said the sod cutter is here and payment of \$4,500 will come from the care fund as previously approved by the board. He is looking into buying new mower decks because Hustler has discontinued making them. New mower decks is far cheaper than purchasing a new mower. A local business has high quality tools and parts at such a discounted price that the cemetery may stock up on a few items also.

New or Continuing Items.

LAND: Northside Urban Renewal District. Mr. Regan informed the board that the information Mr. Kaufman presented to the board last month was not totally accurate. Last month Mr. Kaufman described a land swap to square off the cemetery. He also assured the board that he had heard and addressed their concerns. The board expressed appreciation to Mr. Kaufman for his understanding.

Mr. Regan said cemetery staff printed the master plan from the Missoula Redevelopment Agency website. Upon reviewing that document, there were a number of serious discrepancies found from what Mr. Kaufman presented to the board. The board received copies of the written master plan.

There was much discussion as the board reviewed the information. Board members were not pleased with what they were reading. They pointed out numerous discrepancies from what Mr. Kaufman presented. The board unanimously wrote the following letter:

Dear Mr. Kaufman,

We, the Missoula City Cemetery Board of Trustees, wish to express our continued concerns over certain proposals regarding cemetery land in the North Reserve - Scott Street Urban Renewal District Plan.

Our first letter of concern was dated February 2, 2016 and sent to WGM Group, all Missoula City Council members, and the Missoula Redevelopment Agency. While some of our concerns have been addressed, it appears we again must make clear that we remain steadfast in our duty to preserve cemetery land for its intended purpose.

You presented an updated land use plan to us at our September 1st board meeting. The proposal as we understood at that time consisted of a land trade which would square off the cemetery and allow better residential flow. We were assured this land trade would be acre for acre.

Upon reviewing the updated North Reserve - Scott Street Urban Renewal District Plan there are some discrepancies between it and what you presented to us. The following are our key areas of concern but are not all inclusive:

- **Land designation continues to read Open Space/Parks/Cemetery.** Cemetery land needs clearly designated as cemetery land. Cemetery land is not park land for public use or open space.
- **New entrance.** Upon review of page 80 of your written proposal, the cemetery wishes to firmly state that we do not desire, need, or want a second entrance. The proposal shows a buffer of parkland and trails incorporated using cemetery land. This directly contradicts your statements made in the September board meeting.
- **Pullman Street.** It was not disclosed that Pullman Street would extend through the front parcel of cemetery land and connect into Rodgers Street using cemetery property.
- **Residential.** It was not disclosed that residential development would be placed between cemetery land and Rodgers Street.

Let us reaffirm that we are not opposed to development surrounding the cemetery, however, development must respect the sacred purpose of the cemetery and must not include the blatant appropriation of cemetery land.

We would like to invite you to attend our next board meeting scheduled for noon on November 3, 2016 to address these concerns and any others we may have.

Sharee Fraser
Chairperson

Kim Seeberger
Co-Chairperson

PLOTTER. The cemetery has all the plotter paperwork and needs board approval to finalize the purchase.
MOTION: Mrs. Cordis moved to allow the expenditure of \$15,000 from the care fund to purchase the plotter. Mrs. Seeberger seconded. Motion approved: 4 ayes, 1 absent.

COLUMBARIUMS. Mr. Regan said a motion was not needed at this time. He will gather quotes for black and red granite fronts to see if there is a variance in price. The board will then decide the color and choose the vendor through a motion. The new wall designs have one foot squares with a hanger system. This allows removal of an individual niche face rather than a large heavy panel. Niches will have an aluminum frame inside which is powder coated, an interior door, and a granite front.

CEMETERY CHAPEL USE. There was open discussion and review of the September request to use the cemetery grounds as a place to conduct firearm background checks. Many of the board members have followed the media attention on this topic. All members were concerned with the controversy surrounding this issue. There is a risk for negative impact on the cemetery and staff which could result in some people possibly boycotting coming to the cemetery. **MOTION: Mrs. Jacobs moved that the cemetery not allow the use of cemetery grounds for firearm background checks on the basis that the cemetery is a sacred place. Mrs. Cordis seconded. Motion approved: 4 ayes, 1 absent.** Mrs. Fraser will sign a letter to Mr. Von Lossberg regarding the board motion.

Dear Mr. von Lossberg,

We, the Missoula City Cemetery Board of Trustees, wish to thank you for your presentation last month regarding your request to use cemetery land to conduct firearm

background checks. Our board met at our October meeting and discussed this proposal at length.

Many board members have followed the media discussion on this topic and find it highly controversial. Board members are concerned that allowing firearm background checks on cemetery property would have a negative impact on the cemetery. There is also concern for the possibility that people could boycott the cemetery and refuse to come here.

The mission of the cemetery has always been to create a sacred place for the public. While we admire your passion for firearm controls, we feel the cemetery is not the best place to conduct these transactions.

We wish you well in finding a different location for this project.

Please feel free to contact us again if we may be of service in a manner that better meets our focus. We are always open to assisting departments and city council whenever possible.

*Sincerely,
Sharee Fraser
Chairperson*

STORIES AND STONES. Mrs. Stubb reported donations totaled \$1,278.95, attendance was 800, and printing and estimated labor costs were \$3,042.57. Response for moving the date to September was largely positive and many storytellers appreciated the warmer weather. The potluck was successful and storytellers seemed happy to contribute. Mr. Regan said it was awesome to see so many new people attend this year. He stated he spoke with one individual who voiced a complaint about poor advertisement for the event. Mrs. Stubb explained that radio and television protocol has changed and our only option now is limited to community calendar posts rather than on-air interviews. Mrs. Fraser was disappointed in the lack of student volunteers this year and she will personally contact the Greek fraternity students next year to assure we have volunteers. Mrs. Fraser was very impressed with the historical information in the guidebook. Mr. Regan said that Stories and Stones is a well-oiled machine that takes all cemetery staff to flow smoothly.

MONUMENT INSTALLATIONS. Mr. Regan explained the reason for the cemetery to move towards selling and setting our own stones centers around quality control. Mrs. Moore has been contacting various companies to gather information on their charges and setting fees. She reported that most companies do not have a separate line item for setting fees but, instead, incorporate those fees into the monument cost. Some cemeteries set stones from other companies. In these instances, the monument company provides the foundation, hearth, and stone. The cemetery setting fees in this instance ranges from \$250 - \$900 showing no industry standardized pricing. A handful of places state that their local cemeteries require setting their own stones for quality control and compliance. Mr. Regan stated this will be an ongoing discussion with the board to decide if we set our own stones or all stones that come into the cemetery.

Informational Items. None.

Adjournment at 2:06 pm. Next meeting will be November 3, 2016.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Ellen Stubb, Administrative Manager