

Missoula Cemetery Board Meeting
Thursday, November 3, 2016
12:00pm
Missoula City Cemetery Office

Minutes

Present: Sharee Fraser, Kim Seeberger, Marjorie Jacobs, Chris Behan (MRA), Ruth Reineking (MRA Board), Nick Kaufman (WGM), Jeremy Keene (WGM), Ron Regan, Mary Ellen Stubb, Lani Moore

Absent: Mary Lou Cordis, Pat McHugh

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

Public comment. None.

Financials. Revenues reviewed. Balances as of October 31, 2016: Current revenue = \$54,158.95

Fund balances = Care Fund \$249,183.82 Niche Fund \$88,949.54 Memorial Fund \$8,605.12

Note: family cremation interments are included in the ash burial count.

Expenditures reviewed. Mr. Regan noted that upcoming monument training will over expend the training line item.

New or Continuing Items.

LAND: Northside Urban Renewal District. Mr. Behan began by giving background on the financing role of MRA in this development project. The urban renewal district began two years ago because there is a lot of vacant land mixed with industry and development pressure from all sides. The reason for the district was to recognize that conditions were not conducive for the kinds of development the city wants to see happen. The city needs to maximize opportunity for land use. A master plan model has been set in motion to measure how this area works, development constraints, environmental issues, and to examine the complexity of the area within its current use. MRA must determine how to spend its money in the best manner for the community. This map might end up as part of the growth policy which means a map change with a lot more detail and thought for this area. Mrs. Reineking said she had worked on the growth policy and this area was intentionally blank for future plans such as this. Mr. Behan added that plans continue to allow big space in the middle to protect long term interests.

Mr. Kaufman noted his appreciation for the cemetery board being direct and straight forward about their concerns and ideas for cemetery land use. He said in development concepts like this when land is vacant, others see opportunity for use. There is development pressure, imaginings of what could go here, and concern because the area lacks an important component for infrastructure and transportation. When trying to keep the area conserved without a growth plan then it loses the opportunity for industry transportation access. The growth plan enables control over the destiny of the area so that all pieces function together.

Mr. Keene stated that when a plan develops in an area as diverse as this there are a lot of stakeholders competing. Their job at WGM is to listen, offer recommendations, and try to preserve opportunities for things to happen in the future. There are a lot of property owners who are sensitive to WGM planning for them. While WGM is sensitive to that, they had to lay out a plan to assist MRA with how best to invest their public money in this area. WGM does not control the plan but the plan is a guideline that still requires other decisions. WGM put out a vision with conceptual ideas of what the area could look like. The intention of the plan is not to be an engineer design. People react very strongly because of things drawn on paper but this gives a plan for something to follow over time. Mr. Keene reviewed the final plan summary document. He stressed that the roads in the

diagrams were not exact in their locations. Mr. Regan stated the board had asked for an overlay to see exactly where cemetery land falls in the development plans. Pullman Street shows as crossing straight through cemetery land from the back fence to the front fence. At this time WGM and Mr. Regan worked to draw the cemetery boundaries on the plan document.

Mrs. Fraser stated that continuing to reference the cemetery as Open Space / Park / Cemetery is offensive. This land is cemetery. It is not open space or park land. She wants the wording corrected.

Mr. Keene said WGM proposed land trades to consolidate the cemetery and border cemetery land with streets and residential uses. The intention is to buffer the cemetery with streets but not run streets through the cemetery. Residential property on the other side of the streets is a good use for the land. He recognizes cemetery concerns about residential properties but he believes public streets and public activities will benefit the cemetery as opposed to the industrial uses currently bordering the back of the cemetery.

There was much discussion on street placement and whether the proposed streets were reducing cemetery land. Mr. Regan noted that neighboring businesses to the cemetery built partially in the vacated street right of way. Mr. Kaufman had heard that same statement before and would research that because the plan would need that corridor. Mr. Keene showed the placement of one street slotted just west of the Sandau property. Mr. Regan said surveyors recently placed stakes on cemetery land and in the bull pen. Mr. Keene said it is important to find the right location for a road. There is a need to create a north-south connection. Bulwer Street remains active so it is a natural point to tie into. Mr. Regan also questioned a road on the southwest boundary of the cemetery. Mr. Keene agreed to move that road off cemetery land.

Mr. Regan re-stated that the cemetery asked for a buffer from the light and heavy industry to the north. Citizens complain about the area and it is not good for sales or burials. Each time the cemetery board and WGM talk and come up with an idea it always results in the cemetery losing ground. The first buffer plan was good but Mr. Kaufman told us that once a park gets established on cemetery land it will be very hard to get rid of it later on so that is a concern.

Another concern is the idea of a second entrance at the back of the cemetery. Mrs. Seeberger said WGM is asking for trouble with a second cemetery entrance and that one entrance is sufficient. Placement of another entrance is asking people to come in who do not need to come in. People steal things from graves now and a second entrance invites more of that. It is hard enough for staff to monitor the cemetery without putting a residential site and park next to the cemetery with full access. She stated park land should be separate from cemetery land. Mrs. Seeberger questioned the proposed plan with regards to the land swap when there has been no approval of land swapping to this point. This land swap should be one of the first things to look at before finalizing the land use plan. Mr. Keene agreed the land swap is a big component of this plan. Putting it into the plan means they want to work on it in the future but it requires other land owners like MRL and third party developers to agree. The land swap idea is in the plan so MRA can say if they would like to see that happen. How the property is used once the swap is done is the city and cemetery decision and not for WGM to make. The plan included the land swap as something to think about but is not required to stay in the plan. We know the cemetery does not immediately need the land for burial purposes so the dilemma is whether that land is available for other use in the meantime. Mr. Keene agreed that once a park is established on the land then reclaiming it for cemetery purposes will be very difficult.

Mr. Behan stated that the park piles need removed from this area. Mrs. Fraser noted this would be a blessing. Mr. Keene said that maybe the use for the land is to remain as a storage site. Mr. Regan said that Mrs. Fraser has always wanted the piles and mess cleaned up in the pit area especially the white tank. Mrs. Fraser said it is an awful site with weeds and tanks. This mess really upsets her and is an eyesore on land known as owned by the cemetery which is not how we treat our cemetery land. Mr. Regan gave a short history of the hand shake agreement between the cemetery and street departments for use of the pit area. He wanted WGM to know that

the board is worried about the city possibly selling land for housing. The proposed development plan shows the cemetery losing land. Once it is gone it is gone.

Mrs. Reineking told the board that someone has to want to develop this before anything could happen. Adoption of this plan by MRA and council does not mean roads will be built. There will still be plenty of opportunity to say no.

Mrs. Seeberger asked if WGM contacted everyone in this area about this development plan. Mr. Keene said all property owners were mailed information but he certainly has not spoken with everyone. Mr. Kaufman said they have conducted numerous interviews with property owners. Some owners like Roseburg want no change at all which would severely diminish the opportunity to provide access to their businesses. Alternative truck routes need planned in this area because trucks are unable to cross the Scott Street Bridge.

There was discussion regarding the Russell Street interchange which is a big part of this future development. Mr. Keene stated there would be an eventual overpass for the railroad tracks. Placement of the connecting road is outside cemetery property.

There was discussion on a new front entrance interchange. Mr. Kaufman plans to design an entrance that opens up the area where the cemetery entrance connects to cemetery road. Mr. Regan said the current entrance is tight and dangerous. The cemetery gate is currently 80-100 feet off the Hunton fence. Mrs. Seeberger said that would need moved so the road was not coming into the cemetery. Mrs. Reineking restated that although something is on the map it does not mean that MRA or WGM will actually do anything. Mr. Regan reminded WGM that the plan needs to take into consideration the eight inch water main that runs alongside the main road. Mrs. Jacobs informed WGM that the cemetery spent months working out the agreement for a cemetery entrance sign and what WGM pushes on us puts us in a bind. We had to come up with funding in the past but the cemetery has no money to pay for a new entrance. Mrs. Reineking noted that the changes depend on who is developing the area, then a deal could possibly work out to cover costs. Mr. Kaufman agreed that there were possible funds available. Mr. Behan noted that if the leased land in front of the cemetery is part of a land grant then the railroad cannot sell it. He will get us a name that might help clear things up.

Mr. Kaufman recapped what the board was passionate about and how WGM will address these concerns:

- **Labeling cemetery land.** Mrs. Fraser finds the label Cemetery / Open Space / Park offensive and the label should clearly read as cemetery.
 - *Mr. Keene: He will remove Open Space / Park and label the land Cemetery.*
 - *He will change the color of cemetery land in the plan as suggested by Mrs. Reineking so cemetery land will stand out in the plan drawings.*
- **Cemetery pit clean up.** Mrs. Fraser says the cemetery pit area is unsightly and departments using the area need to clean it up.
 - *Mr. Kaufman: Pit unsightliness affects cemetery brand. He will see how to aid in cleaning up this area.*
- **Land reduction.** Mr. Regan says each time ideas are shared they come out of cemetery land reducing the total acres owned by the cemetery. Mrs. Seeberger does not want to make a park by using cemetery land.
 - *Mr. Keene: He will remove the linear park from the plan.*
 - *He stated there would be no net reduction in cemetery land.*
 - *He will find out the amount of acreage for a land swap.*
 - *Mr. Kaufman: Land swap comes first before finalizing plans.*
- **Roads.**
 - *Mr. Keene: He will keep proposed land use and the road network around the cemetery.*
 - *The anticipated right of way land shortage will come from land trades with no reduction to cemetery land.*
 - *Move the road on the southwest boundary outside of cemetery land.*

- **Communication.** Mr. Regan says a major concern is that changes come out on paper but the cemetery board and staff are not informed.
 - *Mr. Keene: He will include text in the plan to address the cemetery changes and have designers alter the plan based on these concerns following this suggestion by Mr. Behan.*
- **Entrances.** Mrs. Seeberger is concerned that a new entrance is asking for trouble like vandalism. She is also concerned about the lack of approval for a land swap.
 - *Mr. Keene: He will remove the second cemetery entrance on the residential side of the cemetery from the plan.*
 - *Move Russell Street connector road as it appears to go through graves.*
 - *Draw cemetery front entrance showing open design and connection to cemetery road.*

PLOTTER. Mr. Regan said payments for the plotter (\$11,785) and sod cutter (\$436.04) came from the care fund. Mr. Regan scheduled a meeting with Dale Bickell (CAO) to see if new monument regulations can be policies rather than ordinance. The cemetery is going back to setting all monuments in the cemetery. Mrs. Moore found that cemeteries are reverting back to setting their own monuments for quality control purposes. Mr. Regan said he prefers monuments be controlled through policy because it is easier to make adjustments. Mrs. Fraser asked where someone goes if they dispute the board policy. Mr. Regan said Mr. Bickell will help us lay out direction. He hopes to also have input from John Wilson and Steve Johnson.

COLUMBARIUMS. Mr. Regan reported that columbarium quote requests were sent to numerous companies with a return date of Friday, November 11, 2016. The cemetery will compile the returned information and he will personally bring the information to each board member. He felt it was important for them to see the granite samples and design options before they gave their purchasing approval.

MONUMENT SEMINAR. Mr. Regan told of a monument seminar held February 10-12 in Indianapolis. He asked board approval for himself and the maintenance foreman to attend. This seminar is important to tie into the monument and granite industry which directly ties into plans at the cemetery. The requested training makes the proper industry connections for cemetery staff to learn the technology and know what products to use. The current cost to attend the seminar, including membership to the Monument Builder Association, is \$3,132 and would come from the care fund. Training allotment was included in the budget requests. Mrs. Seeberger noted that in the long run the cemetery would make up this training amount in future revenue.

Mrs. Jacobs asked about the upcoming monument services the cemetery was planning on providing. She stated the cemetery goal should be to do good service but not strive to make big money. She was concerned about charging for services that are currently available through others outside the cemetery. Mr. Regan said cemetery staff continues to research what to charge for re-leveling stones, cleaning monuments, setting monuments, and selling monuments. He stressed that the cemetery goal is to offer more services to the public at a lower cost. Mrs. Seeberger noted that the cemetery is offering a service but not requiring the public to purchase those services through the cemetery. The public is free to choose these services anywhere but expanding what the cemetery has to offer will be very beneficial for everyone. Mrs. Fraser and Mrs. Jacobs agreed that the new fees need to minimize labor costs unlike the fee cost study done a few years back. Mr. Regan explained that he has already reached out to Mr. Bickell for assistance in setting up a new fee schedule. These services will generate new revenue but the cemetery goal focuses on the service not revenue greed. The cemetery already cleans up after monument companies who come onto the grounds and set stones. The cemetery sees a need for quality control in this area. Since we already do much of the work and know what works it is time for the cemetery to offer this service to the public. Prices will be very fair and policies established. Mr. Bickell will assist with setting up the revenue accounts. There is a lot to consider, projections to make, and paper trails to set up. Mrs. Seeberger suggested creating a fund for continued training and monument repair. **MOTION: Mrs. Seeberger moved to**

approve the training funds from the care fund for the monument seminar. Mrs. Jacobs seconded. Motion approved. 3 Ayes, 2 Absent.

Informational Items.

December meeting. The December meeting is canceled.

Stories and Stones date. Mrs. Stubb said the storytellers requested the board set the 2017 date for Stories and Stones so they can place it on their calendars. The board decided to set the ongoing date of the tour for the third Sunday in September. The tour date for this year will be Sunday, September 17, 2016.

Adjournment at 1:47 pm. Next meeting will be January 5, 2017.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Ellen Stubb

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