

Missoula Cemetery Board Meeting
Thursday, August 13, 2009
1:30pm
Ruth Bennett Memorial Chapel

Minutes

Present: Doug Waters, Ron Regan, Mary Ellen Stubb, Sharee Fraser, Marjorie Jacobs, Carol Gordon, Pat McHugh, Rick Evans, Bob Jordan, Dana Lewis, Arthur Hightower, Elaine Gagliardi

Absent: Mary Lou Cordis

Note: This meeting is being tape recorded for reference due to its importance.

1. Approval of board minutes: June minutes - approved unanimously.

2. Items involving guests:

- a. Hightower monument request - Arthur Hightower and Elaine Gagliardi. Issue: Monument base as designed and ordered is too large and does not meet cemetery requirements.**

Family wishes to match the existing George monument located in Block 49A and place it in the Hightower Family graves located in Block 11B. Mrs. Gagliardi wished clarification of the cemetery's reasons for denial of this monument. Mr. Waters stated the cemetery requires a 4" and 5" border as necessary for mowing maintenance and to keep the grass from overgrowing the monument. Mr. Regan stated the issue with a larger monument/foundation is that it limits access to the grave and surrounding graves when attempting to place a liner for future burials. Mrs. Gagliardi explained the monument was not only designed by her late mother but her mother had requested that the same design be used on her own grave. The Hightower family would be willing to vacate the two adjacent graves if the cemetery would consider allowing this monument per her mother's wishes. Mrs. Gagliardi noted she had read the cemetery ordinances and understood board discretion can be exercised and the family is asking that happen in this case. Mr. Waters felt another solution was possible and asked Mr. Jordan if he could reduce the base by 1" which would then bring the monument into compliance.

If the base width were 16", it would allow for the 4" top and bottom borders. Mrs. Gagliardi voiced concern that the monument maintain a ledge in order to keep the balance of the monument design as it is the thickness of the design which makes it so beautiful. Mrs. Gagliardi explained this is a larger monument with two small stones connected on each side. Mr. Regan voiced concern about keeping stones in row alignment but stated that either way, this monument would be an adjustment in the row. Mr. Evans wished to remind the cemetery that families become excited when purchasing graves and wanting to match past family monuments. Mr. Jordan stated it would not be a problem to reduce the base by 1", the monument would be the same but now will sit on a 16" base with the required 4" top and bottom border. Mrs. Fraser verified that all parties were happy with the resolution. **Motion: Mrs. Gordon moved that the Hightower monument be accepted provided the base is reduced to 16" and in compliance with the cemetery's 5" and 4" border requirements. Approved unanimously.**

b. Monument correspondences between Garden City Monument Services and Missoula Cemetery. Bob Jordan, Dana Lewis of Garden City Monument Services and Rick Evans of Garden City Funeral Home. (All correspondence documents attached.)

Mr. Waters stated the guests were here for clarification on monument issues related to recent correspondence between Garden City Monument Services and the Missoula Cemetery. Mr. Jordan stated the last board meeting had started some confusion and frustration with cemetery requirements so that he had responded in writing to Board Chairperson, Mrs. Fraser. Mr. Waters noted he had answered each point in Mr. Jordan's letter and that was the large packet of information the Board had reviewed. Mrs. Lewis voiced continued confusion on specifics in cemetery requirements and wondered why the promised working group was not done which could have alleviated some of the confusion. Mr. Waters stated there would be a process to clarify monument requirements with a round table discussion. This would not occur until the end of September due to staff absences. This meeting is to focus on the real crux of the issue: In 2005 and 2007 agreements were made with the monument companies that the cemetery would reduce the required foundation border limits to assist the monument companies with overstock of larger stones. The agreement was to be reviewed every other year and adjusted back to the original limits once this overstock was depleted.

Mr. Waters pointed out the 2005 Board minutes discussing this topic spelled out the agreement and the monument companies would do all they could to meet the agreement. Mr. Jordan stated the issue comes because the standard base nationwide is 14". Returning to a larger border limit would cause any monument company setting stones in the Missoula Cemetery to special order each item for this one cemetery. Mr. Evans agreed with Mr. Jordan and asked why this cemetery cannot accept the normal size base as other cemeteries in the country are currently doing. When Mr. Evans has to set a stone for the Missoula Cemetery it consists of custom ordering the foundation which increases the cost to families.

Mr. Regan stated the issue started way back when this cemetery was designed with a 2' headspace, then in the 1960s liners were required, and due to the fact that this cemetery consists of mostly upright stones a mow strip is needed for maintenance. Without that, the risk of hitting stones increases. Other cemeteries require mow strips and many are designed with bigger headspaces. Mr. Evans empathizes and realizes that the maintenance at this cemetery is twice what it should be. However, costs for custom ordering for this specific cemetery must be passed onto families.

Mr. Waters asked for clarification of the concerns. The current Ordinance #3292 approved in 2005 stated the borders of 6" and 5"; the 2005 & 2007 policy change stated borders of 5" and 4". There is confusion as to which border limits work for the monument company and which borders are causing this discussion. Mr. Waters recalled that Western Monument Services had also brought up the 14" base issue with the border requirements which was why the Board adjusted the border allowance smaller by 1". Mrs. Fraser stated the Cemetery Board was considering returning to the ordinance requirements of 6" and 5" borders.

Mr. Jordan asked if the cemetery realizes that when granite is cut there is an edge allowance. Both Mr. Waters and Mr. Regan acknowledged this and noted that compliance is measured from the narrowest spot, not the largest as noted in the 2005 & 2007 agreements. They realized the need for this allowance and have made that adjustment. Mrs. Lewis informed the Board that she spoke directly with the granite suppliers to find they are cutting from polished area to polished area which could increase the rough area up to 2" depending on the 'bumps'. The only place the monument company is really having difficulty meeting Missoula Cemetery's

requirements is on the slant stones which measure a 14" base. If the cemetery maintains the 6" and 5" borders they would be able to comply.

Mr. Evans and Mrs. Lewis expressed confusion on headspace rules regarding military flat monuments. The standard size of the military bronze flush is 24"x12". In this instance, a granite base is being required to have cement poured around it to fill the 2' headspace. Mr. Regan stated the granite base is the foundation but it only allows 2" from the bronze plaque, therefore, the granite base may be dug in only in the veteran section but in order to meet the border requirements, there must be a cement border poured around it. Mr. Waters agreed that this was a gray area and needed further review. The ordinance was developed to control oversized monuments but the cemetery had overlooked the monuments/foundations measuring less than the 2' headspace. Mr. Evans reiterated he would not get into the cement business to appease one cemetery. At most cemeteries, veterans receive free monuments from the government and free installation from the cemeteries. Mrs. Lewis clarified that a 12"x24" bronze flush must be on a 36"x24" base. Mr. Regan approved. Mrs. Lewis agreed with Mr. Evans that the monument company only sets military monuments for the Missoula Cemetery as other cemeteries handle those installations themselves free of charge to the veteran.

Motion: Mrs. Gordon moved that the monument border limitations be returned to the size set forth in Ordinance #3292 consisting of borders measuring 6" on the left/right and 5" on the top/bottom of the monuments. Approved unanimously. Mrs. Fraser stated that everyone in attendance would receive notification of this policy prior to the working group beginning.

3. Financials:

- a. Revenues: Reviewed FY09 final numbers were within normal levels. July 2009 revenues look good.
- b. Expenditures: Reviewed FY09 final numbers. The Missoula Cemetery returned 12% of its budget to the General Fund. It is unknown at this time if the returned money could be used to reduce the 3.75% required department cuts. City Council will make the final decision. The FY10 budget remains the same with only slight modifications from Finance.

Next meeting: The topic will be balancing the cemetery budget and how that will affect the Care Fund and Ordinance #3292.

4. Motions needed. *(Full board attendance is needed)*

5. New or Continuing Items for Discussion:

- a. Solar Vase Lights. Mr. Jordan showed an example of a new solar light which sits directly into the monument vase. He would like the Board to consider allowing these items in the cemetery. The Board will discuss at a later date.
- b. Recording of Board Meetings. Mrs. Jacobs asked if all future meetings were to be recorded. Mr. Waters stated he had consulted with City Attorney Nugent and it was recommended that all meetings be recorded with tapes being kept in the vault at City Hall. Minutes would still be paraphrased with the recordings for reference purposes.

6. Informational Items *(These items require NO immediate board action but are strictly informational item)*

7. Adjournment at 3:00 pm. Next meeting: September 3, 2009 (Will be Stories and Stones kickoff.)