

Missoula Cemetery Board Meeting
Thursday, January 7, 2016
12:00pm
Missoula City Cemetery Office

Minutes

Present: Sharee Fraser, Carol Gordon, Mary Lou Cordis, Ron Regan, Mary Ellen Stubb, Lani Moore
Absent: Marjorie Jacobs, Pat McHugh

Approval of board minutes: October 2015 - Unanimously approved as submitted.

Public comment.

Nick Kaufman from WGM Group re: Northside Urban Renewal District plans. Mr. Kaufman came with information on plans for developing the north side lands including usage of cemetery land. He reviewed ownership maps and showed development plans. Development plans on cemetery land include housing developments and a trail system. Much discussion followed regarding the history of cemetery land purchases and the plotted cemetery master plan which encompasses all land owned by the cemetery. The board liked the idea of a trail system through the land but placement needs to be well thought out with regards to water lines and grave development. Mr. Kaufman stated his research showed that traditional cemeteries are a way of the past and cremation spreading is the way of the future which results in less land needed for a cemetery. The board expressed openness to ideas for park type uses for the land with the contingency and written understanding that cemetery land remain cemetery land for future burial development. No one can precisely predict how soon the undeveloped land will be needed but it would take only one catastrophic event to quickly fill the current developed area. The landowners who sold this land to the cemetery board, the past cemetery boards who used cemetery care funds to purchase land for long range cemetery development, and the city officials who oversaw the land transactions all made a commitment to the public that the land was purchased specifically for cemetery use and would always stay that way. Mr. Kaufman said he did not need any decisions made today but wants the cemetery board to really think about whether they need the land or not. He left with copies of the cemetery master plan and stated he would meet with the board again in the future.

Financials.

Revenues. Reviewed.

Expenditures. Mr. Regan noted the 230 parts line would be overspent but it would be balanced within that line item category.

New or Continuing Items.

Stories and Stones final report. Mrs. Stubb presented the 5-year average cost for the tour. The 2015 totals show total cost of \$6,500.97 with the stitching machine or \$3,613.57 without the machine. Jennie Pak coordinated the storytellers for the first time and an early September deadline was placed on submitting new stories. Carts became an issue but the university worked well with cemetery staff to arrange a combination lock for Sunday morning pickup. There were just under 1,000 attendees and donations totaled \$1,699.47. Five hundred new guidebooks were printed in the cemetery office and all those were handed out along with some from past inventory. Staffing for the day consisted of six full day and one half day cemetery staff, two street department staff, and seven student volunteers. Overall the tour went very well and continues to flow more smoothly every year.

Northside Urban Renewal District. Mr. Regan stated the cemetery land history was being compiled and copies of maps on file with the county surveyor were being printed. We have found copies of all the deeds but none of them show written restrictions. One deed which WGM found did have restrictions stating the land could never be used for burial. That section is where the current buildings are located and includes part of the D section.

Mrs. Stubb showed the board the catalogued research to date. She reported that all land documents were compiled, surveys documented, and almost all cemetery board minutes have been reviewed and compiled for land purchases and use agreements. The information has been placed into a spreadsheet and the board will receive a copy of the detailed report when it is completed. Copies of missing surveys and maps are the final research piece to be added.

As a bonus to this project, the board minutes are now in order from 1900 to present. All excess copies have been destroyed and the original documents are bound in sheet protectors. Mr. Regan stated once the land research is completed that scanning the board minutes is a project that will benefit further research because the records will be searchable online rather than manually reviewing each one.

Irrigation pump. Bids close on January 11th at 1:00pm. A panel will review and award the bid. All work must be completed by March 1st.

Informational Items.

Discussion on the right to inter. Mr. Regan alerted the board to a few family situations being handled right now regarding the right to inter in a grave. One deals with a permission that was granted to one family member but now the son of the original purchaser believes the grave should be his. Mr. Regan will be consulting the city attorney on this one. The second deals with a family who phoned in a complaint to the mayor office. This family met later met with cemetery staff and are currently gathering signatures from all living siblings in order to bury their brother with their mother. In another instance, an email was received where a family believed they had the right to a grave but an original permission slip form 1945 on record in the cemetery files proved otherwise. Mr. Regan informed the board that the office staff gets beat up regularly for making it too tough for people to be buried in the cemetery but the ordinance must be followed in order to keep the cemetery out of a lawsuit.

New council tour. Mr. Regan stated that all new council members toured the cemetery and he was very pleased and surprised at how many questions they had for staff and the amount of information they knew about the cemetery. Many had reviewed the cemetery website and were impressed by the amount of information they found there. Others were very interested in the history of the cemetery and Stories and Stones. He hopes the cemetery will have good standing with the new council members.

Mapping. Mr. Regan noted that Mrs. Moore is still working hard on getting the block maps on the computer where these are then linked onto the cemetery website. This is a long project with great results.

Adjournment at 1:33 p.m. Next meeting will be February 4, 2016.

**To conserve costs, please bring your agenda and any pertinent documents with you to meetings.