



Metro | *Meeting minutes*

Meeting: Metro Cemetery Advisory Committee meeting
Date/time: Monday, September 23, 2013
Place: Room 370A/B
Purpose: Quarterly Meeting

Attendees

Committee: Verne Duncan, Terry McCall, Meg McCauley, Bo Nevue, Laurel Smith
Metro: Paul Slyman, Melisa McDonald, Monty Woods, Kim Palmero, Michelle Bellia, Emma Williams, Noel Seats
Member of the public: Christoph Miller

Absent

Hannah Allan, Michelle Gregory, David Noble, Larry Potter

Chair Duncan called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. and welcomed Metro Councilor Shirley Craddick to the meeting. As Cemetery Liaison, Councilor Craddick thanked the Committee on behalf of the Council for the commitment and caring assistance they have provided to the Metro Cemetery Program during the past year. Part of the value of the Metro cemeteries is the range of options available to meet the needs of the different populations seeking burial options, and she acknowledged this honoring of diversity.

Melisa McDonald introduced herself to the Committee, as well as Michelle Bellia and Kim Palmero from Office of Metro Attorney (OMA).

Programmatic Updates

Lone Fir Cremation Garden

Melisa McDonald reported that there is significant interest in the Chestnut Grove Memorial Garden, which has generated almost \$20,000 in sales since its opening on June 27, 2013. Sales are on track to recover construction costs after a year.

Nearly every burial option existing has been purchased, and the popularity of the ossuary illustrates the value of the wide range of pricing options available.

Reclamation Project

Kimberly Palmero from OMA provided a breakdown of the calls she has received after publication of Lists One and Two. In addition to contact from families making claims, there have been a noteworthy number of callers seeking reassurance of the safety of their spaces purchased less than 75 years ago.

PES Director Paul Slyman addressed the reasoning behind the expansion of the list to include all families that have not been heard of for 75 years or more; not only those that contain resold spaces. This will prevent any resold errors in the future, as well as possibly provide opportunities for citizens to use spaces in these highly popular cemeteries.

Chair Duncan asked for an update on the Multnomah Park Cemetery soil relocation project, which was provided by Melisa McDonald. She explained that soil displaced during the burial process had

been piled for years by the former contractor at the southern edge of the cemetery. Having received permission this spring from the Oregon Cemetery and Mortuary Board (OMCB) to proceed with removal of this soil, the process is within a few days of completion. Soil is closely examined and taken to St. Johns Prairie. Any findings are respectfully treated and placed.

Cemetery Cleanup

Ranger Monty Woods reported that Phase 2 of the cleanup is in process, with 99 grave sites posted for cleanup at Multnomah Park Cemetery. Two photos are taken of each space; one that shows the headstone for identification purposes, the other showing the current state of the space. Letters will be mailed to the 99 owners of these spaces on October 1, 2013, with removal beginning on November 1, 2013.

Public cooperation has been impressive; some spaces have already been cleaned up. As the aesthetics improve in the cleaned up cemeteries, the environment is safer and more welcoming for the public.

Melisa asked the Committee for their thoughts regarding application of different criteria to Lone Fir, which will be the final cemetery on the clean up schedule, also for ways to work with the public to keep the unique feel of the cemetery, while adhering to the goal of greater safety and reduced maintenance hours.

Stone Orchard Implementation

Melisa McDonald shared that the Stone Orchard software is loaded onto all cemetery staff computers, and research continues on how it will interface with other systems. Also under discussion is which will become the system of record.

Melisa has begun initial input of data into Stone Orchard, and the program is hoped to be fully implemented by January 2014.

Oregon Mortuary & Cemetery Board

Michelle Bellia reported that OMCB has completed its investigation of the Metro Cemetery Program, and that Metro is in the process of discussing settlement possibilities.

Committee Governance

There was discussion around the fact that the Cemetery Advisory Committee is required to be annually reviewed by Metro Council, as stated in Resolution No. 12-4354 (attached). The Committee is out of compliance at this time, thus no votes or actions will be taken at this meeting. Merlene Drapela has retired, but a poll of the remaining members showed a unanimous willingness to serve on the Committee for another year. Official reinstatement of the Committee will be brought before Council in October.

Outreach will be made to Marie Henry, general manager of Lincoln Memorial Park to see if she would like to serve on the Committee.

The Committee was asked to consider whether representation is needed from other areas of interest.

Annual Report Draft

The draft submitted by Hannah Allan was distributed to Committee members, as well as comments sent by Michelle Gregory (attached), neither of whom was able to attend the meeting. Paul Slyman addressed the questions generated by the four comments, and the Committee was asked to submit

any other questions that may arise. The Annual Report will be brought before the Metro Council in October.

Next meeting

December 2013, date tbd

Metro Regional Center