



Metro | Meeting minutes

Meeting: Cemetery Advisory Committee Quarterly Meeting
Date/time: Monday, June 9, 2014 1 to 2:30 p.m.
Place: Metro Regional Center, 600 NE Grand Ave, Room 370A/B
Purpose: Quarterly Meeting

Attendees

Committee: Marie Henry, Verne Duncan Bo Nevue, Terry McCall

Metro: Paul Slyman, Councilor Shirley Craddick, Melisa McDonald, Emma Williams, Matthew Herbert, Noel Seats, Kimberly Palmero, and Stacey Hopkins

Absent

Hannah Allan, David Noble, Michele Gregory, Laurel Smith, Meg McCauley

Chair Verne Duncan called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m. He thanked everyone for coming and welcomed Metro Councilor Shirley Craddick to the meeting.

Chair Duncan asked for any corrections to the summary of the March 10, 2014 meeting, and there were none.

He shared that Michele Gregory has stepped down from the Committee, so there is no longer representation from Mt. Hood Community College. He suggested getting a card to distribute amongst the Committee members to thank her for her participation and service. He asked the Committee to consider a replacement, and Melisa suggested the addition of someone from the community development outreach field; someone who could share perspective from a venue standpoint and help provide direction. It was suggested that Metro look into its venue connections to help fill that spot. Suggestions from the Committee may be sent directly to Melisa, and she will check their availability.

Programmatic Updates

Chair Duncan reported that he went to three Metro cemeteries during the Memorial Day holiday. He shared how good the cemeteries looked, and suggested that an official commendation be made from the Committee to Metro regarding the great work the staff has done with the cemeteries.

Cemetery staffing

Melisa McDonald made mention that the cemetery team is back to full staff.

She talked about Memorial Day at the cemeteries, and how staff and volunteers worked together to help make sure that flags were put on veterans' graves. A solar powered light has also been installed on the flag pole at Grand Army of the Republic.

Also, the Douglass Cemetery Columbarium has been moved to a new foundation. Prior to the move calls were made to family members notifying them and addressing any concerns.

Updated Cemetery Price List

Melisa passed out the newly updated cemetery price list to the Committee. The new price list includes all costs involved with burials at Metro cemeteries, which the previous version did not.

Burial Spaces

Cemetery staff are reviewing inventory of burial spaces from a portfolio perspective. Spaces appear to be out of line with overall prices for burial, and to control this going forward there will be an annual price review.

Coming events:

- Wednesday, June 11th, Buckman Elementary School will be walking through Lone Fir Cemetery. This will be a Second Line event that is part of their cultural education.
- Reverse pitch – Thursday, June 12th 5:30 p.m. Metro will be at the Convention Center pitching to the technology industry ideas for improving what Metro does. Paul Slyman said cemetery staff members, Emma Williams and Noel Seats, have submitted a presentation for one of Metro's pitches. Their idea is mapping a GPS system to help families locate graves at our cemeteries, coupled with physical maps. The system in place now is complicated and labor intensive. If the presentation is chosen by a technology company, this would be a huge benefit to our customers.
- Grave Occasion at Lone Fir – On Saturday, August 16th, the Friends of Lone Fir and the Lone Fir Cemetery Foundation are combining talents with the Home Brewer's Association to put on a tasting event at Lone Fir to promote the restoration of the Bottler family mausoleum.
- Kimberly Palmero and Noel Seats are working on the RFB for grave markers. This will make it possible for Metro to provide grave markers for our cemeteries. Families will be able to order them directly from Metro.

223rd Street Soil Stabilization Project

Metro Ranger Matthew Herbert shared some of his experiences during this project. A handout to the Committee (See attached *223rd Avenue Soil/Site Stabilization Project*), and explained the project.

Councilor Craddick asked if there would be signage placed on the program site area. Metro has been in conversation with the Oregon Mortuary and Cemetery Board regarding this, and it has been agreed that after the project has been completed, a memorial sign will be placed at the site. Metro also intends to install a low fence along the side of the road to help prevent vandalism, create a buffer zone and foster respect.

Metro Cemetery Manager Melisa McDonald talked about plans developed for the program to address any funerary objects that may be found. She will be notified, the proper stakeholders will be advised, and objects will be repatriated. Melisa said that it is more than likely objects will be found at this site.

It is estimated that this work will be completed by the September 2014 Cemetery Advisory Committee meeting.

Bo Nevue asked what the permit requirements for this project are, and Paul Slyman responded that specifics regarding permit requirements have not yet been received from the City of Fairview. Paul asked Bo if he advised keeping the fencing up and closed to the public until the cap soil, hydro seed and site soil has been established. Bo said he was concerned with soil erosion issues with the site and asked if this was being addressed. He also mentioned a Sunmark Seeds product, PermaMatrix, which is used to treat soils such as this.

Council Craddick inquired if there were any levy concerns from the Army Corp of Engineers, and Melisa responded that there were no concerns at this time.

Chair Duncan thanked Matt for the presentation.

Reclamation Project Update

Metro Cemetery Staff Kimberly Palmero gave a presentation regarding the reclamation project. She reported that June 5, 2014, the Metro Council passed a resolution to reclaim approximately 2500 burial sites. She explained the reclamation project process, and how Metro had gone beyond the legal requirements for notification of the public. Metro cemetery staff heard from over 100 customers who had claims in Metro cemeteries. They received 28 claims on 68 spaces. Approximately 2000 spaces will be made available to those who want to be a part of the Lone Fir community.

Kimberly asked the Committee for feedback on next steps to complete this process on issues such as:

- Second owner notices
- Opening Lone Fir to new sales
- Sales to small groups

Kimberly also asked for feedback regarding what to do with 200 interment rights that continue to be in conflict. She presented three options to resolve issues with these sites:

- Suing
- Validation process
- Waiting the 40 – 75 years for them to expire

Bo Nuevo and Terry McCall said that they didn't favor the option to sue.

Terry McCall asked if they had a fall back accommodation to the validation process. Kimberly responded that they would have a solution, but it may not result in the exact same space.

Topics for next meeting:

Chair Duncan brought up that the Historic Columbian Cemetery has asked if Metro would take over that cemetery. He asked how far the Committee wanted to go with the management of historic cemeteries.

He also asked the Committee how they wanted to deal with headstone replacement.

Melisa said that she would send an invitation to the Friends of Lone Fir and the Lone Fir Cemetery Foundation to join the Committee for a social event.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:52 p.m. by Chair Verne Duncan.

Next meeting:

Monday, September 8, 2014 2 to 3:30 p.m.
Lone Fir Cemetery, SE 26th and SE Stark Avenue