



Meeting: Cemetery Advisory Committee Quarterly Meeting
Date: Monday, March 16, 2015
Time: 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. (**note new meeting time**)
Location: Metro Regional Center, 600 NE Grand Ave, Room 370A/B

12:45 p.m.	Coffee and Fruit	
1:00 p.m.	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">Adoption of Meeting SummaryApproval of AgendaReview proposed 2015 Work Plan	Verne Duncan
1:10 p.m.	Program updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">Multnomah Park platting	Melisa McDonald
1:25 p.m.	Memorial Day Plans 2015	Matt Herbert Lupine DeSnyder
1:35 p.m.	Focus Group Update: Memorialization	Terry McCall
2:00 p.m.	Public Outreach Objectives & Expectations	Verne Duncan
2:20 p.m.	Comments from Council	Councilor Craddick
2:30 p.m.	Adjourn	

2015 WORK PLAN - DRAFT

March 2015

Review work plan of Memorialization Focus Group
Define expectations of public input process
Review Memorial Day plans

June 2015

Review progress of Memorialization Focus Group
Formalize future of Committee
Update on resolution of burial rights held in conflict

September 2015

Approve Annual Report
Review proposals from Memorialization Focus Group

December 2015

To be determined based on decision of Committee whether to formalize or sunset



Cemetery Advisory Committee

March 16, 2015

Committee members in attendance: Verne Duncan (Committee chair), Hannah Allan (Committee co-chair), Councilor Shirley Craddick, Terry McCall, Meg McCauley, Bo Nevue, David Noble, Marie Henry

Committee members excused: Laurel Smith

Metro: Paul Slyman, Melisa McDonald, Kimberly Palmero, Matthew Herbert, Lupine DeSnyder, Noel Seats, Emma Williams, Phyllis Cole

WELCOME

Committee Chair Verne Duncan welcomed the Committee and thanked them for coming.

- Minutes for the December 2014 Committee meeting were accepted as submitted.
- Agenda was approved with no changes.
 - Note: Comments from Council were moved to be the second topic item discussed.
- 2015 Work Plan was reviewed and approved.

COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL

Councilor Craddick said she'd like to see the Committee continue to meet and will advocate for this in Council.

- Other items brought up for consideration included:
 - Structure of Committee members: consider areas of expertise and cultural/ethnic diversity
 - Metro Council needs from the Committee should guide the work plan as well
 - Long-term agenda items for the Committee to consider
 - Financial sustainability of the program
 - Criteria to be considered for reviewing a proposal

PROGRAM UPDATES

Program updates were provided by Melisa McDonald, Cemetery Program Manager.

Multnomah Park platting

Staff confirmed work is in progress to provide additional burial spaces in the southeast corner of Multnomah Park Cemetery. Metro Council approved a budget amendment early in this fiscal year to make funds available for the platting of burial spaces with the intent of providing spaces to resolve burial rights ownership issues. There are currently no available burial spaces for sale in this cemetery and this area has never been used as a burial space so there would be no conflict in ownership of burial rights.

- The initial survey work has been completed which included ground penetrating radar (GPR) which revealed the location of underground water lines and the remains of a demolished building. Excavation will be needed to ascertain the extent of the underground rubble, whether it's a solid foundation left intact that will need to be removed or possibly just the typical demolition debris of broken concrete, etc.
 - Metro staff confirmed for the Committee that GPR work was able to confirm the majority of the area to be platted would be available for double-depth casket burial. Specific spaces will only be available for infant graves and cremation spaces based on additional factors both underground and above ground (i.e. water lines, fence, etc.).

PROGRAM UPDATES (cont'd)

Multnomah Park platting (cont'd)

- The company preparing to file the survey on behalf of Metro to Multnomah County revealed through a records search that only one of the five tax lots comprising Multnomah Park was listed with Metro as the owner of record. The remaining four lots, including the tax lot for which platting is being planned, are listed with Multnomah County as the owner of record. Office of Metro Attorney is working directly with Multnomah County to resolve this matter as expeditiously as possible through the terms set forth in the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) governing the transfer of ownership in the main tax lot conveying title from Multnomah County to Metro.
- The timing of the resolution and completed work is no longer confirmed to be done by the end of the fiscal year (FY14-15) as previously expected. Metro staff will provide updates to the Committee as they are available.

Cemetery software

Melisa McDonald provided an update on the software being used by the Cemetery Program at the request of Chair Duncan.

- The current software, Stone Orchard, is meeting the basic needs of the program at this time. Staff is able to use the system to update information which ensures that the accuracy of data within the system is continuously improving.
- Due to Metro security requirements and the software being utilized behind an electronic firewall, there are some aspects of the program that were thought to be a worthy investment but are not available for the public domain.
- There are also aspects of the program that reflect Canadian law and business practices related to cemetery management which do not conform to US requirements. A change to the current system would impact other Stone Orchard customers which happen to be primarily Canadian operations.
- The evaluation of this software for the program will be undertaken after the higher priority of resolving burial right ownership issues has been addressed. At that time, additional options will be considered given the knowledge of Stone Orchard as well as advances in technology.
 - Committee members managing cemeteries currently both confirmed they use HMIS as their software system.

MEMORIAL DAY PLANS 2015

Lupine DeSnyder, Parks and Natural Areas Volunteer Coordinator, was introduced to the Committee. This Volunteer Coordinator position was an addition to the staff for the parks through the levy passed in 2013, with Lupine coming back to Metro for this work in late 2014. Lupine gave recognition to the work done by the Cemetery Program in prior years for the efforts to organize Memorial Day events, and that she appreciates the continued support and staffing from the program for this holiday weekend.

Related to the preparation of the properties, the following is currently planned:

- SOLVE IT event at Lone Fir Cemetery on April 18th will include a group of corporate volunteers from Capital One as well as a group being led by Friends of Lone Fir.
- Ongoing work with Independent Living Resources, a nearby non-profit, will continue throughout March, April, and May.
- Park Rangers and seasonal employees will be working before Memorial Day to mow, edge, and add seasonal landscaping to the cemeteries.
 - Park Ranger Matt Herbert confirmed there will be adequate staff in answer to the question raised by Chair Duncan.
 - Matt Herbert confirmed the mowing schedule would be updated from prior years to ensure the largest cemeteries are mowed closest to Memorial Day weekend. Mowing during the weekend would be limited to smaller, less visited cemeteries to ensure minimal impact to visitors.

MEMORIAL DAY PLANS 2015 (cont'd)

- Flags will be placed throughout all 14 cemeteries with the assistance of volunteers for many of them.
 - Metro is able to provide improved lists of veteran burials through use of Stone Orchard.
 - Volunteers assisting the efforts of flag placement include Central Catholic High School, Friends of Multnomah Park, Stan Clarke from the Lone Fir Foundation board, and several other individuals from the community.
 - Cemeteries that do not have a volunteer placing flags will be done by Metro staff.
- Cemetery office staff will be on-site at the three most visited cemeteries (Lone Fir, Douglass and Multnomah Park) during specific times of the holiday weekend.
 - Volunteers from Friends of Lone Fir and possibly the Lone Fir Foundation are also expected to be present at Lone Fir, as they have been in the past.
 - Volunteers from the informal group Friends of Multnomah Park are expected to be on-site at that property. Additionally, Metro is working toward signage being posted at Multnomah Park regarding the search for descendants of historic owners.

MEMORIALIZATION FOCUS GROUP UPDATE

Focus Group Chair Terry McCall provided an update on behalf of the Group from the minutes of the 2/26/2015 meeting.

- The group will hold quarterly meetings with monthly conference calls in-between.
- The scope of work was discussed with the following items specifically addressed:
 - The definition of “historic” needs to be clarified for use in context of this specific topic.
 - There may be different standards adopted for Lone Fir than for the other 13 cemeteries due to its placement on the National Registry of Historic Places.
ACTION ITEM: Hannah Allan will provide contact information of a preservationist she recently had contact with in Oregon.
 - A suggestion was made for Metro staff to contact the Historic Cemetery Commission for Oregon within the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Division.
ACTION ITEM: Staff Member Melisa McDonald confirmed she is attending the Oregon Heritage Conference in April, which is the gathering that includes the Historic Cemetery Commission, and she will report back to the Task Force.
 - Clarification should be made regarding the extent of descendancy for the marker placement rights beyond the original purchaser.

PUBLIC OUTREACH OBJECTIVES & EXPECTATIONS

There is \$30,000 in the proposed Cemetery FY15/16 budget for outreach to the public regarding cemeteries. If this funding is approved, the following topics would be a priority for public input:

- Value of cemeteries, in general, to the community
- Use of the cemetery space (i.e. sacred space only, community green space, place for community events, etc.)
- Long-term management of historical markers (work from the Memorialization Focus Group)
- Public responsibility for the long-term funding of the cemeteries in the region

The next phase: Metro program staff will work with Communications staff and others on how to best address the public, specifically related to the questions put forth from the Committee.

ACTION ITEM: Committee members should provide any additional suggestions for topics to be prioritized for public input to Metro staff.

ACTIONS

ACTION ITEM: Hannah Allan will provide contact information of a preservationist she recently had contact with in Oregon.

ACTION ITEM: Melisa McDonald will report back to the Focus Group after attending the Oregon Heritage Conference in April.

ACTION ITEM: Committee members should provide any additional suggestions for topics to be prioritized for public input to Metro staff.

ACTION ITEM: Rules and Regulations that are typically handed to customers/visitors to the cemeteries were requested to be distributed to Committee members:

River View Cemetery, David Noble
Lincoln Memorial Park, Marie Henry
Metro Cemeteries, Melisa McDonald

ACTION ITEM: Melisa McDonald will research the dates and times for the quarterly Committee meetings with the preferences noted of a) the earlier 1:00 start time being preferred and b) avoiding a standing meeting conflict with Councilor Craddick's schedule.

DECISIONS

The Proposed 2015 Work Plan was accepted.

Evaluation of the cemetery software will be on a future work plan for staff.

NEXT MEETING: To be announced and confirmed separately.

ADJORNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:31 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Phyllis Cole