

 **Metro | Agenda**

Meeting: Cemetery Advisory Committee Quarterly Meeting
Date: Monday, September 21, 2015
Time: 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
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 Agenda	Verne Duncan
1:10 p.m.	Update: Program overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">Director update: Kathleen Brennan-HunterMultnomah Park update: Block ILone Fir update: Tour of Untimely Departure, Trail Count	Melisa McDonald
1:20 p.m.	Recommendation: Memorialization Focus Group	Hannah Allan
1:40 p.m.	Recommendation: Committee Formalization	David Noble
2:00 p.m.	New: 2015 Annual Report	Verne Duncan
2:10 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

Metro | *Meeting minutes*

Cemetery Advisory Committee

September 21, 2015

Committee members in attendance: Verne Duncan (Committee Chair), Hannah Allan (Committee Co-Chair), Councilor Shirley Craddick, Melisa McDonald, Marie Henry, Meg McCauley, Bo Nevue, David Noble, Laurel Smith

Committee members excused: Terry McCall

Metro: Melisa McDonald, Emma Williams, Noel Seats, Kimberly Palmero, Matthew Herbert, Annie West, Phyllis Cole

Public: Wendy Palmer, Board Vice-Chair, Friends of Lone Fir

WELCOME

Committee Chair Verne Duncan convened the meeting at 1:02 and welcomed the Committee. The summary of the June 15, 2015 were approved as submitted.

Nothing was added or changed on the agenda.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Director Update

Melisa McDonald announced that Kathleen Brennan-Hunter, who attended the June CAC meeting as Interim Director of Parks & Nature, has been hired into the position on a permanent basis. Melisa explained the reporting structure of the Cemetery Program as part of the Parks & Nature Department and Metro.

Multnomah Park Update: Block I

Melisa shared that all permits are now in place to bury and transfer burial rights at Multnomah Park. About five burial rights have been transferred so far, and there has been one burial in Block I. Some logistical operational issues are still being worked out.

The spaces in Block I will primarily be double depth, and sold with two burial rights. The cemetery will not be fully open to public sales until all burial rights have been resolved. Metro is working to best honor families, taking into consideration that there may be more burial rights in conflict than existing spaces. The exception for allowing the sale of a new burial space would be if one spouse is buried at Multnomah Park; then every effort would be made to enable the other spouse to be buried in the same cemetery.

There is a small area of the cemetery that will still remain undeveloped for future decision about whether to offer it as burial space or a cremation garden.

Lone Fir Update:

Tour of Untimely Departures (TOUD)

The intent of this popular Halloween event is to get people into the cemetery and prevent vandalism. Metro's Volunteer Coordinator Lupine DeSnyder is the Project Manager for the event and is working closely with the TOUD planning committee. The committee includes many members of the Friends of Lone Fir Cemetery, as well as volunteer Metro staff and other interested members of the community.

Trail Count

Metro Cemeteries' staff takes trail counts monthly at Lone Fir to gather visitor statistics. However, the region-wide annual Trail Count project offers the opportunity to gather specific information regarding which trails are being used, how much, and why they are used. All visitors and their modes of transportation are noted during a designated two-hour time slot on one weekday and one weekend day.

Visitors are also surveyed if possible. This annual count helps Metro, as a transportation planning and funding agency, to secure Federal funding, and Councilor Craddick identified Lone Fir as a clear transportation corridor. The data from Lone Fir shows that many more people are using this space for recreational purposes than are visiting graves of loved ones. These activities include walking, sitting quietly, reading, picnicking, jogging and riding bicycles. The data should be available in about a month.

Several short updates were offered:

Havurah Shalom

- Over a number of years Havurah Shalom has purchased more than 200 burial rights in Jones Cemetery. Since the initial purchases, many of these spaces have been sold to individual members of the synagogue, and Noel Seats has been working to bring Metro documentation current; providing current owners with updated Contracts of Purchase and Certificates of Interment.

Cemetery Documents Inventory

- Kim Palmero is partnering with Records & Information staff to copy all historic maps and books, with the intent to digitize and preserve these irreplaceable documents. Completion of this project may be part of a budget request for the next fiscal year, or may have to be done over a longer period of time.

Validation Action

- Currently there are approximately 500 spaces in Metro cemeteries that require resolution of burial right ownership, but which did not meet the 75-year-without-contact criteria of Senate Bill 1537. Metro would like to apply the senate bill standard of notification and follow through to these 500 cases, and will file this request in late September or early October. It is hoped that a judge will grant this request in what is called a validation action. Once filed it is expected to take a minimum of 6-9 months for a ruling.

Staffing Adjustments

- There will be some upcoming modifications in staffing to accommodate the program while Noel and Emma are on leave.

RECOMMENDATIONS: MEMORIALIZATION FOCUS GROUP

The letter the Friends of Lone Fir letter to the Council in June was mentioned, and Co-chair Hannah Allan asked Melisa McDonald for an update of a meeting held at Lone Fir with members from the Friends group to talk specifically about their One Stone at a Time project. At the meeting it was decided that the main focus of the project is to stabilize stones that may pose a danger to the public, not restoring or replacing stones. It has been an ongoing practice for Metro rangers to check and repair upright unstable markers in the cemeteries they visit, focusing especially on those in sensitive areas such as near roads and pedestrian pathways. From now on repair work on these stones will be tracked and logged for reference. Rangers Annie West and Matthew Herbert have completed this more formal process for a large portion of the markers at Lone Fir, and continue to do so.

Donovan & Associates has repaired a number of stones, but the epoxy and lime mortar used for repair are not commonly used from October/November until the weather warms again.

An inventory of stones at Lone Fir will be taken, with the help of Friends of Lone Fir, November 2015 through February 2016, formatted to identify:

- The safety of a particular stone in its current condition;
- The level of repair (volunteer, intermediate, or expert);
- How to create an overall repair ranking.

Donovan and Associates will begin training volunteers in late spring of 2016. It is currently being considered as an annual certification process to ensure strong skills and use of any updated procedures, build camaraderie and a sharing of skills.

The Metro rangers will take Monument Stabilization, Repair, and Restoration Training on 10/14/2015.

There will be three levels of stabilization work:

1. Volunteer – Basic stabilization tasks that a volunteer may safely be asked to perform, this will mainly be leveling stones;
2. Intermediate – A higher level of stabilization that will require a greater level of skill. These tasks could be done by the rangers as practical or be contracted out;
3. Expert – This level will be contracted out to professionals with appropriate experience to perform complex stabilization tasks utilizing bigger equipment.

The stabilization work is slated to be done in the summer of 2016.

It is expected that there will be a small number of unique marker issue requests, and an application process is being developed to help Metro gather the information required to meet this need. This will include the relationship of the requesting entity to the individual who is memorialized, and what they are hoping for. Each application will be handled separately by a review panel comprised of people with different sets of knowledge and skills. It is possible that a certain amount of work by the panel can be done electronically, reducing the costs and time of travel.

The panel may or may not include members of the group who will develop the application process. After its findings are endorsed by the Cemetery Advisory Committee, the panel will give its recommendation to staff (using as guidelines the standards of the State of Oregon Historic Preservation Office, especially as these apply to Lone Fir).

Councilor Craddick inquired whether standards currently exist for the appropriate levels of restoration in historic cemeteries. Melisa responded that standards are in place, and if questions arose she would reference the Oregon Commission of Historic Cemeteries publications, as well a recent publication by the Association of Graveyard Studies. There was general discussion on the challenges that can arise regarding markers when multiple heirs of equal standing disagree.

RECOMMENDATION: COMMITTEE FORMALIZATION

The Cemetery Advisory Committee currently exists as a Task Force, which is a group gathered for a particular task and which is dissolved after the issue is resolved.

If the Committee wishes to continue it needs to become an official Metro Committee. David Noble shared that this is the recommendation that he, Meg McCauley, and Melisa McDonald have determined as the best path going forward. He stressed that the effectiveness of a program is tied to the people working in the program, and since it is natural for staffing changes to occur over time, a committee structure would provide ongoing support

and cemetery expertise when necessary.

David submitted a document, Formalization of Cemetery Advisory Committee that outlines the details of the structure and composition of the proposed ongoing Cemetery Advisory Committee.

The Committee accepted Melisa's suggestion that she research next steps in this process. She added that the request must go before the Council, probably in 2016 due to busy Council schedule.

COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL

Councilor Craddick shared her appreciation of the Cemetery Advisory Committee's willingness to help resolve issues and move forward. She emphasized her desire to see the Cemeteries program more fully integrated into the Parks program.

DECISIONS

The Cemetery Advisory Committee voted to move forward with the formalization process to become a standing Metro Committee.

ACTIONS

ACTION ITEM: Melisa McDonald will draft an intake form for marker restoration/repair/replacement issues and bring it to the December meeting.

ACTION ITEM: Bo Nevue and David Noble will put together a draft statement stating the intention of the CAC to become a permanent Metro Committee, with Melisa adding "Metro flavor."

ACTION ITEM: Verne Duncan and Melisa McDonald will present a draft Annual Report at the December meeting.

NEXT MEETING: December 14, 2015, from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m.

ADJORNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Phyllis Cole