

 **Metro | Agenda**

Meeting: Cemetery Advisory Committee Quarterly Meeting
Date: Monday, December 14,, 2015
Time: 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Location: Metro Regional Center, 600 NE Grand Ave, Room 370A/B

12:15 p.m.	Coffee and Snacks	
12:30 p.m.	Welcome	Verne Duncan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Adoption of Meeting Summary▪ Approval of Agenda	
12:40 p.m.	Update: Program overview	Melisa McDonald
12:50 p.m.	New: Metro System Plan	Kathleen Brennan-Hunter
1:10 p.m.	Update: Status of Committee & next steps	Melisa McDonald
1:20 p.m.	New: Work Plan 2016-17	Verne Duncan
1:45 p.m.	Comments from Council	Councilor Craddick
2:00 p.m.	Adjourn	

2015 WORK PLAN

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

December 14, 2015

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

Committee members excused: Marie Henry

Metro: Kathleen Brennan-Hunter, Melisa McDonald, Emma Williams, Annie West, Phyllis Cole

Public: Becky Oswald, Secretary, Friends of Lone Fir (FLFC), Don Forth, Board Chair, Lone Fir Cemetery Foundation (LFCF)

WELCOME

Committee Chair Verne Duncan convened the meeting at 12:32 and welcomed the Committee. Self-introductions were made, and the summary of the September 21, 2015 was approved as submitted. Nothing was added or changed on the agenda.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Staffing Update

Melisa McDonald updated the Committee on current staff levels, and her present role as a cemetery coordinator/program manager, with vital and appreciated assistance from the rangers.

Lone Fir Update

The Pillars Project

There will soon be an installation of basalt pillars at the SE 26th Avenue entrance to Lone Fir, replicating the pillars on SE 20th. Wendy Palmer of FLFC is spearheading this project, and Poetry in Stone is the contractor, and owner Matt Goddard is fascinated by the stones in Lone Fir, so there may have another contractor interested to assist Metro in the historic aspects of the cemetery. This project is being funded 100% by the Friends of Lone Fir, using profits from the 2014 Tour of Untimely Departures. Chair Duncan suggested that sending a letter of appreciation be sent to the FLFC and this will be noted as an action item. An event will be planned when the project is completed, to which the Committee will be invited.

One Stone at a Time

Donovan and Associates has completed stabilization work on about 15 markers at Lone Fir. Additional stabilizations have been completed by Metro rangers, who were trained in this work earlier in the year. The inventory of stones discussed at the September meeting is more extensive than noting marker stability, and thus the inventory of the whole cemetery will thus take longer than first reported. Metro and the FLFC will meet to clarify the balancing of this long-term information gathering with operational needs. This stabilization priority will affect all the Metro cemeteries.

Tour of Untimely Departures Canceled

Due to dangerously high winds and heavy rain the 2015 Tour of Untimely Departures was canceled. It was clear by mid-afternoon on October 31st that to hold the event would be dangerous for all involved, and the decision was made to cancel the event for this year. A refund process was set up, and 97 advance ticket holders generously contributed their payments to the Friends of Lone Fir. This revenue is not enough to fund production of new lot markers for Lone Fir, as was intended. This project will move forward when funding is available.

Chestnut Grove

More of the best selling inurnment options will be installed in Lone Fir's Chestnut Grove Memorial Garden. The program looks forward to the assistance of Parks and Nature's Planning Team of to modify the original design to best meet the needs of families.

Survey

Funding has been authorized for an engineering survey on the north retaining wall at Lone Fir. When costs for this upgrade are known funding options will be discussed.

Multnomah Park Update

Block I Soil

To determine soil composition in a larger portion of Block I, two double depth lawn crypts were recently put in. The soil from these spaces held typical cemetery soil, without the concrete and rebar debris found in the first burial site in Block I. The soil protocol has been updated to deal with atypical soil issues going forward. If material similar to the first opening is found, the load will be taken to St. Johns Prairie, and stored in a separate space. Metro rangers will sort the soil in question. Sand and Gravel is currently the company that would take debris unacceptable to St. Johns. Two additional spaces in Block I will be opened 12/17/2015 and will provide additional data on the overall soil composition of this new burial area at Multnomah Park.

Historic Families

Metro has also reconnected with the Kern and Peterson families through the reclamation project, and has repurchased some of the spaces they were no longer planning to use. This provides greatly needed available places in the historic section of the cemetery. The postings are still out and it is hoped that more historic families will contact Metro.

Jones Cemetery Update

It has been determined that bulk sales are not the best practice for the cemetery program. There is one remaining bulk sale in a settlement process at Jones Cemetery. The Havurah Shalom Synagogue purchased a number of spaces over the years and many of these have been purchased by members of the congregation. Many of these spaces were then sold to members of the congregation. Metro is updating the records for these records by issuing zero dollar contracts to the families, as well as new Certificates of Interment. For a year and a half Metro has been in negotiations with Havurah Shalom on a resolution to this situation, and hopefully within three to six months Havurah Shalom will be picking one of three options that Metro has developed, and Metro will take back the remaining inventory.

Brainard Cemetery Update

A split rail fence is now in place at Brainard Cemetery, and this lovely upgrade is a recent Eagle Scout project, which was overseen by one of Metro's very own Eagle Scouts, Matthew Herbert.

Annual Report

Copies of the Parks and Nature Annual report were passed out. This is a high level view of the levy and bond activities, and next year the Cemeteries Program will be included in this report.

Commission on Historic Cemeteries Conference

Melisa recently attended the State of Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries Conference in Paisley, Oregon. There were two topics in particular she wanted to make the Committee of:

1. A change is being considered in the definition of "historic" to a rolling 75 years, which would enable a broader pool of cemeteries to apply for funds;
2. There was discussion on what events should be allowed in historic cemeteries. The idea of weddings in particular was not a popular concept for those representing the rural cemeteries, where multi-generational burials are the norm. Melisa grew up in a very small town, and could empathize with the rural viewpoint, but was also able to discuss the need for urban cemeteries to have events that bring in people without existing family burials. A way to connect with the community is vital for urban cemeteries be able to meet the community's outside of the multi-generational cemetery that is the norm in rural communities. Creating a position paper on this topic was initially planned, but following this discussion the creation of a draft of guidelines and information needed in these situations emerged as the more reasonable outcome at this time. David Noble provided his perspective on the workings of a single, busy cemetery and how any "extra-curricular" functions must be respectful to the families of the deceased.

Oregon Mortuary and Cemetery Board (OMCB)

December 1, 2015 was Metro's deadline to have met all the conditions of the settlement agreement with the Oregon Mortuary and Cemetery Board. Melisa has met with the OMCB before and after December 1st. By 12/31/2015, when the settlement agreement concludes, it will be known whether the second \$50,000 of the fee has been waived for successful completion of all Metro's responsibilities.

Portland General Electric easement at 223rd

PGE presented to OMCB the location of their easement on the 223rd property. It is primarily an aerial easement of two poles, and PGE would like to put in larger poles. Metro is not prepared to agree to this if it will incur fines and penalties with OMCB. PGE has archeologists and staff used to excavating sensitive sites, and will work with Metro on the logistics for this change and come back to OMCB with a proposal. PGE has not made a firm determination to move forward with this process. Terry McCall verified that part of the agreement would include that Metro would be held harmless should something unintentionally go awry. although the larger liability discussion is still in progress. If it is deemed necessary that Metro rangers on site, PGE will reimburse Metro for staff time. The overarching goal is that PGE wants to move the easement, which would set a Metro process into action that involves more than the Cemetery Program, but overall Metro and PGE responsibilities.

Additional updates

- Metro is currently engaged in an identity project, so Metro will soon have a new look. Melisa will keep the Committee updated.
- Work is currently being done on the FY2016-2017 Metro Cemetery budget which will be due to Kathleen Brennan-Hunter in January. The cemetery program will be requesting \$50,000 to resolve burial rights, as well as one more year of budgeting for Kimberly Palmero's position.
- The feasibility of the current plan for the Lone Fir Cultural Heritage Garden will be examined when the work group is re-gathered for a Lone Fir Summit in March 2016. The work group includes the Lone Fir Cemetery Foundation, the Friends of Lone Fir Cemetery and Metro. By reinforcing the connections of teamwork and best outcome, the summit will address the three priorities of support, operational perspective, and available resources.

METRO PARKS AND NATURE SYSTEM PLAN

Kathleen Brennan-Hunter, Director of Parks and Nature, gave a high level review of the new Parks and Nature System Plan. Many parks systems develop system plans, but because of Metro's somewhat unique portfolio, a five- to 10-year roadmap has been developed to show where are today, and where we are going in the future. Organizing outcomes around frameworks and strategies will help Metro continue to protect the land under its stewardship, five mission-critical and program area strategies are addressed in the Metro System Plan.

Several copies will be passed out at the end of the meeting, and Melisa will send the Committee the link to the document online.

UPDATE: STATUS OF COMMITTEE AND NEXT STEPS

Following the September meeting Melisa has researched requirements the Cemetery Advisory Committee would be held to were it to become a standing Metro committee. Formal committees regularly engage with multiple jurisdictions, which is not how the Cemetery Advisory Committee, as an expertise-focused group, functions. Ad Hoc committees serve to advise programs, and a motion was made by Chair Duncan to continue operation in this manner. Terry McCall seconded the motion and it passed without opposition. Kathleen Brennan-Hunter, Director of Parks and Nature, or Martha Bennett, COO can authorize this. With this in place the CAC will continue to give advice to staff based on the wide range and levels of perspective. The Committee will continue to meet on a quarterly basis.

Due to staffing issues there will be no meeting in March 2016; the next meeting will be June, 20, 2016, and will be held offsite to work on setting a long-range work plan.

Work Plan 2016-17

This will be discussed at the June meeting.

COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL

Councilor Craddick said that she felt comfortable with the comments she had made during the meeting.

DECISIONS

The Cemetery Advisory Committee voted to reinstate as an Ad Hoc committee, and to function in a capacity of advising the Metro Cemetery Program.

ACTIONS

ACTION ITEM: Verne Duncan will thank the Friends of Lone Fir for their fundraising efforts to support the Pillars project at Lone Fir.

ACTION ITEM: Melisa McDonald will send the Committee the link to the Parks and Nature Metro System Plan.

NEXT MEETING: June 20, 2016 1:00 to 2:30 p.m., location TBD

ADJORNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:02 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Phyllis Cole