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MINUTES OF THE CEMETERY COMMISSION
November 21, 2023

A meeting of the Salem Cemetery Commission was held on November 21, 2023, at 6:00 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system. Present on call were Chairperson Jacob St. Louis, Members: Kate Hanson, Phillip Johns and Anthony O'Donnell; Raymond Jodoin, Director of Operations; Conor Morgan, General Foreperson, Cemetery/Tree Division, DPS and Commission Clerk Joanne Roomey. Absent was Beth Gerard.

1. Approve Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes for August 15, 2023

Ms. Hanson made a motion to approve the Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes for August 15, 2023. Seconded by Mr. O'Donnell. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously.

2. Superintendent report from Conor Morgan about Cemetery operations

Since the last Cemetery Commission meeting the following interment activities within the Greenlawn Cemetery are:

- August: 6 cremations
- September: 4 cremations
2 burials
3 boxes sold
- October: 8 cremations
2 burials
2 full burials
- November: 5 Cremations
3 boxes sold
3 sales of lots
2 Lots remaining

It is evident from this that we need to develop the Burke Lot as a matter of urgency, which means the immediate removal of trees and the accurate plotting of lots on the ground.

A large quantity of tree health inspections were received, examined immediately and work orders created as needed. The remainder of SeeClickFix requests were mostly made up of downed branches and complaints of branches in conflict with houses.

The major news from this period is that both outside contractors Mayer and Iron Tree began their large contracts to clear 92 work orders from the backlog. They both declined to work during October, and both began immediately after on the same day. Mayer Tree split the contract into phases meaning that no parking orders could be streamlined. Iron Tree simply stated that they need 46 locations posted over a 10-day period. This caused complaints from residents. As of now, Iron Tree has completed their 46 work orders and Mayer Tree has completed about two thirds of their 46 work orders. Again, this is a great relief to complete before the winter weather.

Most of the reports of downed branches were taken care of by Mike Albert and Richard Martineau. It must be noted that Michael Albert is an absolute stalwart worker who rises to any challenge without a complaint.

Regarding the 105 GGCG planting locations, we have finalized the list of locations and species. We will now work toward opening, building and improving those planting pits for the best results in tree establishment.

Going forward we will be working toward immediately clearing more of the SeeClickFix backlog including a considerable amount of stump grinding in the tree lawns.

Mr. Morgan has spent considerable time preparing for the three tree hearings scheduled for this month. He has endeavored to accommodate the applicants' needs while safeguarding the interest of the city and its trees.

We have welcomed a new recruit to the Tree Department, Kevin Torres, who is a young guy with a very good attitude of cooperation and a good work ethic. Obviously, the lack of staff has rendered the tree crew completely inoperable and despite the addition of Kevin we cannot field a tree crew with one man.

We have welcomed a new seasonal operative to the Cemetery Department, Jaimie Stavros, who is a hard worker and fitting in well.

The lack of staff is now a major concern and threatens even the most basic operations of the cemetery. Today for example we had three operatives in the cemetery. Two of them were engaged in decorating the Christmas tree in the center of town. The third man had to attend the dentist for emergency dental treatment, leaving only Mr. Morgan at the cemetery. The usual complement of union positions in this department is 10 operatives. Out of these 10 unions positions, we currently have three able-bodied union staff. Three staff are out on medium to long term injury/workman's comp. Four union positions are vacant.

With the staff at 30% of its full strength we are still endeavoring to tackle the season's largest chore: the fallen leaves. We have had great cooperation from the parks department manning the leaf vacuum machine. Mr. Morgan would estimate that 70 of the heretofore fallen leaves in Greenlawn Cemetery have been gathered

at least in windrows. There are still some leaves on the trees and the staff have not been able to make it to the satellites yet.

On a positive note, Ms. Peterson is very happy with the performance of the new grass contractor James Burke. Ms. Peterson is eager to discuss improvement projects at Charter Street Cemetery after the holiday.

At Howard Street there is a contract of tree works which should be beginning shortly now that Halloween is over, and we have tree contractors in place.

3. Broad Street Cemetery Concerns

There has been major vandalism and antisocial behavior at Broad Street Cemetery with ongoing destruction of crypts and presence of needles. Mr. Morgan has spoken to Elizabeth Peterson, Director of the Witch House at Charter Street Cemetery, who sadly has suffered a bereavement. She has told him that there is ongoing antisocial behavior at Charter Street, mostly associated with rough sleepers and their interactions with staff.

4. Discussion about Dickson West Side Chapel Slope Expansion

Martha Lyon, Landscape Architecture, spoke about the Greenlawn Cemetery West Chapel Slope Project. She said the project purpose is to provide expanded interment options at historic Greenlawn Cemetery, per the recommendations of the 2022 Master Plan. For more information, please click on this link: https://www.salemma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf7986/f/uploads/greenlawn_expansion-concept_presentation-11-21-2023-compressed.pdf

- Public comment 5 minutes per person not to exceed one hour in total

Polly Wilbert made a comment regarding clarifying the agenda more (the Burke Lot was not on the agenda). She also said it is hard to understand the heights with no measurements and the commission should share information. She is very frustrated about significant expansion with only two options for scattering and interments.

Patti Kelleher said there is a process: Design team wants clear direction on how you would like to proceed; budget approval; design something that can be built; meet with commission in January with a set of drawings with measurements and detailed materials; then it goes out to bid.

Mr. Jodoin said he will try to get this funded with the mayor's office. We are still a long time away from this.

5. **New Business:** Mr. O'Donnell will get more information and put something together for a future meeting regarding what burials are going to look like and scattering gardens.
6. **Adjournment:** Mr. Johns made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. O'Donnell. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Roomey
Commission Clerk

Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A §18-25 and
City Ordinance Sections 2-2028 through 2-2033