

MINUTES OF CEMETERY PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING
CITY OF KENNESAW
City Hall Training Room
(2529 J.O. Stephenson Avenue, Kennesaw, GA 30144)
November 14, 2024
4:00 PM

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

Chairman Bramlett called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Commission members present were Rebecca Carlson, Jim Poole, Vice Chair Lizz Gray, and Tony Taylor. City liaisons included Councilmember Pat Ferris, Assistant Public Works Director Tim Cox, City Clerk Lea Alvarez and Deputy City Clerk Christie Burgner. Kennesaw Cemetery Foundation President Stephen King and Foundation Secretary Andrew Bramlett were also present.

2. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

A. Minutes: October 10, 2024

Consideration to approve the October 10, 2024 Cemetery Preservation Commission meeting minutes.

Commissioner Carlson moved to approve the October 2024 Cemetery Preservation Commission draft minutes. Vice Chair Gray seconded the motion. Vote taken. Unanimously approved (4:0). Motion passed.

3. Financial Report

A. Financials: October 2024

Consideration to approve the October 2024 financial reports.

Vice Chair Gray moved to approve the October 2024 financials as presented by Ms. Alvarez. Commissioner Poole seconded the motion. Vote taken, unanimously approved (4:0). Motion passed.

4. Cemetery Preservation Foundation Update

Cemetery Foundation President Stephen King provided follow-up information on the Life in the Cemetery tours. He thanked the City Clerk and the Cemetery Preservation Commission for their support. The Foundation believes that 2024 will be the highest total of funds raised to date at around \$7000 if all sponsors fulfill their promises. Discussion held. All but one tour date/time was sold out; the total of tickets sold was 140. There was feedback that some of the attendees did not know that the city had a cemetery downtown. People seemed happy with the ticket prices. The walk-through night went well. It is unknown if the tour will expand to two weeks next year.

5. Old Business

A. Discussion: Memorial Trees & Plaques

Review new quotes.

City Clerk Lea Alvarez advised the Commission on the current memorial trees of which some are dead and/or dying. At last month's meeting, the commission discussed replacing those memorial trees with one dogwood tree. The original vendor for that dogwood was let go by Public Works. The new vendor quoted a price that was almost double the first cost. Also discussed at the previous meeting was utilizing the tribute wall for the memorial plaques. It was determined that the current plaques are not able to be placed on the wall and would have to be replaced. The cost for replacement would be approximately \$150 for each of the 56 plaques to total over eight thousand dollars. Ms. Alvarez advised that the clerk's office would like more time to discuss options for a long-lasting memorial. The clerk's office will send out an email regarding the trees. Discussion held. Any of the current memorial trees that die will not be replaced, which is why the clerk's office is looking for a long-term solution. The City Council will be voting on an Art Council restructuring. The clerk's office would like to utilize the new Arts Programming Coordinator to possibly work with Kennesaw State University for a new way to honor/recognize the memorials previously purchased.

6. New Business

A. Discussion: 2025 Cemetery Events

Review possible dates for events and clean up days.

City Clerk Lea Alvarez advised of the 2025 Cemetery Preservation Commission events [Exhibit A] that were provided to the Events Committee. Ms. Alvarez reminded the commission that the dates were not set in stone and could be changed if needed. Ms. Alvarez then turned the floor over to the commission. Vice Chair Gray presented a list [Exhibit B] of possible new events. Commission agreed to the established cemetery events. Discussion held. Any event added to the calendar would be in addition to the established events. Commissioner Carlson would like to utilize the Taste of Kennesaw or the Big Shanty Festival for an event. Decoration Day has historically been more a social event than a cleaning event. The 2025 Decoration Day details will be decided in January. Mr. King advised he could speak with some of the prominent local families to discuss what they would like to see for Decoration Day; the Commission was invited to meet with them as well. Mr. King stated that the Foundation could possibly do a quarterly newsletter. Ms. Alvarez advised that the history trail (scavenger hunt) is something that could be posted on the city's website; and the commission may want to think about how much money they would want to spend on printed pamphlets. Andrew Bramlett asked about having a cemetery tent at the Big Shanty Festival. Mr. King stated that the Life in the Cemetery Tour had more visitors due to the Candy Crawl. The consensus was to look towards a headstone/history tour in late April to coincide with the Big Shanty Festival. Mr. King advised that the Commission could utilize the Foundation website, and the Foundation would be responsive to sending out a newsletter.

7. Staff Comment

Councilmember Ferris stated that the Cemetery Preservation Commission and the

Cemetery Preservation Foundation should be proud of all that was accomplished this year, and challenges the groups to do the same next year. Ms. Alvarez advised there would be no December Commission meeting. Chairman Bramlett reminded that officer election would occur in January. Vice Chair Gray asked if there would be an end of the year recap for council. Chairman Bramlett advised he would do the recap. Ms. Alvarez stated that there was currently enough money to place sod in the areas previously discussed.

8. Adjourn

Chairman Bramlett adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Christie Burgner

Kennesaw City Cemetery

Decoration Day

Cemetery Preservation Commission

Saturday, May 3, 2025 @ 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Memorial Day Flag Placement

Kennesaw Mountain Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution

Sunday, May 18, 2025 @ 10:00 a.m.

Clean Up Day

Cemetery Preservation Commission

Saturday, October 4, 2025 @ 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Life in the Cemetery

Cemetery Preservation Foundation and Cemetery Preservation Commission

Thursday, October 23 – Sunday, October 26, 2025 @ 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Veterans Day Flags and Poppies

Kennesaw Mountain Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution

Sunday, November 2, 2025 @ 10:00 a.m.

Wreaths Across America

Kennesaw Mountain Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution

Saturday, December 13, 2025 @ 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Kennesaw City Cemetery: 2025 Events Calendar

Spring Events

- **Saturday, May 3** – Decoration (Clean-up) Day
- **Sunday, May 18** – Veteran Flags Placed for Memorial Day by DAR
- **Sunday, May 25** – Memorial Day

Summer Events

- **Sunday, June 1** – DAR Removes Veteran Flags from Memorial Day

Fall Events

- **Saturday, October 4** – Clean-Up Day
- **Thursday, October 23 to Sunday, October 26** – “Life in the Cemetery” Tours by the Cemetery Foundation
- **Sunday, November 2** – Veteran Flags Placed for Veteran’s Day by DAR
- **Tuesday, November 11** – Veteran’s Day

Winter Events

- **Saturday, December 13** – Wreaths Across America led by DAR
- **Sunday, January 11, 2026** – DAR Removes Wreaths and Veteran Flags from Wreaths Across America

Additional Proposed Events

Cemetery Preservation Talk & Hands-On Cleaning

Preserve the past for the future. Attend a lecture on cemetery preservation and participate in hands-on cleaning of a historical marker.

An educational talk followed by a hands-on cleaning session, where participants can learn how to safely preserve gravestones for future generations.

Tour of Headstone Symbols

Unlock the secrets of the past. Join us for a guided tour explaining the meanings behind common cemetery headstone symbols.

A tour focusing on the historical and symbolic significance of various symbols found on

headstones, such as angels, urns, and ivy, perfect for those interested in cemetery art and history.

Cemetery Gardening Day

Get your hands dirty! Help us plant flowers and tend to the seasonal greenery around the cemetery.

Volunteers join together to plant and maintain flowers and other plants throughout the cemetery grounds, helping to beautify the space.

Autumn Photography Walk

Capture the beauty of the season! Bring your camera and join us for a fall photography walk through the cemetery.

A guided walk perfect for photographers or those looking to capture the autumn colors and the unique beauty of the cemetery. Tips on photographing old gravestones and landscapes will be provided.

Cemetery Scavenger Hunt (Available year-round, self-paced)

Explore the cemetery and discover hidden gems! Pick up a scavenger hunt list at the cemetery office or download it online and enjoy a self-guided adventure.

This fun, interactive scavenger hunt invites visitors to explore the cemetery at their own pace. Participants can search for specific graves, historical markers, unique headstone symbols, or notable local figures. A great activity for families or groups, and can be done anytime during the year.

Cemetery History Trail (Available year-round, self-paced)

Walk through history at your own pace. Follow the Cemetery History Trail and learn about the significant people, events, and structures that have shaped the cemetery.

A self-guided walking tour with informative markers or an app, allowing visitors to learn about the history of the cemetery and its notable figures, anytime during the year. The trail could include historical highlights like the oldest graves, unique burial practices, or famous personalities.