

MINUTES OF CEMETERY PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING
CITY OF KENNESAW
Council Chambers
June 8, 2023
4:00 PM

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 PM by Chairperson Bramlett.

- Roll Call: Lewis Bramlett, Lizz Gray, Judi Burrell, Anthony Gutierrez, Andrew Bramlett – Honorary Member
- Staff present: Lea Alvarez (City Clerk), Lily Smith (Deputy City Clerk), Tim Cox (Assistant Public Works Director), and Pat Ferris (Council Liaison)
- Guests present: Stephen King (Cemetery Foundation President)

2. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

- A. Approval of the May 11, 2023 regular meeting minutes.

Motion by Vice Chairperson Gray to approve the May 11, 2023 regular meeting minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Gutierrez.

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 3-0. Motion passed.

3. Financial Report

- A. Receipt of the May financials.

Motion by Commissioner Burrell to approve the May 2023 financials. Seconded by Commissioner Gutierrez.

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 3-0. Motion passed.

4. Cemetery Preservation Foundation Update

Cemetery Preservation Foundation President Stephen King provided the Cemetery Preservation Commission with an update. He shared that the Foundation voted to donate \$1,000 to the Commission for the purchase of new benches, and that they are still looking for new members. Ms. Michelle Newman has been attending recently and said she would like to join; however, the Foundation is at full membership based on the current bylaws. The Foundation has one member who has not attended any meetings since the beginning of the year. The Foundation is still looking to fill the secretary position, and while Jacque Cullins will remain on the board as a regular member, Mr. King will take the minutes. The Foundation is also in the process of updating its bylaws. They are on their second draft. The Foundation is looking into redoing its donation flyer

and have talked about using paper flyers versus using a QR code in the kiosks. During June's meeting, the Foundation will begin the planning for this year's walking tour. Ms. Alvarez will have to present the event in front of the Events Committee in July.

5. Old Business

6. New Business

- A. Authorization to proceed with the first phase of re-surveying Section 3 in the Kennesaw City Cemetery for the amount of \$3,480.00.

City Clerk Lea Alvarez presented this item. She went into detail about her conversations with Rusty Ruhling from Ruhling and Ruhling Land Surveyors. Assistant Public Works Director Tim Cox and Ms. Alvarez discussed the need for Mr. Ruhling to replace the pins in the ground in Section III, so that it would be easier to mark and sell lots. This process will also aid the public in finding loved ones and prevent encroachment on adjacent graves. Vice Chairperson Gray added that this data should be used to update all of the current maps and online databases. Mr. King inquired as to how far off some of the measurements were for some of the newer graves. Mr. Cox answered that some of the graves are encroached upon by the road at least a foot or so. Ms. Alvarez reiterated that the number one priority right now is the accuracy of the graves that are being marked for burial and sold this year. Mr. Cox was then praised for bringing this to the attention of the Commission and then spoke briefly about the timeline for the project moving forward.

Motion by Commissioner Burrell to authorize the spending of \$3,480.00 to re-survey Section III of the Kennesaw City Cemetery. Seconded by Commissioner Gutierrez.

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 3-0. Motion passed.

- A. Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Update.

This item was taken out of order on the agenda and was addressed after the authorization of re-surveying Section III.

Ms. Alvarez addressed this item and informed the Commission that the proposed budget had been approved. She explained that the tree removal project along the Revival side of the cemetery was approved, but the funds will have to come out of the Cemetery Trust Fund and not the General Fund. The road repaving was approved as well, but this item will serve as a place holder until it can be added to a larger project. She then noted that the city will keep an eye on the erosion issues and see if the tree removal project remedies the issue. The budget amount for this will be approved by cemetery funds as well. Mr. Cox added that the bid winner for the LMIG Funds in 2023 would be a good fit in the future for a project such as this one. Commissioner Burrell suggested doing the tree cutting projects before the paving so that the heavy trucks would not ruin the newly paved roads. This fact was noted and then a general discussion followed regarding the importance of knowing what is under the roads before paving further so as to not accidentally encroach on established graves.

B. Authorization to proceed with Atlanta Arbor tree quotes.

This item was taken out of order on the agenda and was addressed after the Fiscal Year 2024 budget update.

This item was led by Ms. Alvarez, and she gave the following quotes from Atlanta Arbor to maintain and remove certain trees from the cemetery:

Red Oak Maintenance- \$3,410 for health trimming and plant growth regulation
Pauper Section tree removal- \$3,980 to prevent these trees from falling and crushing historic graves
Historic Section B tree removal- \$3,200 to cut and remove trees encroaching headstones
Water Oak removal in Historic Section A- \$3,100

Mr. King inquired if the stumps of the trees would be removed, and Mr. Cox answered that Public Works would come in and grind the stumps. Chairperson Bramlett asked the commission to clarify its priorities. Councilmember Ferris asked if the commission had ample funds for this project. Ms. Alvarez responded there was over \$60,000 in operating cash. Commissioner Burrell inquired about priorities and the most pressing issues to address. Mr. Cox insisted that the Pauper Section and the trees on the Revival side of the cemetery were the most important projects because both would require a crane, and if done jointly, the fee would only be incurred once. Councilmember Ferris agreed and added that if the commission agreed to do these sections they should have funds left over at the end of the project. Chairperson Gray asked why the commission would want to remove the water oak from Historic A, and the commission discussed that the roots of the tree would ruin the graves around it and make it harder to dig graves in the surrounding areas. She then asked for the annual cost of maintenance of the red oak tree, which Mr. Cox answered that Public Works would like to maintain it once every three years. Ms. Alvarez, Vice Chairperson Gray, and Mr. Cox discussed the possibility of getting any discounts from Atlanta Arbor and it was noted that the discounts were already applied.

Motion by Vice Chairperson Gray to approve the Atlanta Arbor tree quotes for the Historic A water oak removal, the red oak tree maintenance, the removal of several trees through Historic B that are affecting surrounding headstones for an amount not to exceed \$9,710. Seconded by Commissioner Burrell.

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 3-0. Motion passed.

Commissioner Burrell inquired about the timeline of the approved projects, and Ms. Alvarez answered that she would have to get with the company and see when they could start with a deadline of September in mind.

C. Discussion Only: Clean Up Day Planning

Chairperson Bramlett started off the discussion about Clean Up Day with the time of the event. He suggested 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. and the rest of the commission agreed. The

members inquired about the use of equipment during the event and Mr. Cox responded that Public Works has about 14 gallons of D2 on hand and that the commission did not use much of it at the last event. Commissioner Burrell agreed with the new time and added that Andrew Bramlett should do historical tours during the event. Chairperson Bramlett inquired as to how the cleaning supplies would reach the cemetery and Mr. Cox answered that they could be dropped off. Vice Chairperson Gray and Mr. Cox spoke about the logistics of dropping off supplies and ordering more if needed. Ms. Alvarez moved the conversation to what type of audience that the commission would like to target and gave a few past examples. She also added that she would start working with communication on marketing and that she would add in the address for the tours on the literature as well. Mr. Cox added that the Commission also needed to consider how to have enough water out in the Cemetery to do proper landscaping. Chairperson Bramlett posed the question as to how to acquire more volunteers. Ms. Alvarez added that in previous years, city staff had reached out to various volunteer groups with no success. Councilmember Ferris suggested a mailout but Ms. Alvarez informed him that the mailout list she had was for those who owned lots. Commissioner Burrell and Vice Chairperson Gray further discussed utilizing current resources such as the city's newsletter or the Cemetery Foundation's website. Commissioner Gutierrez offered to utilize his Kennesaw State University contacts to try and get volunteers. Chairperson Bramlett made it known that Andrew Bramlett would be happy to reach out to local media outlets. Mr. King said that after August 7th, the Foundation would be happy to add this info to their website.

7. Staff Comment

B. Cemetery Bench Replacement Update.

Mr. Cox and Ms. Alvarez discussed this item briefly. Mr. Cox announced that the benches would be delivered on July 10th. The commission then spoke about why the benches would not have engraved plaques due to rust concerns.

8. Adjourn

Motion by Vice Chairperson Gray to approve the adjournment of the meeting at 5:03 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Burrell.

Vote taken, motion unanimously approved 3-0. Motion passed.