

MINUTES OF CEMETERY PRESERVATION COMMISSION MEETING
CITY OF KENNESAW
City Hall Training Room
August 10, 2023
4:00 PM

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

[The Cemetery Preservation Commission was unable to make quorum. The following meeting was based on discussion only and the items were presented out of order.]

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chair Bramlett.

- Roll Call: Lewis Bramlett, Lizz Gray, Judi Burrell, 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 July 13, 2023 regular meeting minutes.

3. Financial Report

- A. Receipt of the July financial reports.

4. Cemetery Preservation Foundation Update

[This item was addressed fifth, after the Fee Schedule Discussion]

This item was presented by Cemetery Foundation President, Stephen King. During their last meeting, they passed their bylaw changes adding the City Clerk clause and the ability to add up to 25 members. The Foundation has received more interest from member candidates and is working on the Cemetery Walking Tour details. Foundation President King noted that they will have a dress rehearsal during the week and then tours will begin on the weekend of October 20th.

5. Old Business

- A. Project Updates on Clean Up Day, Trees, Benches, Flag Poles, etc.

[This item was presented third, after item 6.B]

City Clerk Lea Alvarez gave some updates about cleaning day. She noted that Kennesaw State University (KSU) wants to partner with the Cemetery Preservation Commission, but it is the same day as their Homecoming activities. She suggested that

the next Clean Up day be planned on a day that will better accommodate students. The Cemetery Preservation Foundation President Stephen King added that he was working with a local Boy Scout troop at his church to try and get more volunteers.

Ms. Alvarez moved on to the tree-cutting project and added that all invoices had been paid at the time of the meeting. She had no update on the flag poles other than that they had been delivered. Then, she moved on to the city benches that were going to be installed in the cemetery. She informed the Commission that installation will probably begin next year and they should come up with ideas as to where to put the benches. Mr. King noted that the Foundation can provide an additional bench due to having extra funds and the Commission can decide where to put it.

Next, Ms. Alvarez moved on to the Section III survey work. The original surveyor tried to locate all of the pins and found about ninety percent of them with a few exceptions. The surveyor has made a worksheet and is discussing the next steps. City staff would like to place pins at all four corners of every plot for better ease of sale in the future. Ms. Alvarez also noted that it would be good practice to pin the lots with no one buried in them yet as well. She added that Public Works is assisting in helping her find a contractor that will give an estimate for all 286 lots that still need to be done.

The last topic that was discussed was the gravel access road. Ms. Alvarez explained her reasoning for possibly closing down the gravel road. She said that the road is encroaching about a foot onto already sold lots and it is also flooding after years of heavy use. Ms. Alvarez proposed closing off the road except for the use of burial equipment. She added that the road eliminates fourteen lots that they could sell and Assistant Public Works Director Tim Cox suggested that the road be turned back to grass. Councilmember Ferris inquired about grave diggers having proper access to the graves. Mr. Cox insisted that they would have access due to walking trails that were built into the cemetery design. Ms. Alvarez was advised by Winkenhofer Funeral Home that the size of the current road is as small as it could be to accommodate their equipment. Ms. Alvarez added that only survey pins on the left side of the road were affected. Chair Bramlett added that this would be a wonderful time to make the road a one-way as well. Ms. Alvarez agreed and insisted that this was the time to make signage as well. Commissioner Guitierrez inquired about the road's sizing and he was reminded that the 5x10 ft lot is the industry standard. The Commission continued discussion about the road and how to best go about notifying the public.

6. New Business

- A. GUEST: Kennesaw Mountain Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution - Overview of annual events in the Kennesaw City Cemetery.

[This item was discussed first]

City Clerk Lea Alvarez introduced the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) to the Cemetery Preservation Commission and guests. DAR Regent Brenda King and Vice Regent Marcia Sasser spoke about their upcoming events. They have two major

events a year, Veterans Day, where they place poppies at the graves of veterans, and Memorial Day, where they place flags at the graves of veterans. She announced that as of this year, they have accounted for 129 veteran graves in the Kennesaw City Cemetery, and they have been putting these events on for five years. Vice Regent Sasser added that the events typically take place the Sunday before Veterans Day or Memorial Day at around 2 p.m. in the afternoon. She then gave some more background regarding Wreaths Across America Day, which is sponsored by the Washington, D.C. Chapter. The mission of this event is that every headstone will have a wreath and every wreath will have a headstone. She went on to note that they have a good volunteer group base and it is the largest event for the chapter. Vice Regent Sasser ended her speech with an invitation for possible volunteers to go to their website.

- B. GUEST: Downtown/ Main Street Manager Miranda Taylor - Storyboard Signage for the Kennesaw City Cemetery and possible installation locations.

[This item was discussed secondly, after item 6.A]

City Clerk Lea Alvarez introduced the Downtown/ Mainstreet Manager, Miranda Taylor, from the City of Kennesaw's Economic Development Department. Ms. Taylor gave some background about the storyboard project that was being worked on downtown. She noted that the storyboards were displayed with city messaging and branding. The locations will be near the amphitheater, the spring behind City Hall, behind Memorial Park, and lastly, in the city cemetery. She credited the cemetery storyboard content to Andrew Bramlett. This board is an overview of the cemetery and points out a few noteworthy things. There is a budget for more storyboards in the future, so she asked the Commission to keep this in mind. Ms. Taylor would like the sign to be towards the front of the cemetery within the gates, but not too far in for passersbys to read. Ms. Alvarez reminded the Commission that the signage cannot go on the left side of the cemetery due to a property dispute. Ms. Taylor went into further detail about the size, materials of the signage, and deadlines. Vice Chair Gray inquired as to whether the people on the board could be made more diverse. Honorary Member Andrew Bramlett answered that he did what he could with the available information. Vice Chair Gray then asked for the board to have ties to modern times. Commissioner Guitierrez suggested putting the storyboard by the flagpoles or closer to the road. Ms. Alvarez reminded the Commission that they would vote on the installation location for the storyboard signage next month.

- C. Fee Schedule Updates - Lot Prices

[This item was discussed fourth, after item 5.A]

City Clerk Lea Alvarez informed the Commission that there is a need to raise the price of cemetery lots in October. She noted that the city has the cheapest lots in the area. The City of Acworth is selling its lots for \$1,050 for residents and \$2,625 for non-residents. She added that Winkenhofer Pine Ridge Funeral Home was starting their lot sales at \$1,995. Ms. Alvarez would like to make changes to lot pricing since it has not been updated in years. She noted that the City of Kennesaw residents would not be deterred by the changes and other buyers would come because our pricing would still be lower than anywhere nearby. Ms. Alvarez seeks to put this item on the agenda for

the Mayor and Council in September pending Commission approval.

7. Staff Comment

A. "Practices for Successful Meetings" training session reminder.

Ms. Alvarez noted to everyone that next Friday, August 18, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. is the "Practices for Successful Meetings" training class. She thanked the Commissioners for registering for the event.

B. Pre-planning for fall cemetery audit.

[This item was discussed last, after item 4]

City Clerk Lea Alvarez would like to go out to the historical sections of the Kennesaw City Cemetery to do an audit of the headstones to ensure that the records are as up-to-date as possible. She wants photos of the headstones as well as to cross-reference the established historical documents. Vice Chair Gray inquired about the records that she gave Ms. Alvarez previously. Ms. Alvarez answered that she was still processing the information that she had previously given. She noted that it was updated and we are working on the inconsistencies that were found. She added that she has updated some of Section III, and she looks to model after the City of Madison, which has a wonderful collection of obituaries and an interactive website. Vice Chair Gray insisted on making a plan to approach the audit and set solid goals. Vice Chair Gray and Ms. Alvarez discussed their parts in the project and for future sections when the weather changes.

8. Adjourn

Chair Bramlett adjourned the meeting at 4:53 p.m. The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on Thursday, September 14, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. in the City Hall Training Room.

Lily Smith, Deputy City Clerk