

REGULAR MEETING OF THE CEMETERY BOARD

MINUTES

May 28, 2019

Meeting called to order at 6:01 pm.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Jeff Ferrara, Paul Swan, Bill Taylor, Stephanie Landry, Kary Lewis, Penny Rzonca, Council - Rick Hudak, Cheryl Jackson

Not Present: Chris Papp, Mayor Bobbie Beshara (notified board of absence)

GUESTS: Pat Healey (council member), Residents Jean Gentner 330-659-6462 and Dorothy Luther 330-659-9718.

Gentner and Luther attended board meeting to represent Richfield families - Luther, Gentner, Hooper, White, and Boston with a desire to get questions answered concerning family burial lots. The family has a large number of cemetery lots where family members are buried, there are empty lots available. What procedure or process is required for the family to purchase or verify the availability of those empty lots?

Jackson said that if lots have been purchased by former family members, written notarized documents are required from the family to allow additional members to be buried. Cemetery records should be available to know who owns the lots; thus helping the family determine what lots have been purchased.

Gentner presented two deeds, the oldest deed was dated 1902. Cheryl copied those deeds and said she would see what additional information was available in Richfield records.

How many generations do the deeds transfer? No definite answer was available. It was suggested that the time limit is 99 years. Swan commented that if direct lineage for cemetery plots cannot be found, the family can post on Legal News. If no response is available within the necessary time limit, then the lot becomes available for purchase. Jeff will research how many generations one must go back to determine ownership before ending the search.

Gentner also asked:

- 1) Who to contact to purchase empty lots?
- 2) If family member lives out of Richfield, can they be buried in a lot owned by a Richfield resident family member? It was clarified that only Richfield residents can purchase lots; who can be buried in lot was not clear. It was suggested that pending Rules and Regulations should clarify who can be buried in lots owned by a Richfield resident.

Jeff explained the process of probing a grave. The Village will probe a gravesite/lot when requested. Benefits of sonar penetration were also discussed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes approved as submitted.

COMMUNICATIONS: None

OLD BUSINESS:

Headstone Repair Options Update:

Contractors Doug Mayer and Mark Morton have been given 2nd draft proposals to do headstone repair. The Service Department is currently waiting for their responses. Each contractor will get one cemetery.

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With headstone restoration contracts under consideration, Taylor asked why it was taking so long to finalize the contracts and move forward with repairs? Jackson and Healey explained that this is the first time anything has been done to repair headstones. The process has taken awhile, but it is moving in the right direction. It was noted that the Fairview West expansion has taken 5+ year.

Fairview Update: Seeding is currently underway. One tree planted is not leafing out and will need replaced. Fine grading is still needed. Surveyors will be out soon to mark off lots, and can then start setting pins.

Healey said its important to prioritize headstones above trees. Hudak reminded the board that the municipality is responsible to maintain headstones. Anything that would damage headstones needs to be carefully considered. Planting additional trees may compromise the integrity of the headstones.

Questions arose concerning Memorial trees. Pending Rules and Regulations have restrictions for cemetery plantings.

Rules and Regulations:

Village law director is still reviewing the draft of Rules and Regulations. That document should be back from the law director by the next cemetery meeting. The board will do a final review and then the document will go to Village Council for final approval.

Guest (Gentner) asked again: "f there is a family member who has never lived in Richfield can they be buried in a family lot?" Jeff felt that ORC would trump Richfield's code. Hudak said municipal home rule allows a municipality's code to be stricter than ORC.

Questions still exist concerning the purchasing of a lot (which requires 10 year residency), and being buried in a lot, are still unanswered. Hudak feels the Rules & Regulations section addressing those questions needs to be carefully reviewed and fine-tuned to remove any loop-holes.

NEW BUSINESS:

Cemetery Section Markers:

Jackson explained that section markers will direct people to the appropriate lot and alleviate questions regarding the location of burial sites. Ferrara explained that cemeteries generally have section markers that are unobtrusive and enhance the cemetery. Swan requested samples of section markers. Ferrara will research and provide samples of section markers at the next meeting.

Ferrara distributed an article about 3D mapping in cemeteries and requested that board members review the article for future discussion.

Swan asked about lots that have borders around them. Ferrara suggested that Rules and Regulations headlines be on cemetery signage along with information that directs interested parties to website; thus helping to alleviate plantings that are restricted.

Ferrara also suggested that Rules & Regulations should be sent to the family of the deceased a few weeks following the funeral and burial to help them understand policies concerning plantings, holiday decor, etc.

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It was noted that the local Scout Troop posts flags in the cemetery at Veteran's gravesite. The Service Department places Medallions at each Veteran's gravesite to designate where scouts can place flags. Service department returns a week later to remove the flags.

COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR:

Rzonca asked if perpetual care cost like an 8% one-time tax would help cover some of the service cost or if it would create more challenges. Hudak thought it was such a small amount that it would not be worth it.

Taylor asked about plantings? Board members felt that good intention (plantings) are fine while the resident is living, but long-term plantings are very difficult to maintain. Current rules allow for annual flowers to be planted within a designated area of the headstone.

Suggested new business for next meeting:

Discuss the need for another wall. Current crypt burying is sold out. Ferrara felt that if another wall were built it would sell out quickly because people are waiting to secure family remains.

Hudak felt that council would readily approve a wall knowing the money would come back quickly. He requested that Ferrara share numbers from previous estimates. Ferrara also shared ideas for a niche wall, path, memorial plantings, etc.

Swan reminded the board that there no maintenance on walls. Ferrara is willing to discuss a new wall at the next board meeting, prepare a proposal, and present to council.

Guest Dorothy Luther asked if the pump was working at the Richfield West Cemetery? Swan said it was not working.

ADJOURNMENT: Meeting adjourned at 7:01 PM.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, June 25 at 6 PM