



Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

- Meeting Date:** Thursday, November 16, 2017, 4:30 pm
- Commissioners Present:** Rita Church, Allison Curran, Lainey Rappaport, Emma Swift, Francis (Tag) Taginski
- Staff Present:** Annie D'Alton, Cemetery Office Assistant
Cindi Wight, Director, Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department
- Public Present:** Jenna Olson, Department of Public Works
Peter Smiar, Engineer, VHB
Eric Farrell, Cambrian Rise Developer
Charlie Pughe, Cambrian Rise
Ron Wanamaker, Preservation Burlington
- Attachments:** Plan for Proposed Stormwater Catchbasins

Mtg. was started at 4:35 by Co-Chair Allison Curran

I. Approval of Agenda

- A. Lainey Rappaport moved to approve; Tag Taginski seconded; all approved.

II. Approval of Minutes from September 28, 2017 Meeting

- A. Curran moved to approve; Emma Swift seconded; all approved.

III. Old Business

A. Cambrian Rise storm water easement proposal follow-up

1. Jenna Olson introduced the project: to divert some of the storm water runoff from the combined storm water/sewage conduit under the area under North Avenue near Lakeview Cemetery, to help prevent large volume of flow causing overflow of untreated sewage into Lake Champlain. DPW is working with Cambrian Rise and Peter Smiar on this.
2. Smiar reported that there is cement under the asphalt road surface, making excavation costly, so they'd like to locate the catchbasins on Lakeview Cemetery's property. The sandy soil along the East edge of Lakeview Cemetery's property would allow water collected in underground catchbasins to drain.
 - ◆ In response to Taginski's concern about what would happen if catchbasins filled, Smiar said they'd drain vertically into the sandy soil, without compromising the Chapel or Office Building foundations or utilities, or Cemetery lots to the west. Also, the volume of the catchbasins is designed to accommodate a 10-year storm, so they won't get filled often, and the existing storm drains will remain in place, taking up some of the storm water.
3. East-side Fence replacement has been discussed as part of this project. Olsen wondered if it would be just the part where construction was done. Rappaport pointed out that it needed to match all along the East side, Cindi Wight indicated that complete East Fence



replacement has been planned for a long time, and \$75,000 is included in the budget for this, but that adding historical design value would increase the price, and Parks would like assistance from DPW & Cambrian Rise in return for allowing use of Cemetery property. The company that installed the original fence is still in business, and quoted \$200,000 to replicate the fence. All agreed that this was unnecessarily expensive. Cost sharing percentages will be negotiated. Rita Church asked who would choose the design of the new fence. Rappaport expressed concern that old underground utility conduits & water pipes be protected from crushing damage by heavy machinery. Eric Farrell promised to take financial responsibility for any property damage caused by the project.

4. Curran asked if the water would need to be shut off, how long the construction would take. Olsen said no need to shut off water, and construction would take 2-3 weeks.
5. Farrell asked what time line would be. Olsen said ideally before June 30, 2018, as the money is budgeted for FY18, and she asked Farrell to hire the contractor to expedite the process.
6. Smiar asked if surveyors could work on Cemetery property. Annie D'Alton reported that they already have. Smiar said they'd just surveyed outside the gate, but D'Alton corrected him—they'd stood in the flower bed east of the office. All agreed that it was fine for surveyors to work on the Cemetery property, but Wight asked that future surveyors be more respectful.
7. The Commission voted to allow the project: Taginski proposed acceptance, Curran seconded, all in favor.

Additional Item, Not on Agenda: Farrell asked if the South Fence could be removed—a neighbor wants no barrier to wildlife (on the order of fox & raccoons). He noted that there is a 30' buffer on the south side of this property line. He would also like pedestrian access.

- Rappaport said a fence is needed to discourage unwanted dog entry and drug-related activity.
- Curran indicated there has been much discussion about the need for fencing around the City's cemeteries. It doesn't need to be chainlink, but there needs to be a defined boundary.
- Taginski said smaller fence would be OK.
- Farrell proposed a pedestrian gate, but not with a path leading to it. Wight recommended **making sure there was a sign indicating the City Ordinance of no dogs allowed in Cemeteries.**

B. Cambrian Rise runoff concern

1. Farrell reported that Taginski had been in touch. Item III.A. addressed this.

[Farrell, Olsen, Smair and Pughe left the meeting at this point.]

C. (Agenda Item G. was addressed at this point in the meeting.) Preparation for addressing the City Council.

1. Curran is assembling information to present, and this has brought up a fundamental issue: she wants better clarity and understanding about the role and authority of the Cemetery Commission. Commissioners cited examples below.
 - ◆ Wight responded that she was discussing Parks Commission role with Assistant City Attorney Justin St. James, and would include the Cemetery Commission.
 - ◆ Swift brought up the issue that the Commission had set a fee, and when Queen City Ghostwalk complained that it was higher than comparable Parks usage fees, Interim Director lowered it without consulting Commission.



- ◆ Rappaport noted that the Commission's recommendation for making the Office Assistant position full-time was not followed, even though other positions were added. Also that requests for signage has not been addressed.
- ◆ Curran indicated that it's not clear how often the Commission is supposed to meet.
- ◆ Taginski noted that the Cemetery Commission presence on the Parks web site is buried, feels like a distant second cousin, have to beg for financial support, and former Parks Director Jesse Bridges did not have an understanding of the fact that Cemeteries are not to be treated like other parks.
- ◆ Wight described her feeling that Cemeteries serve an important role in the community as "passive parks"—a quiet public space. She sees an important part of her role as Superintendent of Cemeteries is to advocate for the City's Cemeteries.
- ◆ Rappaport feels it's time to plan for the future and start looking for land for new Cemetery space.
- ◆ Taginski wants the Commission to be involved in the hiring process for the Office Assistant. He urged Wight to request the applications that the Human Resources Department rejects. Wight responded that she is working with Beth Anderson in the Clerk's Office to craft a position in which the employee will work ½-time at the Clerk's Office, and ½-time at the Cemetery Office.
- ◆ Taginski asked how the Commission should request the help that they feel is needed from Parks, for example, for the fence replacement and the surveying of Section VI.

D. (Agenda Item C.) Signage for no dogs, and Greenmount open sunrise to sunset.

1. Curran asked how to get results on the long-term ignored request for signage installation—how to choose appropriate signage and get it installed.
2. Rappaport noted that signage needs to be installed at every Cemetery entrance. There are more people camping at Greenmount lately. It is harder to enforce a rule when there's no posting to refer to (people are more likely to respect a sign than verbal reminder of the Ordinances, and signs carry the message when no staff are present).
3. Wight clarified that 2 types of signs are needed: one for no dogs, one open sunrise to sunset for Greenmount.

E. (Agenda Item D.) Chapel insurance: is City not responsible for interior repairs, as indicated by Friends of Lakeview via Rita Church?

1. D'Alton reported that she emailed the City Clerk's Office, and Stephanie Hanker responded 10.16.17: "The building is insured through the City of Burlington, both the exterior and interior."

F. (Agenda Item E.) Portable Handicap Access Ramp for Chapel." Still needs to be researched.

G. (Agenda Item H.) Not addressed.

H. (Agenda Item I.) Maintenance Issues

1. Holes have been filled in gravel roads in Greenmount, but possibly not graded.
2. Office entry stair railing has been repaired. Wight offered that the entranced through the railing may be narrow on purpose to prevent wheelchairs from accidentally rolling down the steps.



I. (Agenda Item F.) Section VI status report

1. Taginski asked if Penny for Parks money can be used; Wight responded that she believed money from the Parks budget has been allocated.

IV. New Business

- A. Welcome Cindi Wight!

V. Superintendent's Items

- A. Questioning of Interim Parks Department Director Nina Safavi's authority to change the impact fee without consulting the Commission.
 1. Email from Wight, 11.20.17: It does not appear that staff has the authority to override a Commission decision. St. James referred to the City's description of the Cemetery Commissioner:
<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CityCouncil/Cemetery-Commissioner>
and the City Charter, Article 1, 9-1 through 9-21, and Article 73, 218-220.

VI. Commissioner's Items

- A. New City of Burlington Cemetery will be needed at some point in the future, as the population will grow with all the new housing being built.
 1. Taginski suggested looking at land in the South End.
 2. Curran also mentioned the need to develop a Green Burial area—this and urn burials appear to be the direction public interest is moving.
 3. Taginski mentioned benefit of consulting staff to opt for low-maintenance designs for new areas.

VII. (Agenda Item VIII) Public Comment

- A. Ron Wanamaker thanked the Commission for what they do. Preservation Burlington supports the Cemetery Commission, and would be happy to help advocate. They value partnering—see the Seven Days article & video on the recent Preservation Burlington Historical Tour of Lakeview.
- B. Wanamaker offered to look into fundraising to provide additional financial aid for fence replacement. He warned against choosing aluminum: Shelburne Museum's aluminum fence is falling apart after only 7 years.
- C. Rappaport asked about applying for grants. Wanamaker replied that there are 2 people on the PB board who help find funding sources and apply for grants. One needs only to search the internet and learn what the criteria are for grants offered.
- D. Wight asked if Wanamaker knew of comparable fence designs from other companies—he will look into this for the next meeting.
- E. Wight asked Commissioners if they know of individuals who would contribute to fence replacement. Wanamaker asked what the Cemetery Division's process is for fundraising. Taginski replied that D'Alton does not have time to fundraise-- that adding this duty was going to be a benefit to increasing her hours to full-time.
- F. D'Alton noted that the Friends of Lakeview Cemetery have fundraised, with Office Assistant support, for the Chapel Renovation, Gazebo Rebuild, and Fountain Replica Installation. They might be interested in collaborating on the fence replacement. Church suggested consulting with Diana Carlisle when the exact needs have been agreed upon.



- G. Taginski asked if Preservation Burlington would require that the fence be a specific material. Wanamaker replied that their role is to provide guidelines.

VIII. (Agenda Item VII) Office Report

- A. D'Alton thanked the Commission for their service, and said it has been a privilege to work at the City's Cemetery Division. She is sorry to leave, but is looking forward to the opportunity to devote all her energy to one department, as she starts full-time at the Library November 27, 2017. There are many, many unfinished projects to correct, preserve and share the Cemetery records. She described one that she is happy to have been able to finish before leaving:
 - 1. Recreating the interment records for 1920-1921. The writing in the chronological interment log for this period was considered illegible by the person creating the alphabetical record of interments, which are the records searched when identifying if and where a person was buried in the 3 City-owned cemeteries. For **over 90 years**, Cemetery staff and the public have been informed from these records that over 100 people were not buried at City-owned Cemeteries, but they were. D'Alton has photographed the Burial Permits (stored at the Fletcher Free Library), and researched online sources with the help of 2 volunteers, Amber Collins and Deborah Light to decipher and confirmed the names and death dates of these people. The burial records have been printed, so future inquiries will result in correct information.
- B. Curran thanked D'Alton for her service.

IX. Adjournment

- A. Next meeting: Thursday, January 25, 2018, 4:30 pm.
- B. At 6:15 Swift moved to adjourn, Curran seconded, all in favor.