



CLAY STREET CEMETERY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – AUGUST 4, 2021
HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE (459-6769) AND
IN FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA



The **Clay Street Cemetery Commission** convened at 5:00 p.m. on the above date to conduct a Regular Meeting at the City Council Chambers, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska, and via teleconference with **Chair Aldean Kilbourn (Seat C)** presiding and with the following members in attendance:

Members Present: George Dalton, Seat A
 Janet Richardson, Seat D
 Julie Jones, Seat E
 Victoria Dowling, Seat G (arrived at 5:20 p.m.)
 Jeff Jacobson, PW Director & Ex-Officio Member (telephonic)

Absent: Michael Gibson, Seat B
 Karen Erickson, Seat F

Also Present: D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

a) Regular Meeting Minutes of July 7, 2021

Mr. Dalton, seconded by **Ms. Richardson**, moved to APPROVE the meeting minutes.

Chair Kilbourn took a voice vote on the motion to APPROVE the meeting minutes, and all members voted in favor.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Jones, seconded by **Ms. Richardson**, moved to APPROVE the agenda.

Chair Kilbourn requested that a new item be added as Item (a) under New Business and that the other items be shifted down to Items (b) and (c).

Chair Kilbourn took a voice vote on the motion to APPROVE the Agenda, as Amended, and all members voted in favor.

COMMUNICATIONS TO COMMISSION

a) Searl Burnett Inquiry about Missing Headstone on 7/16/2021

Ms. Richardson spoke about the Burnett child's burial site near the cemetery gate. She stated that someone had inquired about a headstone, but she was able to uncover a City marker at the gravesite. She stated that she took some photos of the marker and responded to the person that the

marker is there. She mentioned that there was a photo of the City marker 2009 on findagrave.com. She reported that the person who had inquired responded saying that everything is as they thought it should be.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) Update on Markers Placed during July Work Session

Chair Kilbourn was pleased to report that the Commission had placed all the markers they have ordered except for one. She commended Ms. Jones and her workers for all their hard work in placing the new markers and stated that they have been an immense help. **Ms. Jones** reported that a volunteer from the previous year contacted her and said that they walked around cemetery this summer and were blown away to see all the finished rows.

b) Update on Ground Penetrating Radar performed July 11, 2021

Ms. Richardson stated that the first day Garret (with Lahontan Geological and Geotechnical) did work at the cemetery was July 11, and he found a lot of graves. She stated that the dry weather helped, and with the ground-penetrating radar (GPR), he could tell how deep remains were buried and whether the remains were that of a child. She stated that the GPR also revealed some places where it seemed that a headstone was about 2 feet under the ground. She reported that Garret was able to locate where Richard Geoghagen is buried next to his wife, Ella Joseph de Sacrist. **Ms. Jones** asked whether the underground headstones might be an urn or someone's ashes. **Mr. Dalton** questioned whether they should try to dig in those areas to see whether they are markers. **Ms. Richardson** stated that she flagged the 3 spots where Garret believed there were headstones underground. **Chair Kilbourn** stated that Garret worked from 8-3, and he there is still time left over. She reported that he returned later, but it was rainy and difficult to see things due to all the water. She stated that there are a few more sites the Commission would like to know about and that Garret is willing to come back for another hour or two.

c) Update on Letter to the Fairbanks Daily News Miner regarding Military Assistance with Memorial Day Preparations

Chair Kilbourn stated that she had written a letter and submitted it to the News Miner at least 10 days ago, but she has seen nothing in the newspaper yet. She spoke to the great work done by the military volunteers and talked about the positive comments she heard from folks on Memorial Day about the appearance of the cemetery.

d) Update on American Legion Letter Requesting Funds for Projects

Chair Kilbourn reported that she has heard nothing from the Legion and asked the Clerk whether the City had heard anything; Clerk Snider stated that she had heard nothing. **Chair Kilbourn** stated that she wrote to the Legion because they have graves at the cemetery; she stated that she hopes the non-response is because they have not checked their mail. **Ms. Jones** stated that the Legion is approaching its final quarter and must spend remaining annual earnings, so she suggested sending a letter directly to Walter Cray and duplicating it to the Auxiliary. She stated that Mr. Cray is regional president now also. **Chair Kilbourn** stated that she would resend the letter.

- e) Update on Order from Quiring Monument for Pioneer Markers.

Ms. Jones reported that she received a draft layout back from Quiring Monuments, but she did not like it and sent it back. She commented that the person the Commission usually works with is still out on maternity leave. **Ms. Richardson** asked whether they adjusted the shipping costs, and **Ms. Jones** confirmed that they had. She stated that shipping costs had actually decreased.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Drone Photos of Cemetery

Chair Kilbourn stated that when she reached Paolo Greer to tell him the exciting news about having located Richard Geoghagen, he immediately showed up at the cemetery. She reported that Mr. Greer had a friend who owns drones, and he asked the friend to come take aerial photos of the cemetery. **Chair Kilbourn** reported that the friend took some awesome photos with two different drones in a little over an hour. She stated that she and Ms. Jones will try to write something up about it. She briefly discussed the possible uses for the overhead photographs of the cemetery. She reported that the man with the drones did not charge the Commission anything for the service, and she expressed appreciation to him.

- a) Update on Available Funds

Chair Kilbourn reported that she and Ms. Richardson have some receipts for reimbursement to give to the City Clerk for some small purchases made for items for the cemetery. She reported that the cost of the marker design for the Pioneer markers was well worth it. She asked members to comment on how to move forward in regard to the Commission's fund balance and what should be prioritized to purchase. **Ms. Richardson** commented that the Commission is nearly out of cement bases. **Ms. Jones** commented that she believes the goal should be to spend the discretionary grant funds and build up the Commission's funds in case something comes up. She questioned how much of the Commission's fund balance was grant funds that need to be spent. **Chair Kilbourn** stated that \$4,567 is the remaining balance of the grant funds, and she agreed with Ms. Jones that the Commission should save some of its funds. **Mr. Jacobson** suggested that the Commission focus on the purchase of headstones and bases with the remaining grant funds. Members discussed some ideas for expending the funds and the cost of items such as cement bases.

- b) Discussion on Research Required to Order Additional Markers

Members discussed the need for more research to be done so that they would have accurate information on enough sites at the cemetery to place another order for headstones. **Ms. Richardson** commented that, after the GPR project, the Commission finally knows where all the graves are located within the Catholic circle. **Chair Kilbourn** commented that she would like to finish the General Section first.

Ms. Richardson stated that the City Surveyor, Henry Irving, is an acquaintance of hers. She stated that following the GPR activity, Mr. Irving marked each grave that was found with a survey flag – about 200-300 in all. She shared that they had to renumber because of all the newly found graves,

and the private markers did not have numbers assigned to them. She stated that some graves were found in between others, so they had to find a way to number those. **Ms. Richardson** reported that Mr. Irving created a spreadsheet and sent it to her and Ms. Kilbourn. **Chair Kilbourn** commented on the incredible number of name misspellings in City records. She stated that she and Ms. Richardson are working on the list and are checking for name spelling errors. **Ms. Jones** asked whether a new map should be ordered this season; **Ms. Richardson** replied that the work is not complete yet, but the difficult section is done; she stated that Mr. Irving can proceed with creating a map for that section. **Mr. Jacobson** reminded members that the grant funds need to be spent by October. **Ms. Jones** stated that 15-18 is a good number to aim for in ordering markers and bases. **Ms. Dowling** stated that she has been working on a list that Ms. Kilbourn sent her and suggested that some of the information she has found will help. She stated that she is nearly done, and she would send the information to Ms. Kilbourn once she is finished.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Regular Meeting of the Clay Street Cemetery Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, September 1, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Jones, seconded by **Ms. Richardson**, moved to ADJOURN the meeting. **Chair Kilbourn** declared the meeting ADJOURNED at 5:39 p.m.



Aldean Kilbourn, Chair



Rochelle Rodak, Deputy Clerk II

Transcribed by: DS