



CLAY STREET CEMETERY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – MAY 3, 2023
HELD VIA ZOOM WEBINAR AND
IN FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA



The **Clay Street Cemetery Commission** convened at 5:01 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)** and with the following members in attendance:

Members Present: George Dalton, Seat A
 Michael Gibson, Seat B
 Janet Richardson, Seat D
 Julie Jones, Seat E
 Karen Erickson, Seat F
 Amy Stratman, Seat G
 Jeff Jacobson, Public Works Director

Absent: None

Also Present: D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

a) Regular Meeting Minutes of April 5, 2023

J. Jones, seconded by **K. Erickson**, moved to APPROVE the meeting minutes.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

K. Erickson, seconded by **J. Jones**, moved to APPROVE the agenda.

Chair Kilbourn added new item (b) to New Business, Dandelions.

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

EVENTS & PUBLIC RELATIONS

a) Cemetery Clean Up Day Recap

J. Jones reported that Chair Kilbourn wrote a PSA to help gather volunteers for the clean-up day on Saturday, May 20. She stated that she sent the PSA to the radio station, KUAC, and

justserve.org, which is viewed by many in the church community. She shared that she would make some calls to local organizations to help garner more volunteers.

J. Richardson stated that the Commission should not count on Pioneer volunteers, as they moved their Birch Hill Cemetery clean-up day to the same date. She stated that the Public Works department will be mowing starting on May 11. **M. Gibson** stated that he resisted the change to the Pioneer clean-up day, but it was changed anyway.

J. Jacobson reported that Public Works will begin working at the cemetery on May 11.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) Sample Sign Layout

Chair Kilbourn referenced the handout from J. Jones, which is an update of the sample that was in the agenda packet. **J. Jones** stated that J. Richardson wrote up a narrative for the first sign, and she stated it might be interesting to add some information about where Tolovana is in relation to Fairbanks. Other members expressed interest in such an addition.

M. Gibson stated that Tolovana used to be located along the Tolovana River; he stated that there was a tramway between Tolovana and Livengood. He stated that Tolovana has been defunct for a long time. He stated he was there in 1977, and the Tolovana settlement was already gone, but there are still ruins.

J. Jones stated that the narrative is a start. She asked M. Gibson whether he would like to provide some input for the narrative. **M. Gibson** stated he would like to review the information. **J. Richardson** commented that the sign should be more about Fairbanks than Tolovana. She indicated that she would provide more information for the sign.

K. Erickson stated that there is a book about the Vachon family. **Chair Kilbourn** shared that that is how they discovered that the father is buried at the Clay Street Cemetery with the children. **K. Erickson** shared that her personal recollection is that there was a smaller cross at the cemetery at one time that had the children's names on it, but it was broken in pieces. She stated that J. Jacobson said that the remnants were not at Public Works. She stated that she was happy to hear that other members of the Commission had been in touch with the Vachon family. **J. Richardson** and **K. Erickson** remarked on what delightful people they were. **Chair Kilbourn** stated that the book was fascinating to read.

b) Update on Outstanding Quiring Monument Orders

J. Jones reported that, as of May 1, she received word that the 19 memorials and the Conley memorial have shipped. She shared that the order of 50 memorials are currently being prepared for shipping. She stated that the order of two memorials are still waiting for stock in order to be fulfilled. She shared that the order of 60 headstones are in preparation for production. **J. Jones** stated that Public Works should be expecting an order of 20 headstones soon.

c) Community Service Project Assistance from FEDC and Halfway House

J. Jones reported that FEDC received the PSA, and they will be advertising the Clay Street Cemetery workday. She shared that the FEDC director, along with a friend, has committed to show up for the workday. **Chair Kilbourn** clarified that the workday at the cemetery will be for cleanup.

d) PVC Crosses

J. Jacobson reported that he has identified materials to create white crosses as markers at the cemetery. He demonstrated some samples of the white PVC materials and how they could be structured to create crosses. He reported that the estimate for the purchase of 150 8-foot pieces is \$2736.00; he stated that prices have dramatically increased beyond what the Commission originally budgeted for the crosses.

Clerk Snider reported that the original motion was approved to purchase enough materials to make 300 crosses at a cost of \$2,190.00 from room rental tax funds.

J. Jones, seconded by **M. Gibson**, moved to amend the amount previously approved to purchase the materials for the crosses by increasing the approved amount to \$2,736.00 to be paid from room rental tax funds.

M. Gibson asked about the UV-resistance of the PVC materials. He questioned the durability of the product. **J. Jacobson** stated that the material does not rot and is durable. He stated, however, the material would be brittle in cold weather. **Chair Kilbourn** stated that the material is being used for fences. **J. Jones** commented that she has seen PVC fences in a horizontal slat sag from the hot sun in hot climates, but she believes the crosses will hold up nicely.

J. Jones, seconded by **M. Gibson**, moved to amend the motion by increasing the approved amount to \$2,900.00. No members objected.

Chair Kilbourn took a voice vote on the motion to amend the amount previously approved to purchase the materials for the crosses by increasing the approved amount to \$2,900.00 to be paid from room rental tax funds, and all members voted in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Advance Printing Estimate for Sintra Map Signage

J. Richardson, seconded by **J. Jones**, moved to APPROVE an expenditure of \$320.21 to have three updated Clay Street Cemetery maps completed with Advance Printing, to be paid from the room rental tax fund.

Chair Kilbourn took a voice vote on the motion to APPROVE an expenditure of \$320.21 to have three updated Clay Street Cemetery

maps completed with Advance Printing, to be paid from the room rental tax fund, and all members voted in favor.

b) Dandelions

Chair Kilbourn expressed concern about the dandelions at the cemetery. **J. Jacobson** stated that he has spoken with Alex Lexa, the Facilities Laborer, who indicated that he can do a dandelion treatment in late May and again in July.

REFERENCE MATERIALS

a) April 2023 Room Rental Tax Balance Report

Chair Kilbourn reported that the current room rental account balance is \$11,470.86. She stated that bills will be coming into that account.

b) April 2023 Capital Projects Fund Balance Report

Chair Kilbourn reported that the current capital projects account balance is \$9,314.27. She stated that sometime in early June, she, J. Richardson, and A. Stratman should have the research done to order enough headstones to use the entire balance of the fund.

OPEN AGENDA

K. Erickson questioned what came about with John White's dog tag. **J. Jones** replied that the dog tag was installed two years ago, and, as far as she knows, it is still in place.

J. Jacobson questioned whether anyone had reached out to former Clay Street Cemetery Commission Chair Bill Robertson's widow to see if she could provide any information or data about the cemetery. He stated that information could be a valuable resource for the Commission. **Chair Kilbourn** stated that she has not heard from Betsy Robertson except in regard to the items in their garage. She indicated that she could reach out to Ms. Robertson.

M. Gibson stated that he has missed some meetings. He asked about the property on the west side of the cemetery. **J. Jacobson** explained that the estate that was working with the City to donate the land was contacted by a surviving member of the Pease family who requested that the property be retained by the Pease family. He stated that although the trust was unsure whether the family member would be responsible enough to repair the property, pay back the utility fees, and clean up the junk on the property, the Native organization the family member belonged to supported him in his efforts. So, the property was not passed on to the City. **J. Jacobson** stated that the property is now in the hands of Robert Pease, and the City is waiting to see what happens. He shared that the property is not fit to be occupied, and he hopes that it will be cleaned up. He expressed hope that things would improve. He stated that the property would remain in private hands for the time being.

K. Erickson stated that she had drafted a letter the previous year regarding contact with the Masons. **J. Richardson** stated that Erica Miller has gone through old Masonic records, and she could not find anything. She stated that she has friends tied to the Masons who have been unable to find any information. **A. Stratman** reported that she wrote to the Grand Mason in Anchorage but has never received a reply. She stated that she made contact with a friend who is a high Mason in Anchorage, but he was unable to provide any information other than a few email addresses. **J. Richardson** shared that in researching one man buried at the cemetery who was a member of the Blain Masonic Lodge, she emailed the Grand Washington Lodge requesting information on the fellow. She stated that the person emailed her back within a couple of days with the deceased person's Masonic card. She stated that a couple of weeks later she was researching the history of the Fairbanks Masonic Lodge, which was the formerly the Tanana Lodge under the Grand Lodge of Washington. She stated that she emailed the man again asking whether they had more records for the Fairbanks Lodge. **G. Dalton** requested more information regarding the Masons. He stated that there has been much secretiveness surrounding the Masons. **J. Richardson** stated that she would share information she has with G. Dalton. **Chair Kilbourn** spoke to the secretiveness of the Masons and spoke to her own family history regarding the Masons. **J. Jacobson** read aloud an article he found online about the Fairbanks Masons. **Chair Kilbourn** expressed curiosity about a blue building off of 17th Avenue that has a sign indicating that it is a Masonic temple. **K. Erickson** stated that she would inquire about the building.

J. Jones thanked fellow members for asking great questions and for bringing up some old projects.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Regular Meeting of the Clay Street Cemetery Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, June 7, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kilbourn declared the meeting ADJOURNED at 5:46 p.m.



Aldean Kilbourn, Chair



Colt Chase, Deputy City Clerk

Transcribed by: DS