



CLAY STREET CEMETERY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – NOVEMBER 1, 2023
HELD VIA [ZOOM WEBINAR](#) AND
IN FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA



The **Clay Street Cemetery Commission** convened at 5:02 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
 Dawn Milligan, Seat B (remotely)
 Janet Richardson, Seat D (remotely)
 Julie Jones, Seat E
 Amy Stratman, Seat G
 Jeff Jacobson, Public Works Director

Absent: Karen Erickson, Seat F

Also Present: Colt Chase, Deputy City Clerk

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

a) Regular Meeting Minutes of October 4, 2023

J. Jones, seconded by **A. Stratman**, moved to APPROVE the October 4, 2023 meeting minutes.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

J. Jones, seconded by **A. Stratman**, moved to APPROVE the agenda.

J. Jacobson indicated that he needed to leave early for another meeting and requested that he be able to provide a report early in the agenda.

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

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS – None

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

J. Jacobson reported that he submitted his 2024 Public Works requested budget to the Mayor, which included \$10,000 in capital project funds for the Clay Street Cemetery to purchase 30 new headstones. He shared that the Mayor did not fund that line item, and the budget will now go to the City Council. He explained that over the next few weeks, the Council will hold several work sessions to hear presentations from each department head, at which time he can highlight any items that were originally requested but had been cut. He indicated that the Council has the discretion to make adjustments to the budget, but he will not be allowed to provide any additional visuals or materials to the Council at his presentation. He provided a printout of various images from the cemetery, taken over the summer, which **Chair Kilbourn** indicated

she would send to the Council, along with her own report on the Commission's work in 2023. **J. Jacobson** stated that the Commission is a hardworking group, and he hopes they will have funds for more headstones.

J. Jones asked for clarification as to whether there will or will not be a chance for the Clay Street funding request to be granted. **J. Jacobson** confirmed that the Council will have the ability to add or subtract things during the coming work sessions. **J. Jones** asked if Committee members should show up at the work session, or if there was another way to help advocate for the funds. **J. Jacobson** responded that there is no public testimony period at budget work sessions; however, there is one for regular Council meetings. He shared that the agenda for the November 27 and December 11 meetings will include the budget ordinance.

COMMUNICATIONS TO COMMISSION – None

EVENTS & PUBLIC RELATIONS

a) 10/6/23 Facebook Post Re: Peter Conley

Chair Kilbourn stated that the Facebook posts by Deputy Clerk (DC) Chase, highlighting cemetery activity over the last several months, have been awesome. She thanked him for sharing about the Commission's efforts.

FINANCIAL UPDATES

J. Jones reported that she submitted an application for the 2024 Discretionary Fund grant, requesting the same amount as the previous year, which was around \$13,000. She shared that Chair Kilbourn had the chance to review the application for accuracy prior to her submittal. **Chair Kilbourn** thanked J. Jones for completing that important task.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) Sample Sign Layout

Chair Kilbourn highlighted the newly acquired, historic, aerial photograph of the City purchased by A. Stratman off eBay, which will be an excellent image to include on the new sign that is being made.

J. Jones reported that she has maintained positive contact with the sign company to confirm that they are still planning to submit the Commission's order, which was prepaid. She shared that they have been holding off until some of the details were finalized and that they confirmed that they are fine with waiting. She stated she would like to have a hardcopy of the photograph to share with the graphic artist. She stated that the artist would like to scan it and see if it can be enhanced in order to get greater detail from the image in certain locations. She added that it might be worth waiting to complete the sign layout until the spring or summer, when they can get an updated aerial image showing the new white crosses against the green grass.

b) Quiring Monuments Orders

J. Jones shared that earlier in the day, Quiring Monuments sent another proof which included various edits submitted by the Commission. She stated she would forward the new rendering to everyone soon. She reported that she has exchanged messages with the company regarding certain requested emblems which are typically used for larger monuments. She explained that the company uses a laser cutting process and is concerned that the smaller scale of the monuments would potentially result in chunks busting out of the intricate designs. She stated, however, that they are willing to make a simpler line drawing to send for approval.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Reimbursement(s)

J. Jones, seconded by **G. Dalton**, moved to reimburse A. Stratman \$19.94 for purchasing the 1930's City of Fairbanks aerial photograph via eBay on 10/5/23.

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

A. Stratman shared that the photo's description on eBay referenced the 1930's, so she thought for sure that it would be from 1936 when the B10 squadron came through. She recounted her surprise at seeing the back of the photograph, which read: "Official photograph – Air Corps U.S. Army – Flight F – 1st Photo Squadron – Ft. Lewis, Washington," a flight which they were not previously aware had occurred. She indicated that upon further research, she noted that the building for Barthel Brewing Company, which burned down in 1940, was not visible in the photograph. She stated that this, along with some text on the front of the image, leads her to believe that the photo is likely from the summer of 1941, and that more images may exist from this squadron's flight. Additionally, she suggested that there are likely even earlier photos somewhere out there from the 1936 squadron flight.

DC Chase stated that after the graphic artist is finished with the photo, it would be nice to get an enlarged version to hang at City Hall.

OPEN AGENDA

Chair Kilbourn shared that she received a request from someone who liked the type of monuments that the Commission uses at the cemetery, and they asked her if they could pay \$350 to have one ordered for themselves. She indicated that the item would piggyback on the Commission's existing order. She clarified, however, that the marker was not for the Clay Street Cemetery. DC Chase stated that accepting funds for the purpose of ordering an item that would be for the individual's personal use would not be appropriate. He suggested that the Commission could share the contact information for the company they use, including specific product details.

J. Jones reported having confirmed with DC Chase earlier in the day that the remaining funds from the Capital Projects account had been exhausted. She stated she had received confusing statements from Quiring Monuments suggesting that there may be an outstanding balance, so she emailed the company to clarify. DC Chase shared specifics on the timing of when that invoice had been entered and when the payment was submitted and suggested that the date of the statement may have been prior to payment having been received by Quiring Monuments. He indicated it is possible that payment may still be on its way. **J. Jones** stated she would keep an eye on that item and keep DC Chase informed.

Chair Kilbourn shared that she will be giving a presentation to the Fairbanks Genealogical Society on the topic of homesteading in Alaska. She stated that she came across a very informative report from an organization at a university in Fort Collins, Colorado, which is responsible for going to every military base in the country and gathering historical information about the area. She indicated that the report provided details about homesteads in the Fairbanks area which were appropriated by the President of the United States and the Department of Defense, to establish the local military bases. She shared that one exciting thing about the report is that there is a treasure trove of information about people who happened to be buried at the Clay Street Cemetery, with details including direct quotations and vital statistics from various publications or newspapers – information that the Commission has not previously come across. **J. Jones** asked Chair Kilbourn if she had gotten access to the information through the Genealogical Society. **Chair**

Kilbourn clarified that it was actually just from searching online for homesteading in Alaska. She stated that the report is about 80 pages, including maps and biographies. **J. Jones** stated that it sounded like there was a strong network of homesteaders at the time. **Chair Kilbourn** explained that surprisingly, she learned that there was not much across the rest of Alaska but that the Interior had a quite a lot.

DC Chase reported that during the last City Hall records maintenance day, the Clerk's Office staff came across a box of files that were associated with the Clay Street Cemetery, and he was unsure if any of the records were known to the Commission. **Chair Kilbourn** and **A. Stratman** both indicated that they would like to stop by the following week to review the records.

J. Richardson shared that during her research for the individual named Anita de Martinez, the inquest of her death indicated notification had been sent to her godfather, Jose Rodriguez of Santa Barbara, CA, her brother-in-law, Eduardo Cordaro, also of California, and the St. Vincent Convent in Santa Barbara. She stated it was possible that Anita had been an orphan there, and with the hope of learning more about Anita's date and place of birth, she contacted their archivist, who quickly responded to let her know that the request needed to come via a government entity. She stated that she was able to submit a formal request, with the help of DC Chase, and she received an email just before the meeting informing her that the St. Vincent's archivist had located the records for A. de Martinez, including her birth year and details about her two sisters who had also been admitted to the convent. She shared how she was then able to connect dots between one of these sisters and the brother-in-law, E. Cordaro. **Chair Kilbourn** and other Commission members expressed joy for J. Richardson's success, acknowledging that they had been researching A. de Martinez for years. **J. Richardson** stated she will continue to use the new information to research more.


NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting is scheduled for January 3, 2024, at 5 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kilbourn declared the meeting ADJOURNED at 5:30 p.m.


Aldean Kilbourn, Chair


Colt Chase, Deputy City Clerk

Transcribed by: CC