

**MINUTES**  
**CEMETERY ADVISORY BOARD**  
PARKS AND RECREATION OFFICE  
December 21, 2017 - 4:00 P.M.

The following members of the Cemetery Advisory Board were present: Mr. Al Hamscher, Mr. Pat Gormely, Mr. Richard Akins, and Ms. Deborah Saroff and. Also present were Mr. Mike Mohler, Cemetery Sexton; and Mr. Casey Smithson, Park Superintendent.

The following guests were present: Mr. Wynn Butler.

Absent: Mr. Brian Waddington and Mr. Mike Carlson.

A. MINUTES

Mr. Hamscher called for a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Saroff mentioned that Mr. Lawrence Pollack was not absent at the June meeting, he had moved away. Mr. Mohler shared that a resignation was not submitted until after the June meeting. It was moved by Ms. Saroff, seconded by Mr. Carlson, to approve the June 15, 2017, minutes as amended. On vote, motion carried 5-0. Dr. Reay arrived after minutes were approved.

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

C. SEXTON'S REPORT

Mr. Mohler stated that revenue for the current year were as follows: Sunrise Cemetery \$50,900 to include sales and burials; Sunset Cemetery \$13,800 to include sales and burials. Mr. Gormely asked if non-residents were charged different fees than residents. Mr. Mohler indicated that there was not different fees for residents vs. non-residents. Discussion ensued regarding perpetual fund potential uses. Mr. Mohler indicated that the perpetual care fund is for maintenance of the cemetery and building roads for new sections.

D. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Hamscher moved to untable the natural burial discussion. On vote, motion carried 6-0. Mr. Smithson showed the board the 4.2 acres of the cemetery that is being proposed as a natural burial section. Discussion ensued about placement of a natural burial section for the cemetery.

Ms. Saroff requested that the board first define a natural burial before they start looking to create a natural burial section. Mr. Hamschler indicated that he spoke with Mr. Jim Scheldon, Wichita Catholic Cemetery Sexton, that has a natural burial section. He indicated that natural burials are defined as no casket, no vault, no coffin, no embalment, and shrouds. William Posey, owner of Kensington Gardens in Wichita, stated that natural burials are not defined by law and the most extreme natural burial is to enter a naked body into a gravesite.

Dr. Reay asked if embalming fluid causes any issues with the soil. Mr. Hamscher indicated that he had researched a study in Long Island that showed no water or ground contamination from traditional burials. Traditional burials are embalmed and entered into a liner/vault and casket. Ms. Saroff asked about the ordinance requirements for burials in Manhattan cemeteries. Mr. Mohler indicated that the minimum is a 2-piece grave liner.

Ms. Saroff indicated that previous meeting notes state that adding a natural burial section requires a change to the ordinance. She also indicated that there was a note regarding a registry. Mr. Mohler shared that there is no intent to become part of the registry as that is a service which allows individuals to come in and perform the burial and place a rock on the gravesite.

Mr. Hamscher requests that board members come prepared to the next meeting to discuss the natural burial section. The board should come with ideas about the definition, pros and cons for the natural burial section.

E. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Mohler shared with the group that the by-laws for the Cemetery Advisory Board state that the board reports through the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) to the City Commission. Mr. Gormely felt this was previously changed. Mr. Mohler stated that the by-laws were never changed and action did not need to occur today on the change. Mr. Carlson asked what we hoped to change with the by-laws. Mr. Smithson shared that this board reports through PRAB even though the City Commission assigns the members. Most of the advisory boards report directly to the commission. The suggestion is to change by-laws to report directly to the City Commission instead of reporting through the PRAB. Ms. Saroff asked if a decision needs to be made. Mr. Mohler states that a vote should occur in December.

Ms. Saroff asked what needed to be updated in by-laws. Mr. Mohler stated that the proposal is to change by-laws for the Cemetery Advisory Board to report directly to the City Commission. Dr. Reay asked if a motion could be made. Ms. Saroff made a motion to change by-laws for the Cemetery Advisory Board to report directly to the City Commission, seconded by Dr. Reay. On 5-0 vote, motion carried. Discussion ensued about attendance of members to the meetings. Mr. Mohler shared that the by-laws state that members must be at half the meetings per year.

F. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

Meeting adjourned.