

Community Cemetery Board
Minutes of Meeting
March 25, 2021

The Community Cemetery Board of the City of Milford convened by the way of video conferencing (zoom) which was available for public view and participation as permitted.

PRESIDING: Mayor Archie Campbell

IN ATTENDANCE: Members Scott Sipple, Brad Dennehy, Mark Whitfield, Danny Skinner

STAFF: Deputy City Clerk Katrina White

Absent: Jean Wylie

Mayor Campbell called to order the Community Cemetery Board meeting at 9:08 a.m.

City Manager Whitfield made a motion to approve January 29, 2021 meeting minutes. Mr. Sipple seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business

Headstone Repair Project, Phase III Update

Mr. Sipple explained that plans are being made to move forward and the proposal for Phase III would be submitted at the April meeting.

Wall Removal Update

Director Dennehy reported the wall has been removed and the project has been completed. The Public Works employees did an excellent job and his office has not received any complaints. He stated that he had received a question as to if they would be interested in planting trees along the area where the wall was.

City Manager Whitfield added that the city has money that was set aside in the City budget under electric for the planting of trees in the City. Providing that the trees go in the right of way and not on cemetery property that would be the proper use of the funds. There are other grants available through the state. He stated that he would recommend if it was decided to plant trees to plant something low growing due to the overhead wires at most locations. He prefers planting more native-type trees, rather than exotics. He recommended planting the Eastern Red Bud tree which is a native Delaware tree that grows in this area and has very few pests' diseases.

Mr. Skinner stated that he thought the Board should wait until the money was available to replace the wall with a 4 ft high black wrought iron style aluminum fence that the board had previously discussed.

Mayor Campbell asked what the estimated cost was for the fence. Director Dennehy stated that he believed it was about \$80,000 to do the whole perimeter.

Director Dennehy stated that he would look into getting an updated price on what it would cost to put the type of fence in that Mr. Skinner was referring to and would get a price on what it would cost to plant the trees down there. He stated that he would bring that back to the next meeting along with photos of the Eastern Red Bud Tree.

New Business

Seaside Jewish Community Proposal

Mr. Sipple explained that the Seaside Jewish Community of Lewes, Delaware had put in a request for cemetery property to sell to their members. He stated that there was an undeveloped area at the rear portion that was enclosed by the driveway on the south end of the cemetery. The front half of it was developed the rear half was not. About two-thirds of the rear half was going to be sectioned off in two-grave lots and the other portion was going to be an extension of the cemetery's single grave lots. 150 available spaces have been isolated that can be surveyed and developed for this purpose. He stated that the area is available that is being proposed.

Barry Novich and Alan Slan were both present and representing the Seaside Jewish Community.

City Manager Whitfield asked Mr. Novich if they were going to purchase all 150 lots and then resell them. Mr. Novich stated no but the area would be reserved for them to purchase lots as needed.

Mr. Sipple stated that no other lots in that area would be sold to anyone except for members of the Seaside Jewish Community.

City Manager Whitfield stated that has raised some concerns within the community. He explained that this is the Milford Community Cemetery and at one time it used to be a segregated cemetery but that was done away with. The cemetery is not segregated by religion, races, or for any other reason. If the Seaside Community would like to buy the 150 lots and resell them, in that case, it is not segregated and that is the only way a particular area could be reserved for a particular religion.

There was additional discussion on the topic.

Mr. Sipple stated that there were plenty of lots available throughout areas that are already developed in the cemetery that the members of the Seaside Jewish Community could purchase.

Director Dennehy stated that it sounded like the cemetery has available space and Mr. Sipple said there are 20 acres out there. He said he has been with the city for 17 years and was there when the wall got removed between what was known as the African American cemetery and the

white cemetery. It was a big moment for Milford and thinks Milford wants to be known as welcoming to anyone regardless of skin color or religion. He said that the city would welcome the Jewish community and wanted to reiterate what City Manager Whitfield and Mayor Campbell stated that this would be a contentious issue.

Mr. Slan stated that he and Mr. Novach were appreciative of the opportunity and understood the issues involved. He said that they are comfortable with the solution of being able to purchase lots anywhere in the cemetery proposed by Mr. Sipple.

Award of Grass Cutting Services for the 2021 Mowing Season

Director Dennehy explained that the specifications were revised this year and one of the key things that was added this year was a performance bond to give the city more control and additional insurance. There were three contractors that submitted bids: Warrens Lawn Care, LLC - \$55,510, C & C Lawn Care - \$69,333.16, and Christian Landscaping Company, LLC - \$57,200.

City Manager Whitfield made the motion to award Warren's Lawn Care for cutting the grass at the cemetery for the 2021 growing season. Mr. Skinner seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Community Cemetery Website

City Manager Whitfield said that when Milford Community Cemetery is googled a website pops up that is on Mr. Sipple's service and is not sure how often it gets updated. He recommends that the cemetery association check around and look for a vendor that will do a website for the cemetery board. The cemetery board is a separate entity and the minutes could be posted there so that any lot owner would be able to access it. Also, they could post questions through the website. He thinks it should be an independent website and if the board agrees he will do some research on who might be able to get the ball in motion.

Financial Report

Mr. Sipple reviewed the financial report. (See Financial Report) He said that lot sales, interments and the cash balance are all up.

There was a discussion on the Perpetual Fund.

Maintenance Report

Director Dennehy reported that the Annual Spring Cleanup went well and the grass cutting season would start on April 1, 2021. He stated that he has noticed some potholes and would try to get some estimates for repairs the next time the City has a contractor doing a paving job.

Next Meetings:

April 23, 2021

July 23, 2021

October 22, 2021

With no further business, Mayor Campbell called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Sipple made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Whitfield seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:19 a.m.

Katrina L. White, CMC
Deputy City Clerk/Recorder