Elkton Cemetery Special Commission Meeting June 20, 2019

Present: Karen Jones, Lee Dearing, Colleen Grady, Steve America

Absent: Charles Morris, Albert "Bill" Davis, Troy Shifflett

Administrative: Delores Hammer - Cemetery Director

Guest: Mayor Joshua Gooden, Randall Snow, Wayne Printz

Pledge of Allegiance: All in attendance joined in reciting the pledge.

Chairman Jones began with a statement that she had received notice 24 hours ago that a person would be attending to speak. This is a Special Cemetery meeting and was not publicized as a public meeting. Chairman Jones said in order to be fair to all citizens no one would be allowed to speak. All Cemetery meetings are open to the public but not all are open for public comment unless previously advertised as such. Chairman Jones requested that if someone had a question or concern to place this in writing and submit to the Commission for review, discussion and a response.

Wayne Printz asked if this was a standing meeting that was held very month. Chairman Jones responded no this was a special meeting.

Chairman Jones stated that if anyone had any questions or concerns regarding paving at the Cemetery then these questions should be directed to Town Council. The decision to pave the Cemetery was made by Town Council not the Cemetery Commission. Mr. Printz became very loud and demanded to know were Chairman Jones got her information and if she had checked with the Attorney. Chairman Jones stated once again if someone had concerns with the paving of the cemetery then that person should speak to Council. Mr. Printz said he had an issue "with you two attacking me personally." Mr. Printz pointed at Chairman Jones and Colleen Grady. Chairman Jones assured Mr. Printz that no one was attacking him. Mr. Printz stated that Cemetery meetings are open to the public and he should be allowed to speak. Chairman Jones reiterated what she had said earlier that all meetings are open to the public but not all meetings are open to public comment.

Mr. Printz became loud and Chairman Jones stated that if Mr. Printz could not be quiet than he should leave. Mr. Printz stated that he was leaving and that he had heard Chuck Morris had resigned and he would like to submit his application.

Devotions: Chairman Jones asked everyone to bow their heads in a moment of silence.

Meeting Minutes

Colleen Grady asked that the word trinkets be changed to objects. Chairman Jones asked that a sentence be added to clarify a statement she had made.

Vice Chair Dearing made a motion to accept the May 16, 2019 minutes with requested changes
Seconded by Colleen Grady

Voice Vote 4-0
Karen Jones, Lee Dearing, Colleen Grady, Steve America

Motion Carried

Old Business

Bylaws were reviewed and a few minor changes were requested.

Vice Chair Dearing moved bylaws be accepted and presented to Council for approval.
Colleen Grady seconded the motion

Voice Vote 4-0
Karen Jones, Lee Dearing, Colleen Grady, Steve America

Motion Carried

I. Bathrooms

A discussion was held regarding the bathrooms and the question was asked if everyone thought that it was wise to proceed with the bathrooms. Vice Chair Dearing said that a piece of land was sold for the bathrooms. Colleen Grady said she did not want a bathroom. Vice Chair Dearing said he knew Ms. Grady did not want a bathroom but a piece of land was sold for funds to build a bathroom. Chairman Jones said that she has mixed emotions about moving forward with a bathroom. In the past year things have come to light about the Cemeteries finances. Chairman Jones said that she has spoken to people who have expressed interest in a Columbarium. Vice Chair Dearing stated he is also interested in pursuing the idea of a Columbarium. Vice Chair Dearing said that he is very flexible and that if the Commission is stating that they do not want a bathroom and would like to move in another direction he is fine with that. But he would like some movement, something to happen. That for over 20 year's things have been discussed but not implemented.

Vice Chair Dearing made a motion that the bathrooms be tabled.
Colleen Grady seconded the motion

Voice Vote 4-0

Karen Jones, Lee Dearing, Colleen Grady, Steve America

Motion Carried

II. Columbarium

Chairman Jones asked the Director of the Cemetery the status on the Columbarium's. Information and photos were provided. It was discussed and decided that the Commission would like to pursue the option of a Columbarium. The Director will contact a person familiar with Columbarium's and ask that they attend and provide a presentation at the Cemetery Commission meeting on Thursday July 18, 2019.

Steve America made a motion to explore the idea of a Columbarium.

Vice Chair Dearing seconded the motion

Voice Vote 4-0

Karen Jones, Lee Dearing, Colleen Grady, Steve America

Motion Carried

III. Increasing Rates

The Commission recommended rate increases in February. It was recommended to increase space fees from $600 to $800 and open and closings from $400 to $550. The Director said that the Commission should also review the cremation open and closing fees. Mr. Snow said his thoughts were to increase the rates even more. He does not think it is wise to be the least expensive cemetery in the area. The Cemetery will fill up faster than anyone else. Vice Chair Dearing said that is also a concern for him. Vice Chair Dearing said that $600 is way too low and Elk Run Cemetery will become a place where everyone will come because of the price. Chairperson Jones said she agrees that this should not be a pauper cemetery. She said it is not fair to the Town residents to continue to carry the cemetery that rates should increase.

Chairperson Jones asked for a motion to rescind the original motion to increase space fees and opening and closing fees.

Lee Dearing made motion
Colleen seconded the motion

Voice Vote 4-0

Karen Jones, Lee Dearing, Colleen Grady, Steve America

Motion Carried

Vice Chair Dearing made a motion that spaces be $1,000 effective September 1, 2019 with opening and closing fees increasing to $750.
Steve America seconded the motion

Voice Vote 4-0

Karen Jones, Lee Dearing, Colleen Grady, Steve America

Motion Carried

Colleen Grady a motion to increase cremation opening and closing fees to $300.
Vice Chair Dearing seconded the motion

Voice Vote 4-0

Karen Jones, Lee Dearing, Colleen Grady, Steve America

Motion Carried

IV. Rescinding mowing rights

Chairperson Jones said that rescinding mowing rights had already been approved and should have been recommended to Council. Steve America said that is was tabled because it was an election year. Chairperson Jones said that it was requested from the Town of Elkton. Mayor Gooden said that rescinding mowing rights was suggested by a public works employee. Colleen Grady said that part of the contract with the mowers was an agreement that the Town would rescind mowing rights. Steve America said that this would be presented to Council again. Chairperson Jones said this is a liability issue. No other Cemeteries allow private mowing.

Colleen Grady made a motion to rescind mowing rights effective January 1, 2020.
Vice Chair Dearing seconded the motion

Voice Vote 4-0

Karen Jones, Lee Dearing, Colleen Grady, Steve America

Motion Carried

V. Removing objects from the graves

Chairperson Jones stated this has been a long established rule that has not been enforced. People are placing bird feeders and retaining walls. Vice Chair Dearing asked how the Commission was going to handle the removal of objects. Someone needs to inform everyone that objects need to be removed. Chairperson Jones suggested mailing a letter informing everyone. Colleen Grady asked if we had addresses. Ms. Grady suggested an ad be placed in newspaper and also the town Facebook page. It was decided that the letter would be signed by the Cemetery Commission. A work session will be at the Cemetery to see what needs to be removed and also working on a letter to be mailed.

VI. Finalized budget

The Commission would like a copy of finalized budget in the packet. Also, an actual monthly budget which will reflect what was budgeted and how the money was spent. The Commission would also like a report of the perpetual and real estate account balances.

VII. Privacy Fence and Building

Vice Chair Dearing asked if a privacy fence was more important that spending the funds for a Columbarium. After discussion

Colleen Grady made a motion to table the privacy fence
Vice Chair Dearing seconded the motion

Voice Vote 4-0

Karen Jones, Lee Dearing, Colleen Grady, Steve America

Motion Carried

Vice Chair Dearing suggested that the Director reach out to East Rockingham High School and ask about painting a mural on the storage building at the cemetery. Mayor Gooden said East Rock has a new art teacher that we should contact. The Director will contact the art teach and ask him to attend the July 18, 2019 Cemetery meeting to discuss options.

Vice Chair Dearing made a motion to accept Charles Morris resignation
Steve America seconded the motion

Voice Vote 4-0

Karen Jones, Lee Dearing, Colleen Grady, Steve America

Motion Carried

Vice Chair Dearing made a motion to place an ad in the newspaper with a time frame to accept applications. Mayor Gooden suggested advertising a date when the Commission will begin accepting and when the application process will end.

Colleen Grady made a motion to adjourn
Vice Chair Dearing seconded the motion

Voice Vote 4-0

Karen Jones, Lee Dearing, Colleen Grady, Steve America

Motion Carried

Karen Jones

Chairperson: Karen Jones

Vice Chair: Lee Dearing