

Russellville Oakland Cemetery Commission Minutes

February 18, 2020

The Russellville Oakland Cemetery Commission met for the regular meeting on Tuesday, February 18, 2020, at 5:30 p.m. in the 1st Floor Conference Room.

Attending: Director Stephanie Warwick, City Attorney Trey Smith, City Finance Director Robin Johnson, Chairperson/Commissioner Mindy Hudson, Commissioner/Secretary Rebecca Howell, Commissioner Kenneth Startup, City Council Liaison Justin Keller, visitor Erin Michael from the Mayor's office, and visitor Sean Ingram from The Courier

Absent: Newly-approved Commissioner Mary Moores Schwartz, Commissioner Cindy Hlass, and Mayor Richard Harris

Chairperson Hudson expressed appreciation for everyone in attendance and opened the Cemetery meeting at 5:31 p.m.

Old Business:

The First Order of Business was to review and approve the minutes from the January 21, 2020, Cemetery Regular Meeting. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Startup and seconded by Liaison Keller. The minutes were unanimously approved.

The Second Order of Business was a presentation of the January 2020 Financial Report by Finance Director Johnson. Balances at 1/31/20 were Bank OZK C.D. \$150,216.30 and Bank account (Russellville Fund 24) \$62,806.16. Director Johnson said that \$40,000.00 funding from the City will be transferred in February. As shown on the Statement of Revenues and Expenditures, January revenues were \$1,435.92 and total expenditures \$3,151.72. Interest income for January (Bank OZK) was \$207.67, and Director Johnson will check on the term of this C.D. in response to a question from Liaison Keller. Chairperson Hudson thanked the Finance Director for this report.

The Third Order of Business was not addressed. Director Warwick and Commission members did not have any concerns from the public.

The Fourth Order of Business was a discussion about the need for two new board members/commissioners. Director Warwick explained the importance of service on the board and how it helps her. She encouraged Commissioners to think about persons who may be interested in serving on the board; another invitation to the public will be issued. City Attorney Smith will check on the possibility of adding another one or two board positions.

The Fifth Order of Business was a discussion and approval for the second phase of the planting of trees/shrubs along the north line of the cemetery (along 8th Street). Director Warwick provided Commissioners with a map showing Drives 1- 4 next to 8th Street and with eight (8) trees drawn in. Different types of trees for planting were suggested: mature trees, sugar maples, and two types of smaller magnolias (Teddy Bear and Little Gem). Commissioner Startup recommended having a few sugar maples and more magnolia or evergreen trees for their green color and easy

maintenance. Director Warwick said that the smaller Teddy Bear magnolia trees were native and hardy; she wants to have two (2) planted toward the middle of the North Addition and two (2) planted toward the middle of the west section along 8th Street. These plantings can be done soon, with four (4) more to be planted next fall on either side of the earlier Teddy Bears. The cost of the eight (8) trees is \$4600-\$4700, and this would go in the grounds maintenance account. As for watering the new trees, Director Warwick plans to check on repairing a spigot near the Renfrow monument. Liaison Keller made a motion to plant the trees/shrubs in 3 phases, with Phase 1 starting now as Director Warwick has described. Commissioner Startup seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Chairperson Hudson thanked Director Warwick for being a wonderful director and expressed appreciation for her work.

New Business:

The First Order of New Business was a discussion and request for approval for removal of Service Road #1 (situated between Drive #1 and Detroit Ave) for road safety concerns and to add approximately 60 grave spaces to the original portion of the cemetery, better known as the North Addition. There have been requests to purchase spaces here, and the work involved would be to remove asphalt and add topsoil, grass seed, and mulch. Costs would go to the cemetery improvements account. Net revenues from the sales of sixty (60) spaces is estimated at \$31,000-\$32,000.

Chairperson Hudson presented several questions related to this project: Does the road separate the historical section? How much do we need these new spaces, given that we have the new section? Will access be diminished for funeral service personnel? Will it affect designation of historical registry? Commissioner Startup added that the historical designation needs to be discussed, and he questioned whether access to the new section may be more pressing. Chair Hudson said the safety issue may be a reason to close the road soon, add necessary fencing, and then finish this project in phases.

Director Warwick said this was an excellent start for the conversation. She reported that other improvements, such as curbing work, are good. The State Registry historical designation work is ongoing and is a formidable undertaking, with much accurate research involved. Regarding the access in the new section, Director Warwick will check to see if aggregate (gravel) can be used in continuing this road. Chairperson Hudson mentioned that we may need to re-focus on the magnolia tree project.

Liaison Keller made a motion to table the discussion about removal of Service Road #1 until the March meeting, Commissioner Startup seconded, and all voted in favor.

The Second Order of New Business was an update about the damaged sign. A restitution check has been received and Public Works will be notified.

Following a motion by Liaison Keller and second by Commissioner Startup, Chairperson Hudson declared the meeting adjourned at about 6:32 p.m.