

Summary Report
City of Raleigh Historic Cemeteries Advisory Board

**Borden Building * 820 Clay Street
Monday, April 9, 2012**

Members Present:

Jane Thurman- Raleigh City Cemeteries Preservation, Inc.
David Brown- Raleigh City Cemeteries Preservation, Inc.
Wayne Schindler- City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department
Doris Burke- Parks, Recreation and Greenways Advisory Board
Jimmy Thiem- Parks, Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board

Members Absent: (excused)

Danny Morgan- City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department
Terry Harper- Raleigh City Cemeteries Preservation, Inc.
Orrin Haywood- Raleigh City Cemeteries Preservation, Inc.

Members Absent: (unexcused)

Jason Queen- Preservation North Carolina

City of Raleigh Staff Present:

Christy Cornell
Sally Thigpen, Urban Forester

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. David Brown called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

The Board reviewed the minutes from the 3/12/12 meeting. Wayne asked that the minutes clarify that an ad-hoc team was formed (consisting of Wayne, Danny, Jane, and Terry) to determine the content and format of the Cemeteries Maintenance Manual. David asked that the minutes reflect the correct name of the Oberlin Cemetery. With the suggested corrections, the minutes were unanimously approved.

DISCUSSION

OLD BUSINESS

Christy reviewed the status of the repair contracts. Staff is awaiting a response from SHPO on the RFPs for cobblestone and fencing repair work.

Christy mentioned that David Berra is working to develop cemetery signage costs.

Wayne mentioned that the Maintenance Manual ad-hoc team met in March to draft an outline for the manual. The ad-hoc team will meet next on May 7 at 3:30 p.m.

The Board discussed the development of cemetery landscape plans.

Sally mentioned that she spoke with Site Manager, Troy Burton about Mordecai's landscaping plan. She reported there are two general approaches for establishing baselines for a landscape plan:

1. Pick a specific point in time (e.g. the Johnson Federal Cemetery uses photographs from the early 1990's as their base year for their landscape plan.)
2. Pick a relevant time period- (e.g. Mordecai's homestead period covers 120 years. Landscape materials which would have been used during that time period are permissible in their landscape plan.)

Sally noted that the time frame of interments at City Cemetery covered a unique period of time when plants, trees and shrubbery used in public landscapes were often ornate and exotic in nature. Long-term sustainability and on-going maintenance were not significant considerations at that time. She mentioned that formal cemeteries, such as City Cemetery, likely had trees on the perimeter of the property, not the interior. Standing trees located in the interior of City Cemetery are likely 'volunteer' trees, or planted as 'memorial trees' by families of the deceased.

The Board discussed the focal points of the Landscape Plans. Ultimately, the Plans may be customized to the specific geologic and cultural features found in each of the three historic cemeteries. Context of surrounding neighborhoods and uniformity in appearance and character should also be considered. Plan development should include researching the historical context of existing trees and shrubs, and developing several overarching principals (such as establishing minimum distances and tree sizes for new plantings, considering tree life span and appropriateness of the species for the given climate and soil types, arboreal maintenance requirements, and patron safety).

Sally mentioned that Trees Across Raleigh (TAR) is very interested in assisting with tree replanting. Jimmy mentioned that if the intent is to utilize TAR material and labor resources, the Landscape Plan must consider the size and types of trees which can be easily planted by hand.

The Board agreed to invite local knowledgeable resources to assist in development of the Plans. (Names mentioned include Susan Little, Dean Ruedrich, Jeff Adolphsen, neighbors, Kimberly Siran) In addition, the final product should be reviewed by local CACs, the Historic Districts Commission, and City Council. The Board agreed that the PRGAB should be kept informed of progress and the final product.

The Board agreed that the Landscape Plans should be completed by fall 2012 or spring 2013. It was mentioned that 'Service Raleigh', held each March, could be used as a large-scale tree planting day.

Jane motioned to reserve a significant portion of the next meeting to continuing the discussion on cemetery landscape planning. The motion was seconded by Jimmy. The motion was amended to include the formation of a landscape planning sub-committee by the end of the May meeting. The Board approved the amended motion unanimously. David asked that Board members contact him and City staff if they are interested in serving on the sub-committee or know of any knowledgeable community resource persons who would be interested in serving.

Next, the Board reviewed drafts of the 2011-2012 Annual Report and the 2012-2013 Work Plan. David and Jane agreed to prepare a brief PowerPoint presentation for presentation to Council.

The Board accepted nominations for the election of officers for the term of 2012-2014. Jane nominated David Brown to serve as Chair and Jimmy Thiem to serve as Vice Chair. Both members agreed to serve in these capacities. Doris seconded the motion. The nominations passed unanimously.

New Business

Jane noted that the Boy Scouts cancelled for 4/14 and rescheduled their work in City Cemetery for 4/21.

The Board discussed the absence of Board Member Jason Queen. Jane will call Jason to determine if he is able and willing to continue serving. If not, the Board will work to fill his position for the upcoming term.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m. The next meeting of the Historic Cemetery Advisory Board is scheduled for Monday, May 14, 2012 at the Tucker House.