

Russellville Oakland Cemetery Commission Minutes

February 15, 2022

The Russellville Oakland Cemetery Commission met for the regular meeting on Tuesday, February 15, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. in the 2nd Floor Conference Room.

Attending in Person: Director Stephanie Warwick, Chairperson/Commissioner Mindy Hudson, Vice Chairperson/Commissioner Kenneth Startup, Commissioner/Secretary Rebecca Howell, and Commissioner Mary Schwartz

Attending via Phone: City Attorney Trey Smith

Attending via Google Meets: Commissioner Cindy Hlass

Absent: City Finance Director Robin Johnson, Liaison Phyllis Carruth, Mayor Richard Harris, Debi Headley from the Mayor's Office, and visitor Sean Ingram from The Courier

Chairperson Hudson welcomed all and expressed appreciation for attendance at tonight's meeting, which she called to order at 5:35 p.m.

Old Business:

The First Order of Business was to review and approve the minutes from the January 18, 2022, Cemetery Regular Meeting. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Vice Chair Startup and seconded by Commissioner Schwartz. The minutes were unanimously approved. Chair Hudson thanked Secretary Howell for preparing the minutes.

The Second Order of Business was a presentation of the January 2022 Financial Report by Commissioner Schwartz. Cash balances for January 31, 2022 were: Russellville Oakland Cemetery operating account \$108,398.73 and Bank OZK perpetual care trust account \$154,297.99. On the Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for January, Commissioner Schwartz explained that \$48,000.00 was transferred in from the City and this covers lawn care. Director Warwick explained that the projected opening of the Campbell Addition should bring in revenue from preplanners and that we can seek appropriation from City if needed. Commissioner Schwartz will check with Finance Director Johnson as to whether money can be moved from one budgeted account to another.

The Third Order of Business was an update about Project Items. (a) An order has been placed with Earthworks for the planting of a teddy bear magnolia tree between drives 3 and 4 (along the 8th Street line) to replace the one lost last year. Expected time frame for such planting is within the next 6 weeks. (b) Saplings to be planted by volunteer Walter Hudson are not yet available from the Forest Service. These are to be planted along west fence line near the apartments. Hopefully they will be here by month end.

The Fourth Order of Business was an open floor to the Public to address concerns/suggestions, and there were no visitors in attendance. Director Warwick encouraged Commissioners to let her know if we have news from someone.

New Business:

The First Order of New Business was an open discussion for the Decoration Day 2022 project. Should COVID cause too much risk, it will be wise to sponsor a Decoration Month with private tours given by Director Warwick. Hopefully though, being outside will be safe enough, and a Decoration Day will be held in May. The focus this year will be a headstone cleaning workday. Director Warwick will have a chance to try out the new D-2 product, and one family has committed to let us clean five tombstones.

Vice Chair Startup made a motion to set Sunday, May 1, as Decoration Day/Workshop with a rain date of Sunday, May 15. The time of this event will be 1:00 – 4:00 that afternoon, with set-up at 12:30. Secretary Howell seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Commissioners are requested to bring some of their own supplies, such as old toothbrushes, flimsy scrapers, Q-tips, plastic gloves, and things of this sort. Our hope is that some families will want to buy this product and learn how to clean their family stones.

Thinking ahead to the November Fall Tours and Cleanup Day, Director Warwick plans two new tours: mayors and military. She hopes to rent a golf cart to assure all can make a tour.

The Second Order of New Business was a question as to status of putting Oakland Cemetery on the state registry for historical preservation. Director Warwick described two tasks, which are archeological surveys and lots of numbers for each decade. Historical significance is key.

The Third Order of New Business was discussion about fencing and other projects. A bid package for the east line Detroit Avenue fence has been sent to Public Works/Planning Development, where they will steer us through the process. Next steps are bid, Finance Committee, and City approval. Regarding the new Mary Rye Campbell Addition, drawings may be shown next month for Memorial Wall and Heaven's Garden.

Chairperson Hudson adjourned the meeting at about 6:25 p.m.