

Russellville Oakland Cemetery Commission Minutes

March 15, 2022

The Russellville Oakland Cemetery Commission met for the regular meeting on Tuesday, March 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, Commissioner Mary Schwartz, and visitor Madilyn Miller, new Backup for Director Warwick

Attending via Phone: None

Attending via Google Meets: City Attorney Trey Smith and 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 5:30 p.m.

Old Business:

The First Order of Business was to review and approve the minutes from the February 15, 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.

The Second Order of Business was a presentation of the February 2022 Financial Report by Commissioner Schwartz. Cash balances for February 28, 2022 were: Russellville Oakland Cemetery operating account \$107,075.51 and Bank OZK perpetual care trust account \$154,313.72. On the Statement of Revenues and Expenditures for February, Commissioner Schwartz reported that numbers looked good due to revenue from cemetery lot sales and grave openings receipts. Expenditures exceeded revenue by \$1,307.49. Largest expenditures were contract labor (lawn maintenance), grave openings, and cemetery perpetual care.

The Third Order of Business was an update/presentation of first draft concepts in the Mary Rye Campbell Addition. Director Warwick presented two options featuring plaques to honor our benefactor, the late Mrs. Mary Rye Campbell. After a considerable amount of discussion, Commissioners narrowed their preferences to two main choices. First, at the west side of the new parking area and facing west looking at the creek, a decorative 4-foot metal bench surrounded on each side by a single oak tree with metal tree guard. Then, near the end of the new roadway, the plaque would be placed on a planter of durable stone. Certain bushes would surround the raised planter and plaque. Director Warwick will check on the cost of these choices. Cost of the plaque may be about \$1,800.00.

The Fourth Order of Business was an open floor to the Public to address concerns/suggestions, and there were no visitors in attendance.

New Business:

The First Order of New Business was an update about the gift of saplings from Volunteer Walter Hudson. Chairperson Hudson reported that the small trees are planted and have flags and sleeves for protection. They should grow quickly. “We are very grateful that he did this,” said Vice Chair Startup.

The Second Order of New Business was a discussion about reaching out to people we know to request a monetary gift for our east line Detroit Avenue fence project. A similar fence project gifting opportunity some years ago helped finance the wrought iron fencing now in place. Looking to the future, a feature article in The Courier might inform the public about our goals, what’s been done in the cemetery over the last ten years, and history of some the families at Oakland. Director Warwick gave Commissioners a draft copy of a letter that could be used and asked for ideas to be sent by email, in time for a vote at the next meeting.

The Third Order of New Business was information from Director Warwick about a Cemetery Preservation Workshop to be held in Harrison, Arkansas, on Saturday, April 2, 2022. Attendees can learn about “cleaning, basic repair, leveling and straightening of gravestones.” The instructor is Jonathan Appell of Atlas Preservation, and he was scheduled to present a similar workshop at Russellville Oakland Cemetery a few years ago, but weather caused a cancellation. Any Commissioner is invited to attend the Harrison event. Then, our own workshop for cleaning gravestones is set for May 1, 2022.

Chairperson Hudson thanked Commissioners for coming to tonight’s meeting and adjourned the meeting at about 6:25 p.m.