

**CEMETERIES BOARD OF TRUSTEES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
Special Meeting
CITY HALL 4TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2006
3:30 PM**

| <u>Board Member</u> | <u>Attendance</u> |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Connie Christensen | P |
| Barbara Falowski | A |
| Albert McWhite | P |
| Victoria Mowrey | P |
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| Ann Platt, Vice Chair | P |
| Jose Portela | P |
| Larry Sherman | P |
| Mark Van Rees, Chair | P |

Also Present

Julius Delisio, Cemetery Board Liaison
Bruce Larkin, Director of Business Enterprises
John Moritz, Carriage Services
Bill Avery, Carriage Services
Jim Bernard, Carriage Services
Jeff Moderelli, Assistant to City Manager
DJ Williams-Persad, Assistant City Attorney
Jamie Opperee, Recording Clerk

The meeting was called to order by Chair Van Rees at 3:40 p.m.

Mr. Larkin introduced Mr. Moderelli and informed the Board that he would be taking Mr. Larkin's position after his retirement and would hereafter attend the Board's meetings.

1. Future Capital Improvements

Mr. Delisio informed the Board that the project at Sunset was progressing and should finish ahead of schedule. He estimated the center section and road would be complete by the end of March and they would take over maintenance on Section 7. The building would probably be completed by late summer.

Mr. Delisio referred to the sheet he had distributed with a “wish list” of capital projects. He pointed out that inventory at Lauderdale Memorial would be depleted in approximately two years, so the new mausoleums there were a critical need. Mr. Delisio said that if things went well, the contract with Carriage would be renewed around June. Ms. Platt confirmed with Mr. Delisio that he was describing an extension of the current contract for an additional five years as of the expiration date. Ms. Platt noted that this would not utilize a competitive process and she was concerned about the appearance of this. She said she would feel more comfortable if the City Commission were the ones to decide to forego the competitive process.

Mr. Larkin explained that the contract provided that it was within the City’s discretion to extend the agreement in five-year increments. It was therefore appropriate for the Board to recommend extension of the contract. Mr. Delisio noted the lack of suitable vendors as well.

Evergreen Cemetery

- ❖ Walkway along back lake area in front of indigent area – estimate: \$25,000

Mr. Delisio had included a map of the walkway placement and noted that this would enable access to the mausoleum area without walking through the grass in the indigent area.

- ❖ Replace trash containers: estimate: \$6,000

Mr. Delisio stated they were seeking a new design that was more decorative and more permanent. Possible designs would be presented to the Board for approval.

- ❖ Marker / monument repair – estimate: \$100,000, with matching funds available from the Perpetual Care Trust Fund

Ms. Platt was concerned about the irrigation systems at all of the cemeteries, and Mr. Delisio assured her that there had been some issues after the hurricane and after some renovations, but all of the irrigation systems were operational. He noted that head and pump replacement and pipe repair were maintenance issues and were taken care of by Carriage.

Chair Van Rees asked Mr. Delisio about a suggestion made at a previous meeting to close the 13th Court entrance to Evergreen. Mr. Delisio said they had made the entrance one way and put up signs, and this seemed to be working for visitors to this area. Ms. Platt noted that there was still no place to park a car there without damaging a space or blocking the roadway. Ms. Platt wondered if the alley could be used for parking. Mr. Delisio said nothing prevented them from installing a gate and directing people to park there, but this would present an enforcement issue.

Lauderdale Memorial Park

- ❖ New Mausoleum on State Road 84 [500+ crypts] estimate: \$1 million

- ❖ New entry at Southwest 4th Avenue, improve Southwest 9th Avenue – estimate: \$50,000, with matching funds available from the Perpetual Care Trust Fund
- ❖ Resurface roads overlay – estimate \$150,000, with matching funds available from the Perpetual Care Trust Fund
- ❖ Marker repair/lifting – estimate \$100,000, with matching funds available from the Perpetual Care Trust Fund
- ❖ Decorative trash containers – estimate: \$15,000
- ❖ Generator for office building – estimate: \$20,000

Chair Van Rees felt they should consider creating Cremation Gardens at Lauderdale Memorial and/or Sunset. He explained that this was an alternative, permanent memorial setting for cremation families. These were very aesthetically pleasing, natural settings, configured like rock gardens, with walkways and sometimes commingled ash containers. Chair Van Rees asked Mr. Bernard to bring photos to the March meeting.

Chair Van Rees was very concerned about the condition of some of the motor vehicles in use at the cemeteries. Mr. Avery stated they had identified a particularly dilapidated vehicle and it had been tagged and would no longer be driven off the grounds. They had also hired a mechanic to maintain the vehicles and equipment. Mr. Delisio added that several new vehicles had recently been purchased as well. Mr. Avery informed the Board that employees would soon receive new uniforms and would be instructed how to conduct themselves in order to improve the quality of the visitors' experience and the overall ambiance at the cemeteries.

Chair Van Rees wanted to move immediately on the new entry for Lauderdale Memorial. Mr. Delisio said this was a contract renewal issue. He had spoken with the Landscape Department, who agreed to provide the Board with some ideas to consider.

Sunset Memorial Gardens

- ❖ New mausoleum site TBA [200+ crypts] - estimate: \$400,000
- ❖ New entry gate Westside - estimate \$50,000, with matching funds available from the Perpetual Care Trust Fund
- ❖ Resurface roads overlay – estimate: \$150,000, with matching funds available from the Perpetual Care Trust Fund
- ❖ Decorative trash containers \$15,000
- ❖ Marking repair lifting – estimate: \$100,000, with matching funds available from the Perpetual Care Trust Fund
- ❖ Maintenance facility – estimate: \$50,000

Chair Van Rees asked about the new mausoleum site, and Mr. Delisio agreed to bring more information to the next meeting regarding this. He felt that most likely, a new mausoleum would be situated south of the new building. Mr. Delisio said that once one mausoleum project

was sold at 90%, they would begin the next one; this 10% vacancy enabled them to service at-need families. He explained that the State statute mandated that within 1 year of the presale, construction must begin; within 5 years, the project must be complete.

Chair Van Rees felt they would be in a serious shortage situation at Lauderdale Memorial Park within the year. Mr. Delisio noted that from a Trust fund perspective, selling one mausoleum was like selling four spaces. He felt that the corner of State road 84 and 7th could best be utilized as mausoleum space.

Ms. Christensen said she had observed discoloration on the vases on the cryptfronts of the mausoleums. Mr. Bernard said they were trying to address this issue.

Mr. McWhite wanted to address the limit of twelve services on Saturday at Sunset Memorial Gardens. Mr. Delisio said that when more were allowed, it was unmanageable and mistakes were made; they wanted to keep to this number until the new section was opened up. Mr. McWhite claimed that many burials were coming in from Dade County that they were not aware of and he wanted to institute some proof of residency requirement. Mr. Delisio said that the policy set by the Commission was that residents of Fort Lauderdale were permitted to buy six spaces at the resident discount for immediate family members, regardless of where these other family members resided.

Chair Van Rees felt one problem was that area funeral homes did not show up at the time they had promised. He felt that the timing must be managed much better to enable more services per day. Mr. Delisio asked Mr. McWhite to meet with him and Mr. Avery to discuss this. He noted that he and Mr. Moritz had previously met with several funeral directors on this issue and the directors shown no cooperation regarding honoring service times.

2. Contract Modifications

- ❖ Annual base payment is \$511,000, changing based on the CPI on renewal of the current contract. Propose we set a base for a renewal at \$525,000 with an annual increase of 2%.

Mr. Delisio said that during an audit several years ago, they discovered that they were the only group that had a fee with no annual increase. He felt the annual increase would be more realistic.

- ❖ Payment of 5% for cash receipts over \$3 million annually. This should be modified with a one-time adjustment to \$3.5 million, increasing annually with the base payment of 2%.

Mr. Delisio noted that this had not increased since 1993 and should be increased as well. Ms. Platt wanted some actual inflation statistics to consider for the annual increase instead of the flat 2%.

- ❖ Create a Discount Program to Fort Lauderdale City Employees.

Mr. Delisio said they were considering the same structure as was currently offered to residents. Chair Van Rees felt they would need the specific guidelines. The Board was concerned about non-resident, non-employees obtaining the discount through this plan and Mr. Delisio reminded them that those not eligible for the resident discount must pay the difference. The Board expressed general disapproval of the idea and Mr. Delisio said they could remove this item from the list.

Ms. Platt wanted to revisit the resident discount plan and require that all non-resident family members must pay full price. Ms. Mowrey agreed and said this program could then be extended to City employees. She felt they must do some long-range planning to consider how long their cemeteries would have available space. Mr. Portela noted that many surrounding communities did not have their own cemeteries, and felt they should only permit Fort Lauderdale residents to be buried in their cemeteries. Mr. Bernard said it was "too late to put the biscuit back in the can" because a heritage had been created at the cemeteries. He felt they could control it by price, but it would be unfair to try to control it by residency.

- ❖ Permit design and placement of private, above-ground double crypts at Lauderdale Memorial Parks in a designated area.

Chair Van Rees wanted to be sure that space was set aside in the Master Plan for 2-crypt private family mausoleums. He assured Ms. Christensen that the Board would be included in the decision for the particular area to designate.

- ❖ Clarify contractually the service and merchandise trust fund disposition upon termination of the agreement.

Mr. Delisio asked the Board to send additional suggestions to him to add to the list for the next meeting.

3. Adjournment

The next meeting for the Board will be March 2, 2006.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:39 p.m.