

**CEMETERIES BOARD OF TRUSTEES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
City Hall 8th Floor Conference Room
Thursday, November 14, 2006
3:30 p.m.**

<u>Board Member</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Cumulative 2006</u>	
		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Connie Christensen	P	5	1
Barbara Falowski	P	4	1
Victoria Mowrey, Vice Chair	P	6	0
Ann Platt	P	4	2
Jose Portela	P	5	0
Larry Sherman	P	6	0
Mark Van Rees, Chair	P	6	0

Also Present

Julius Delisio, Cemetery Board Liaison
 DJ Williams Persaud, City Attorney
 Jeff Moderelli, Director of Business Enterprises
 John Moritz, Carriage Services
 Trevor Jackson, Carriage Services
 Sharon Seliger, Carriage Services
 Larry Corey, Carriage Services
 Jacquelyn Schoenberg, Carriage Services
 Aaron Seaman, Carriage Services
 Joe Giordino, Carriage Services
 Scott Schmitt, All Florida Tree
 Alan McPherson, All Florida Tree
 Jack Boland, Crowder Gulf
 Mona Laventure, Recording Clerk

The meeting was called to order by Chair Van Rees at 3:30 pm.

1. Minutes Approval

A. Meeting of 09/14/2006

Motion made by Mr. Portela, seconded by Ms. Christensen to approve the minutes of the September 2006 meeting. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

2. Old Business

A. Sunset Memorial Gardens Building Update

Mr. Delisio announced that the building was complete but had no water service. They were still in the process of resolving the easement issue, but Mr. Delisio thought this should be resolved within two weeks. Mr. Delisio estimated that total costs would reach approximately \$1.5 million. Mr. Delisio described the trees that were planned for planting from the Greenshade Grant. If the stock of trees are available we should be able to begin planting in December.

B. Follow-up Sunset and Evergreen Concerns

Sunset

Mr. Delisio reminded the Board that there had been three areas of concern at Sunset: the sprinklers, the fencing and the Mausoleum. The sprinkler situation had been corrected; the listing fence had been up-righted, and the mausoleum was scheduled for painting in December.

Chair Van Rees asked if there was a way to treat the mausoleum to avoid the rust stains from the irrigation system. Mr. Delisio hoped that the new sprinkler heads would not over-spray onto the building now and the problem would no longer exist. He agreed to ask the painting contractor about using epoxy paint, which Ms. Falowski stated would resist rust stains.

Evergreen

Mr. Delisio remarked on the extent of damage from last year's hurricanes at Evergreen and the concern the Board had with the Lake Bank. He explained that the City had a contract with Crowder Gulf to clean up hurricane debris. Mr. Delisio referred to a proposal from Crowder to do work at Evergreen and noted that the dollar amount appears significant, however, the work will require a technical proficient vendor to perform the tasks needed. He feared that not acting would lead to much more serious damage at some point and could cause encroaching on burials due to the loss of soil.

Mr. Jack Boland, Crowder Gulf, explained the extent of the damage at Evergreen and the work that must be done. Mr. Delisio stated that once the removal of debris was complete, They would create another proposal for the "Phase 2" work that must be done to the lake bank for stabilization. Ms. Platt said they must be mindful of maintaining screening for neighboring properties and beautification of the cemetery.

Ms. Platt said she was concerned about the aesthetics at all of the cemeteries and thought they should consider establishing a foundation that accepted donations for cemetery beautification. Mr. Delisio had informed her that this was permissible under State statute to establish an endowment for a Cemetery.

Mr. Delisio explained that they would obtain two additional bids for the work at Evergreen, and asked the Board to approve the amount of Crowder's bid as the maximum bid. Mr. Boland confirmed that Crowder would obtain the two additional bids.

Motion made by Ms. Christensen, seconded by Ms. Platt, to set the maximum amount for tree removal, pruning and cleanup at Evergreen Cemetery at \$305,850. Board unanimously approved.

Ms. Platt felt they should communicate with the neighbors; Mr. Boland recommended that Gene Dempsey, the City Forester, visit the neighborhood association and that fliers be distributed. Chair Van Rees suggested that notice be posted at the cemetery as well. Mr. Boland promised to visit the neighborhood association if Mr. Dempsey could not. He also agreed to prepare a rendering of the improvements.

3. New Business

A. **Presentation Mausoleum and Cremation Garden Concepts**

Mr. Larry Corey, Carriage Services, presented several renderings of mausoleums and memorial gardens and passed them around for the Board to examine. Mr. Corey confirmed that these drawings were conceptual and not drawn to scale. Once preferences were narrowed down, the design team would create accurate scale drawings.

B. **Cemetery Contractor Contract Extension Proposal**

Mr. Corey referred to a capital plan Carriage had developed and asked the Board to continue Carriage's contract, which was due to expire in approximately two years. Mr. Corey stated that in return for their contributions to the project costs, they wanted to be able to recoup their investment through the contract extension.

Mr. Delisio said they had been working on this since September 2005, and had selected these capital items at our previous Board meetings. The City had addressed several concerns with Carriage since the spring. Mr. Delisio stated that according to the City Attorney, this list of capital items would be an addendum to the original agreement. Mr. Delisio stated that the agreement could be renewed in 5-year increments.

Ms. Mowrey asked Mr. Delisio's opinion of extending Carriage's contract. Mr. Delisio said he could not support the accounts receivable addendum with Carriage retaining ownership because he felt it was an asset of the Cemetery not of the Contractor. that ...they're going to walk away and continue to collect for five years on property that was sold... and I just would find it very difficult for anybody to even administer such a proposal." He said he could see some amount may be negotiated due to commissions, etc., would not recommend the contractor keeping it for five years after the contract expired. Mr. Delisio thought there was some room for discussion in accounts receivable and this should be considered.

Mr. Delisio informed Ms. Platt that the 1993 contract was negotiated with the City Attorney and the City's Cemetery Manager. Ms. Platt said she would like to see a counter proposal to consider. She also thought that Mr. Delisio should create a response, including language he felt should be included. Chair Van Rees said he would find it very difficult to recommend that the Board proceed. He agreed with Ms. Platt that this indicated the need for a bid process, but thought it would be very difficult to find someone willing to bid on operating the City's cemeteries. Chair Van Rees said he would recommend that the Memorandum of Understanding be redrafted and that Item A be totally rewritten.

Mr. Corey said they wanted to initiate the discussion and to negotiate the right position. Mr. Corey stated that the key elements were:

- They were running out of mausoleum space and Carriage would not provide more funding if they were leaving in two years
- Carriage must consider the payables and shut down payment plans to sell shorter periods
- Carriage wanted confirmation that the proposal was worthy of consideration and a commitment to negotiate issues to come to an agreement

The Assistant City Attorney stated that the existing contract did not specifically address the accounts receivable; this was proposed by Carriage. Mr. Delisio said that therefore, anything not in the existing contract would be an amendment. Chair Van Rees requested that the Board draft a motion to direct City staff to discuss the particular items, and not take this to the City Commission as yet.

Ms. Mowrey stated that while she was pleased with Carriage's performance so far, she felt her responsibility to ensure that the facilities in the City's cemeteries remained in the City's possession, regardless of the contractor. She felt there must be some means of compensation for the receivables if/when the contract was severed.

Ms. Platt said they must have an extension of the contract, but the issues must be discussed first. She suggested that a Carriage representative, Mr. Delisio, a City representative and a Board representative meet and discuss the issues. Mr. Corey assured her that Carriage wanted to begin this process.

Motion made by Ms. Platt, seconded by Ms. Mowrey, that Chair Van Rees, Mr. Delisio, Mr. Moderelli and a Carriage representative discuss the contract extension and make suggestions for changes to the language and report back to the Board. Board unanimously approved.

Ms. Platt suggested that part of the contract extension include the requirement that Carriage create a Master Plan for the Cemeteries.

C. Maintenance Reimbursement July-Sept 2006

Mr. Delisio informed the Board that there were no unusual expenses for this quarter. He remarked that the maintenance of the parks had improved and was more consistent.

Motion made by Ms. Mowrey, seconded by Ms. Christensen, to approve the maintenance reimbursement for July – September 2006. Board unanimously approved.

4. Other Items

Mr. Seaman reported that Carriage was covering the cost of replacing the Biondi vases that had suffered the finish deterioration and was no longer purchasing vases from Biondi for the mausoleums.

Regarding the establishment of a foundation to collect and manage funds for cemetery beautification, Mr. Delisio clarified that they wanted an endowment, and the Assistant Attorney said this must be put on the City Commission's agenda.

Ms. Christensen thanked Chair Van Rees, Julius Delisio, Ms. Seliger and Mr. Moritz for their efforts on behalf of the family of a serviceman who had taken his own life. Ms. Christensen also thanked Lauderdale Memorial Park, which performed the burial.

5. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.