

CEMETERIES BOARD OF TRUSTEES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
City Hall 8th Floor Conference Room
Thursday, March 13, 2008
3:30 p.m.

<u>Board Member</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Cumulative Attendance</u> 2/2008 through 1/2009	
		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Mark Van Rees, Chair	P	1	0
Victoria Mowrey, Vice Chair	P	1	0
Alfred Calloway	P	1	0
Anne Platt	P	1	0
Jose Portela	P	1	0
Dolores Sallette	P	1	0
Larry Sherman	P	1	0
Susan Telli	P	1	0

Also Present

Julius Delisio, Cemetery Board Liaison
Lisa Slagle, City of Ft. Lauderdale
Cate McCaffrey, Director, Fort Lauderdale Business Enterprises
John Banas, Carriage Services
Trevor Jackson, Carriage Services
J. Opperlee, Recording Secretary

The meeting was called to order by Chair Van Rees at 3:37 pm.

1. Minutes Approval

- **Meeting of 1/10/2008**

Motion made by Ms. Telli, seconded by Ms. Platt, to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2008 meeting. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

2. Old Business

A. Cemetery Contract

Mr. Delisio reported that the City Commission had approved the contract in a 3 – 2 vote with Commissioner Hutchinson and Mayor Naugle opposed. It would become effective October 1, 2008.

3. New Business

A. General Price List Lauderdale, Sunset and Evergreen

Mr. Delisio reminded the Board that their goal had been to have pricing parity between Lauderdale Memorial Park and Sunset Memorial Gardens. They had actually reduced the prices at Lauderdale Memorial Park in the area of the corner of Southwest 4th Avenue and State Road 84. This area had proven to be difficult to sell. Mr. Delisio said there were several hundred spaces in this section.

Mr. Delisio explained that at Sunset Memorial Gardens, there were spaces that were formerly dedicated to oversized graves. He remarked on how rarely these spaces were used, so they would revert back to normal-sized single spaces, and anyone desiring an oversized space would pay an additional \$1,000 for an additional adjacent space anywhere in the cemetery. Mr. Banas said he had discussed this with Mr. Delisio.

Ms. Platt wanted to know the exact number of spaces they were discussing.

Mr. Delisio said the equal pricing provided the ability to serve families that specifically wanted to be at Lauderdale Memorial Park. He showed Ms. Sallette a map of Sunset Memorial Gardens and indicated the sections on the perimeter they were discussing.

Mr. Delisio drew the Board's attention to the Veteran's Program pricing he had provided.

The Board discussed installing hedge to reduce noise in Lauderdale Memorial Park along Southwest 4th Avenue. Mr. Delisio said neighbors had remarked they wanted to view the open space of the cemetery and did not want this open view blocked. He advised Board members to speak to their Commissioners about this.

Ms. Sallette referred to a special at Forest Lawn Cemetery that included burial and a vault for \$1,795. Mr. Delisio said Fort Lauderdale would not "lower ourselves to those type of standards." He noted those prices had increased recently as well. He advised Ms. Sallette to explain to families that graveside services were not available with that special, and there were often long wait times at Forest Lawn.

Chair Van Rees asked why companion mausoleums did not appear on the new price list. Mr. Delisio said they had made mausoleums pricing inclusive within a range. Chair Van Rees asked the niche inventory. Mr. Delisio said there were fewer at Lauderdale Memorial Park than at Sunset Memorial Gardens, and noted

that the wall niches did well and the original niche bank was close to being sold out.

Chair Van Rees wanted to know the percentage of pre-need veteran spaces sold in any of the cemeteries in past six months, since the new veterans' cemetery had opened in Lake Worth. Mr. Delisio believed there had only been a couple sold at Lauderdale Memorial Park; the program had not sold that well. Chair Van Rees said the impact had been substantial from the County's perspective. He thought the veteran's program should be park-wide. Mr. Delisio confirmed that a companion could be buried in the veteran's section, and a non-veteran could be buried in the veterans' section for \$3,495.

Ms. Mowrey was concerned about lowering prices in a less desirable section of Lauderdale Memorial Park, just to be on a par with Sunset Memorial Gardens. Ms. Platt thought they had accomplished their goal of providing a choice of cemeteries: Lauderdale Memorial Park or Sunset Memorial Gardens, for the lower price.

Motion made by Ms. Sallette, seconded by Mr. Portela, to approve the general price list. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Chair Van Rees remarked that maintenance outside the cemetery fence along State Road 84 looked particularly bad. He believed they would need to improve the landscaping. Mr. Banas explained that the irrigation system had been exposed during nearby roadwork, and he felt that when the roadwork was complete the situation would improve. When the work was finished, they would fill in the gaps in the coco plum hedges along the fence.

B. Maintenance Reimbursement Oct – Dec 2007

Motion made by Ms. Telli, seconded by Ms. Mowrey, to approve the maintenance reimbursement. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

C. Evergreen Cemetery Non-Compliant Ground Cover

Mr. Delisio said they had been more lenient at Evergreen than the other cemeteries because many of the graves were older. Their attitude had always been that as long as the grave was taken care of, it would be left alone, provided the non-compliant material was only around the monument. If it was not taken care of, it would be removed.

Mr. Delisio reported that the Gottlieb grave had been cleaned up as of the previous day. Cemetery staff would clean up the Bechert site the following

Monday, as no one had responded to the notice sent out. The stepping stones and figurine would be boxed and stored for Ms. Bechert.

Mr. Delisio explained that benches were only permitted in paths in the cemetery, and he approved all bench placements. He noted that paths were not always immediately adjacent to gravesites. He explained that the paths were easements and typically had irrigation lines beneath them.

D. Overview 2000 Cemetery Master Plans

Mr. Delisio reminded the Board that the Master Plan was required of the contractor when the contract was renewed in 1999. He presented the Master Plans that were submitted and noted that although the designers had done a very nice job on the building at Sunset Memorial Gardens, they had not realized the need for a maintenance area. Mr. Delisio said this had been used to develop the Capital Projects Plans.

Mr. Delisio advised the Board that they would have \$15,000 for landscaping at Evergreen with the new contract. Since there was no Master Plan needed for Evergreen, Mr. Delisio suggested they use some of the \$100,000 Master Plan funds for additional landscaping at Evergreen.

Ms. Platt was not in favor of "spending \$100,000 just like that" but wanted to obtain some "real documents." She requested definite information regarding spaces and projects needs. She wanted to be sure they planned appropriately for the future.

Ms. Telli felt they might need to reconsider the strategic plan from 2000 and determine where they needed to go for the next five years. She suggested discussing goals and objectives at one of the Board's meetings.

Ms. Mowrey stated, "I'm not going to buy into spending our \$100,000, even though it's a meager amount to spend for a long-range plan...I'm just sick of there being no plan."

Mr. Delisio explained that the \$100,000 was earmarked for Master Plans, but could be allocated elsewhere. He did not want to spend the money, only to receive another set of documents like those they had received in 2000; he would rather see the money spent on improvements. He agreed the Board should discuss their priorities before the money was made available.

Ms. Mowrey wanted to see what Carriage intended to do. She said the Board had never seen this before. Mr. Delisio felt the Board could work with the

contractor and provide input for the designs and the new agreement is specific to what Carriage is required to do.

Ms. Platt asked about the proposal for a curved mausoleum she remembered. Mr. Delisio explained there were two phases to this project. This was submitted for State approval, and he would inform the Board in May about its status.

Mr. Delisio agreed to provide copies of the 2000 Master Plans to Board members.

Ms. Platt remarked that part of the problem was that the Board did not have real data. Chair Van Rees said the Board needed statistics from Carriage and Mr. Delisio: numbers and percentages of ground, mausoleum and niche internments in the last few years.

Mr. Delisio remarked on the dramatic rise in cremations in the past five years. There were also marketplace dynamics over which they had no control that affected them.

Chair Van Rees was aware that the City Commission had not agreed with the Board regarding cremation proposals, but he said he was "not going to give up because we need to be providing greater opportunities."

The Board discussed the mausoleum conceptual design for the new building they had approved for Lauderdale Memorial Park. Mr. Delisio explained that phase 2 was years away. Mr. Delisio assured the Board that the building design they had approved was what would be built since the contractor had provided the rendering and construction cost, and this is what the State approves.

Ms. Mowrey was concerned the Board had approved a conceptual plan and not building plans. Mr. Delisio informed her that the only thing that might change from the rendering they approved was the color of the granite, but assured her that the architecture was correct. Currently there are no building plans since the contractor does not have an agreement in place.

Mr. Banas stated he would have a signed contract in May for the construction, and Mr. Delisio said the Board would see this. He stated the Board would be presented with color choices for the granite as well.

Chair Van Rees wanted assurance that the Board would be informed of any architectural changes. Mr. Delisio said the one architectural change made was removal of the center front column to match the current Lauderdale Memorial Park mausoleum.

Mr. Banas confirmed that the center column would be removed. He said they desired a more modern look for the roof, and might select flat instead of barrel tile, but it would definitely be hurricane-proof ceramic tile. They had also discussed reducing the number of niches to allow space to create an area for couch crypts. Mr. Banas said the entire building would have stamped concrete to match the chapel, and every crypt would have an overhang. He stated these features would incorporate the "spirit of the original building, but we're making it just a little bit nicer." Mr. Banas said due to the "maintenance nightmare" of lighting on crypt fronts, they had decided not to include these.

4. Adjournment

The Board's next regular meeting was scheduled for May 8, 2008.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: J. Opperlee, Prototype Services