MINUTES
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
HIGHLAND CEMETERY BOARD
AUGUST 18, 2010

The Chairman, Chris Elledge, called the Special Called Meeting of the Highland Cemetery Board to order at 2:05 p.m., Wednesday, August 18, 2010 at the Highland Cemetery Office. Notice of the meeting and agenda were posted on the City Hall bulletin board as required by State Law.

ROLL CALL: Chris Elledge, Raymond Jackson, and Robert Williams.
MEMBERS ABSENT: None.
STAFF PRESENT: Kim Shahan, Parks and Recreation Director
Gerald Catlett, Parks and Grounds Administrator
Azalee McGahee, Cemetery Sexton
Jeanie Wheeler, Recording Secretary
Deborah Griswold, Parks/Grounds Secretary

VISITORS: None.

CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF MARCH 17, 2010. Elledge asked for consideration of the minutes of the Special Called Meeting of March 17, 2010, and they were approved as written.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: None.

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1. CONSIDER AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION FOR RECOMMENDATION TO APPROPRIATE PERPETUAL CARE FUNDS FOR A LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT IN THE CEMETERY AND TO PUT OUT A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) LANDSCAPE DESIGN AT THE CEMETERY.

Elledge introduced this item for discussion and asked the members to review and consideration for discussion and approval as appropriate.

Shahan provided a sample draft RFP for this item provided by the staff showing the utilization of interest for the Perpetual Care Fund Trustee. He asked the Board members for their endorsement to do this landscape enhancement project for the Cemetery. He explained that this did not represent a contract only a request for proposal from the vendors and/or companies interested in bidding on the project. The request provides desires and interests for the project and then the vendors come back with what they can provide to meet the specifications of the request.

Catlett provided that at a recent meeting with Perpetual Care Trustee and the City Attorney, the legalities of using the perpetual care funds for such a project was discussed. He further explained that the Perpetual Care Fund State guidelines state that the use of the “interest” dollars for the funds is appropriate for the enhancement of the cemetery. Catlett also stated at this time there is approximately $260,000 in the Perpetual Care Fund; $208,900 being “interest” money and the other $51,100 being the principle which cannot be used for enhancement purposes. Catlett’s recommendation was keeping at least $60,000.00 in the funds at all times. He noted that each year we never ask more than $5,000 for maintenance materials for the perpetual care lots. He added that the Mayor and City Council had an interest in replacing the trees in the Cemetery because many were old and damaged. At this time approximately 300 trees needed to be removed and then we could go back and replace with bigger trees. To accomplish this properly it would need water which means a sprinkler system for the entire Cemetery. To do this big of a project would require the contracting of a professional landscaping company. He added after meeting with the McMahon Foundation with a request, we could completely renovate the Highland Cemetery. Catlett then requested the Board's input on all the development of the project.

Shahan informed it would be the concept as the LETA projects on the medians requiring the companies to submit plans within requested requirements.

Elledge stated that when we can get a total on the project costs he would definitely be interested and willing to go to the McMahon Foundation for their support. It has always been the McMahon Foundation attitude that everything they support in the community to benefit as many as possible.

Shahan stated that any City entity is qualified to submit a request to the McMahon Foundation.

Catlett reminded this is the first step toward a plan.

Elledge agreed that improving the entire cemetery enhances all lots to include the perpetual care lots.

Williams expressed his concerns about using the perpetual care funds wisely.

Catlett stated to enhance the Cemetery enhances all lots and using perpetual care funds for equipment for care of the perpetual care lots could not buy extra diesel or dump trucks this type of enhancement to the cemetery does work for all the lots.

Shahan noted that the Perpetual Care Trustee attorney and the City attorney were in agreement for the landscape design plan for the cemetery.

Catlett stated the procedure once the design is back is a letter to the Trustee for their acknowledgement.

Shahan then added then the request for proposal would go before the Mayor and the Council for approval to go out for bid for the contract.

Jackson expressed his concerns about the people who signed up for the perpetual care lots concerning their feelings about it to include the interest that should still belong to the fund.

Catlett informed the Board that principal for the perpetual care funds will not and cannot be touched by the state law governing the use of perpetual care funds, but the interest can be used.

Jackson also expressed his concerns about taking out the big trees.

Catlett explained about the requirement of a maintenance bond to do this type of project and that there is a list of several varieties that would be replacing the trees that grow well in this area. He added that the new trees will grow along side where the old trees were planted.

Elledge noted that the perpetual care lots are the greenest in the cemetery because of their sprinkler systems. It would so enhance the cemetery to have green lots everywhere and that short of buying new tombstones everything else has been done to bring up the looks of the cemetery. He expressed this cemetery needs this major renovation.

Catlett ensured the Board that the same perpetual care lot maintenance will continue as always.

Jackson requests that all markers being leveled should also be part of this project.

Shahan stated that extensive removal and replacement would be around 1,000,000 and going to McMahon Foundation for 200,000 and get 200,000 matching from the Perpetual Care Fund then would provide 400,000 working towards the original plan.

Catlett agreed that always going for the big plan is wise, but also always having a plan to work toward gets it there.

Shahan stated the objective is to not do a piece meal project and to date we have only been maintaining the Cemetery but it truly needs a makeover for improvement and letting someone with design ability really provides a long term plan.

Catlett informed that the request for proposal requires the company to provide a staffing requirement for the project.

Williams asked about the maintenance bond.

Catlett answered that a contract with a maintenance bond requirement provides a contractor to maintain after for a certain period of time, usually being 10% out and running for 1 to 2 years. After time elapses, the bond runs out and released to the contractor.

Elledge reminded the boards members that any withdrawal from the funds goes thru the trustee and is signed off by a judge. There are several step of approval.

Catlett added that all of the funds will stay within this Cemetery.

Williams ask about the Cemetery Care funds.

Catlett explained 25% of the sale of lots goes back into the Cemetery Care fund for purchase of equipment and cemetery maintenance and projects. This is requested each year through the Capital Outlay for the budget.

Catlett informed the Board that there was 88 acres of space to last almost twenty years at this time.

Elledge recommended except for some tribal policies dealing with the Indian land surrounding the cemetery which is owned by three tribes; Kiowa, Comanche and Apache it would be advisable to start planning the building of another cemetery elsewhere.

There was no other discussion and a motion was made.
MOTION by JACKSON; SECOND by WILLIAMS.

To endorse recommendation to put out for Request for Proposal for landscape design for the Highland Cemetery using the accrued interest amount on the Perpetual Care Fund to fund the landscape design to enhance the Highland Cemetery.

AYES: Elledge, Jackson, and Williams. NAYS: None. MOTION CARRIED.

COMMENTS/DISCUSSION/ADJOURNMENT

There were no other comments or discussion and the meeting adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

RESPECTIVELY SUBMITTED,
CHRIS ELLEDGE, CHAIRMAN
HIGHLAND CEMETERY BOARD