



HOWARD COUNTY CEMETERY PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

3430 Court House Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

Administered by the Department of Planning and Zoning

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September 2019 Minutes

Tuesday, September 10, 2019; 10:00 -11:30 a.m.

The bi-monthly meeting of the Cemetery Preservation Advisory Board was held in the Ilchester room on the 2nd floor at 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043. All cases are public meetings unless otherwise indicated. All inquiries should be made to: 410-313-2350.

Members Present: Liz Larney, Chair; Mike Bennett; Fred Dorsey; Chip Plitt; Edward Glawe

Staff Present: Beth Burgess; Kaitlyn Clifford

Public: Melinda Chaney Farnsworth, Savage Cemetery; Roberta Kelly, Howard County Fire Department

General Topics

CPAB Business

- Mr. Plitt moved to approve the November 2018, March 2019, and July 2019 minutes. Mr. Bennett seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.

Cemetery Updates

Cemetery Inventory: Ms. Burgess shared some updates for a few cemeteries as Resource Conservation Division staff continue to work on updating the inventory.

#17-3 Fuller Kane Smith has had a new 6 foot wood fence added around two sides of the cemetery to screen from the adjacent house lots for sale. The cemetery has been mowed and maintained this summer, but no one is aware who is doing the upkeep of the cemetery site. Mr. Dorsey said he has tried to contact the land developer and Remax relator of the lots, but his attempts have gone unanswered.

#24-5 Dorsey at Arcadia has had the perimeter and path of the cemetery upkeep as a project by the Eagle Scouts, but the interior of the cemetery remains untouched and overgrown with invasive plants. Mr. Dorsey has been in contact with a previous member of the HOA before it was defunct. Mr. Dorsey has worked with that former member to get information out to other neighbors of Valley Meade on the work that has taken place at the cemetery and hopes to have additional work done. As the HOA is defunct and the HOA is listed as the owner of the cemetery it has since been abandoned by the neighborhood for upkeep and maintenance. A former homeowner recently returned a statute to Mr. Dorsey that had previously been placed in the cemetery. Mr. Bennett with the support of Meadowridge Memorial Park staff transported the statue back to the cemetery. The board discussed options for performing maintenance on the cemetery site and Mr. Bennett expressed his concern that maintenance of the cemetery could attract nuisances and encourage more destruction of the

cemetery. Mr. Dorsey said that Valley Meade used to be a dairy farm with free range cows which could account for the destruction that has occurred on the cemetery site and suggested to leave the cemetery covered than open to the elements to prevent further destruction of the site. With the updates to the cemetery from the Eagle Scout projects there are now benches and a meditation area. Mr. Bennett said the burials themselves are unusual to the United States and are reminiscent to the type of burials that occur in Korea with curbing that sits up on the burial to keep people from walking over the top of the graves. The marble of the box cover helps to keep the headstone story well preserved above the ground, so it will not get covered by soil.

Ms. Burgess spoke on behalf of Wayne Davis concerning #42-6 Slave Burial Site off of Guilford Road. Mr. Davis has been working with the Columbia Group to preserve the cemetery site. Ruppert Management Company which is adjacent to the property has provided grounds crews to help with maintenance of the site. And Robert Mosko with Preservation Howard County provided 6-7 members for additional cleanup. The efforts from Mr. Davis' work helped locate 37 burial depressions and stones. The red flags mark stones and the yellow flags mark the depressions. An additional 37 trees were marked dead, dying, or in a poor location and will need to be removed to upkeep the cemetery site. Ms. Burgess mentioned that there has been interest in designating this site as a Historic Site through the National Register. Ms. Burgess discussed with the Board the potential for other means of clean up or support for the cemetery as there is currently no grants accessible to the Board. Mr. Bennett acknowledged Mr. Davis was providing more support for this site than most abandoned cemeteries.

Ms. Burgess told the board she had been contacted by a gentleman stating he had found a deed for a family plot in the Ellicott City Historic District that required the deed owner to upkeep the family plot. After Ms. Burgess discussed cemetery locations with the gentleman it became clear that this was a new cemetery site unknown to the Board and not currently included on the inventory. The cemetery is located near Rebecca's Lot and Pleasant Field behind St. Peter's episcopal church. The deed states it is 25 square feet and about 5 acres of land total. Mr. Bennett stated that description would be the size of a single grave. Ms. Burgess said that it may be difficult to locate this site and that the topography of the area is very steep. Mr. Glawe said he may be able to help locate the site as he knows the owner of the landscape business potentially located adjacent to the burial description. Mr. Bennett said he would like to be included on the site visit for locating this burial.

Ms. Burgess gave an update on Rosa Bonheur and the construction occurring on the site. Originally the developer or owner had access to the complex on the side of Dorsey Run Road, however the layout of the site had to change as there has been issues with drainage in the previous access location. The developer used ground penetrating radar to map pet and human remains. Twenty-one human remains were located on the site. Ms. Kelley asked if any cremated human remains could have come up as disturbances and assumed to be pet remains. Mr. Bennett said that was a possibility. Ms. Burgess said that there has been talk of SHA trying to expand Route 1 by the Rosa Bonheur entrance and the road widened could impact the historic stone entrance wall.

Abandon Sites

Ms. Burgess said that through all the cemetery inventory efforts of both volunteers and RCD staff, 11 sites have not been located at all. Additionally, there have been about a dozen sites that have been owned by HOA's that are to be maintained in open spaces by the HOA but default from a HOA leaves a cemetery unkept and without ownership. Mr. Dorsey said he is still looking into finding additional support before he goes into spearheading a program on his own. Mr. Dorsey shared a flier from Prince George's County that included a Cemetery Survey to get the public's information on abandoned cemeteries.

Ms. Burgess announced there will be a General Plan update and Resource Conservation will be included in that update. Ms. Burgess said there will be language included regarding neglected and abandoned cemeteries in the General Plan Scope but reiterated that the ownership is something that needs to be determined at the State level.

Outreach

Ms. Burgess discussed Hands on History that was held on August 8th, and thanked Ms. Kelly and Ms. Farnsworth for volunteering to run the CPAB booth during the conference. Ms. Burgess said that there was a large turn out with hundreds of children. Ms. Kelly and Farnsworth did a wonderful job of emphasizing the beauty of cemeteries to the children. Mr. Dorsey took pictures of the booth. Ms. Burgess dressed as a skeleton and let the children try on the skeleton mask. Ms. Burgess said that next year it would be a great idea to have some giveaway items for the children, such as stickers, candy, or coloring material. Ms. Kelly said it may be helpful to bring grave makers as a hands-on example for the children.

Other Business

Ms. Kelly said that the Historic Society creates a passport activity book for children during the summer to explore historic sites and suggested that the Board speak to the Historic Society about including a cemetery page in the book.

Ms. Burgess said that RCD staff would continue working to update the inventory list and plan to focus on the harder sites that have not been found. Ms. Larney asked if the Board could help locate any of the inventory that have not been found. Ms. Burgess said she would email the list of more difficult site locations to the Board.

Ms. Burgess told the Board that Ms. Kelly has put in her interest with the County Executive's office to join the Board. Ms. Clifford will update new member packets this year and include next year's schedule with the packets.

Ms. Larney reminded the Board that while there is not much development occurring currently there is still plenty of work the Board could do, such as working on the cemetery inventories. Ms. Kelly said she had photos on the Francis Gravestones. Ms. Burgess said the Department is not seeing many plans of subdivisions with cemeteries and told the Board it would be a good opportunity to work with the Coalition at a State level to help them get their initiatives through. Once Codes are in place at a State level it can help at a County level. Mr. Dorsey asked if there are things that could be done at the County Level. Ms. Burgess said that the Board can work to draft legislation that could be submitted to Dr. Ball. Mr. Plitt said it was the time to draft the legislation as the General Plan is being updated. Mr. Dorsey said that County Council District Five has an interest in cemeteries. Ms. Burgess said that the Board can discuss the legislation ideas at the next meeting and encouraged the members to bring drafts of legislation into discuss in November.

Mr. Bennett moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Plitt seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 10:39 am.

Next meeting, Tuesday, November 12, 2019 at 10am in George Howard building.