



**Madison City Cemetery Committee**

**April 19, 2016**

**Minutes No. 2016-04**

The Madison Municipal Cemeteries Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, April 19, 2016 at 3:00 PM in Conference Room 130 on the upper level of the Madison Municipal Complex located at 100 Hughes Road.

The following is the record of the members and those who attended:

Place No. 1 Elbert Balch	Present
Place No. 2 Council Member Gerald Clark	Present
Place No. 3 Public Works Director Kent Smith	Present
Place No. 4 City Clerk-Treasurer Melanie Williard	Present
Place No. 5 Mayor Troy Trulock	Present
Place No. 6 Shawn Hardy	Present
Place No. 7 Dorothy Magee	Present
Place No. 8 Cindi Sanderson	Present
Place No. 9 Jeanne Steadman	Present

Other City representatives in attendance: City Attorney Kelly Butler and Assistant City Attorney Megan Zingeralli.

Public in attendance: Kathryn Wall Norman, Vickie Morris, Faye Barkley, Cindi Bedsole, Angela Davis Gary, Tracy L. Landrum, Opie Balch and Amanda C. Turner.

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 PM by Committee Chairman Jeanne Steadman.

Minutes: Mr. Balch moved to approve the minutes from the March 29, 2016 meeting. Mrs. Sanderson seconded. The vote was recorded as follows:

Place No. 1 Elbert Balch	Aye
Place No. 2 Council Member Gerald Clark	Aye
Place No. 3 Public Works Director Kent Smith	Aye
Place No. 4 City Clerk-Treasurer Melanie Williard	Aye
Place No. 5 Mayor Troy Trulock	Aye
Place No. 6 Shawn Hardy	Aye
Place No. 7 Dorothy Magee	Aye
Place No. 8 Cindi Sanderson	Aye
Place No. 9 Jeanne Steadman	Aye

The Committee reviewed the following list of recommendation from the Madison City Cemeteries Family & Friends Committee:

1. Restore all the following artifacts to their original grave locations.
  - Statues - all 12 inches or greater in height: The Committee recommends that no statues be allowed.
  - Benches – those still in the city's possession and including allowing families to return benches: Discussed grandfathering in of 3 benches.
  - Veteran's Artifacts – The Committee discussed allowing if affixed they are affixed to headstone)
  - Concrete slabs that were laying over graves - this has not been determined to be an African American burial practice so more research will be done.
  - Cornerstones – Discussed allowing with Public Works permission.
  - Decorative Borders - including decorative rocks: This was discussed and the Committee does not feel that this is a good idea as it could create maintenance issues.
  
2. Create and implement exceptions for flowers and decorations for headstones that are not typical vertical headstones.to include those that are flat or near flat on the ground and cannot accommodate flower “saddles”. Request allowance for all sites to have shepherd's hooks or ANY items abutted to the headstone. Hooks abutted to the headstones should cause no additional weed eating issues.

The Committee discussed allowing 2 hooks or 2 ground mounted pots per headstone, or one of each.

3. Allow funeral home markers and stakes. The funeral home markers removed need to be restored to their original grave sites. We will compile a list from the removed funeral home markers. The list can then be used by the City and the City Cemetery Committee and the MCCFFC to locate each site. MCCFFC will work to restore all markers to their rightful locations, especially if there is no headstone. This is a critical element to avoid unmarked graves.

The Committee was advised that these have already been replaced.

4. Reconsider the ordinance designation that gives sole power to the City of Madison Public Works Director.

The Committee discussed this and feels that the authority should stay with the Public Works Director as it is his department’s responsibility to maintain the cemeteries.

Section 12-24 (d) (2) Once a flag pole is has been removed, either partially or completely, whether intentionally or unintentionally. No person may reinstall or replace at any grave site. Suggestion: Establish a special appointment team consisting of the Director and two other people, one of which should be a family member.

The Committee did not feel that the appointment of a team is a good option.

5. Maintain all graves within all three cemeteries at a level surface (fill holes, depressions, sink holes, etc) and maintain on a regular and recurring basis.

The Committee was advised that this already being done.

6. Treat fire ant mounds on a regular and recurring basis.

The Committee was advised that this is already being done.

7. Plant grass seed or sod on all new graves or graves without sufficient grass.

The Committee was advised that this is already being done.

8. Renovate silk flower discard bin to be covered on all four sides and to be aesthetically more pleasing. An alternative may be a single line of wood fencing to conceal the flower bin(s) and trash receptacle(s).

The Committee discussed this and feels that this is a good option.

9. Better maintain the "Old Madison Cemetery" (South of Mill Road) and maintain it on the very same frequency and to the same detail as the other two city cemeteries.

The Committee was advised that the Alabama Historic Commission has recommended minimal mowers be used near old monuments to avoid damage to the monuments.

10. Create and maintain a database of every grave and a family member contact for each, where possible.

The Committee discussed this and expressed that this would be a good option. Council Member Clark spoke favorably regarding the creation of a database. Discussed requesting that the City Clerk's office amend forms to include additional contact information for additional family members.

11. Allow a Community Clean-up Day twice a year.

The Committee discussed this idea and expressed that this could be a good idea for the future but it would not be City sponsored due to liability issues.

12. Many removed items are anticipated to remain unclaimed. As a goodwill gesture, we request an area be designated as a "Serenity Garden" in both cemeteries to display appropriate items. Request a local garden club or volunteers to maintain the garden areas. Once completed, if additional items remain establish a garden in the south "Old Madison Cemetery,".

Following discussion, the Committee did not agree with this recommendation.

13. Family representation on the Madison Cemetery Committee.

This was discussed by the Committee and the Committee did not feel that additional members were needed. It was pointed out that there are already members on the Committee who have family members buried in the Madison Cemeteries.

14. Vickie Morris offered to be the liaison with a group of volunteers to assist the Madison City Cemetery Committee with support from the MCCFFC (family and friends committee).

The Committee were not in favor of this idea.

Suggestions include (but are not limited to):

- Maintain flag poles when families are no longer available : The Committee did not think this would be a good idea as it would open the City to additional liability.
  - Organize Community Clean-up Days: The Committee did think this might be a good option.
  - Research grants/funding for cemetery projects.
  - Assist with documentation in submitting permits required by AHC: The Committee reminded those in attendance that the City is exempt from the permitting requirement.
  - Assist with data-base of families: This will be researched.
  - Locating unmarked graves and placing identification.
  - Projects to assist in preservation of "Old Madison Cemetery."
  - Cataloging all removed items and assist in determining final resolution of items. This has been done by Public Works.
15. Make provisions for flags and other displays of patriotism to be made at any and all veteran's graves at all times. Discussed allowing immediately before and after holidays.
  16. Recommend the City ordinance include language to formally recognize and adhere to and abide by all laws of the State of Alabama and recommendations by the Alabama Historic Commission governing historic cemeteries, to include the Alabama Burial Laws.

The Committee reminded those in attendance that the City is exempt from the Alabama Burial laws.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

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Melanie A. Williard  
City Clerk-Treasurer