



**BROOKSVILLE CEMETERY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AGENDA
JOSEPH E. JOHNSTON, III, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 HOWELL AVENUE**

June 15, 2022

5:30 p.m.

- A. CALL TO ORDER**
- B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- C. INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBER – SALLY SPERLING**
- D. INTRODUCTION OF NEW CEMETERY SEXTON, JASON RALEY**
- E. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**
- F. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
March 2, 2022 meeting minutes
- G. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**
 - 1. Discussion of change of rules to allow balloons under the same restrictions as other holiday decorations. The following language is proposed**

Decorations and balloons (mylar or other) for holidays or memorable occasions, such as celebrating the birthday of the deceased, or may be placed 2 weeks before and may remain 2 weeks after a holiday or memorable occasion. If left longer than this amount of time, they may be removed at the discretion of the Cemetery staff.
 - 2. Updates on the following projects:**
 - Cemetery operations reorganization
 - General Cemetery Upkeep
 - Cemetery (Newton) Mausoleum roof repair
 - Cameras installed at Cemetery
 - Garden of Innocence new area
 - Septic Tank on regular clean out cycle until connection to City sewer
 - New golf cart
 - Plans for expansion on northwest portion

- Plans for ADA handicap paved pad
- Upgrade Cemetery software
- Plan to request additional Cemetery staff and possible size increase for Cemetery office
- Put on your calendar – Founders’ Week Cemetery Tours:
October 8, 2022 – 10:00 a.m.
October 15, 2022 – 10:00 a.m.

H. OLD/NEW BUSINESS

I. CITIZEN INPUT

J. NEXT MEETING DATE (tentative) – September 28, 2022 (5:30 p.m.)

K. ADJOURNMENT

Please be advised that two or more City Council Members may attend and participate in this meeting. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, persons with disabilities needing a special accommodation to participate in this proceeding should contact the City’s ADA Coordinator no later than 48 hours in advance of the meeting at (352) 540-3810. Meeting agendas and supporting documentation are available from the City Clerk’s office and on line on the City’s website. Any person desiring to appeal any decision with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, may need a record of the proceedings including the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based, and therefore must make arrangements for a court reporter to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made.



**BROOKSVILLE CEMETERY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES
JOSEPH E. JOHNSTON, III, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
201 HOWELL AVENUE
BROOKSVILLE, FL 34601**

March 2, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Kathleen Hudak at 5:30 PM. Present were Brooksville Cemetery Advisory Committee Members: Chairwoman Kathleen Hudak, Ronald Lawson, Council Liaison Pat Brayton, Joe Merritt and Jan Knowles. Also present: Eric Stokholm, Cemetery Sexton and Jennifer Battista, City Clerk/Recording Secretary.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

December 7, 2021 meeting minutes

Motion:

Motion was made by Brayton and seconded by Lawson to approve the December 7, 2021 minutes. Motion carried 5-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- 1. Discussion of Another Possible Amendment to Cemetery Rules – not allowing vault/body slab “wraps” or “tarps” or “vinyl” coverings on vault lids**

After discussion, it was decided change the rules to prohibit “any decorative covering or coating”. It was mentioned by Council Liaison Brayton that they could not enforce it for those already in place. Committee Member Lawson advised he would check with the Lake Lindsey Cemetery, and maybe some other cemeteries, on what their rules are for vault lids.

Board Member Merritt brought up for discussion the fact that vaults are now being made of other material besides concrete and he suggested allowing only concrete vaults in the Cemetery. There was no objection to adding that to the rules.

City Clerk Battista reminded all that the changes to the rules will have to go to City Council for consideration.

2. Update on vandalism at Cemetery

The Committee discussed the options of locking the gates or other security issues at the Cemetery. Chairman Hudak brought up for discussion electrical gates on a timer and it was deemed to be expensive with electric power needing to be run to the front gates. Board Member Merritt was concerned about the chance of someone being locked in unless it is a device that could be triggered to be opened from the inside. However, it would not prevent someone from jumping the fence and trigger the gate to open.

City Clerk Battista advised that security cameras are being considered City-wide for City owned property and temporary cameras have been recently installed at the Cemetery. It was Committee Member Lawson's understanding that the vandalism had tapered off and perhaps further action could wait until Council approved City-wide security measures. City Clerk Battista advised that the Hernando County Sheriff's Office has been patrolling the Cemetery routinely.

3. Discussion of:

- a. possible price increases**
- b. possible discount for veterans**

Council Liaison Brayton felt that the Committee really needs to look at raising the rates. Spaces at other Cemeteries are more expensive and, therefore, more are buying at the Brooksville Cemetery. This creates more and more need for maintenance. He stated that the Cemetery needs to start covering some of their expenses and it would not take much of an increase to help in this effort. He reminded those present that the Cemetery would be getting larger [with the development of the northwest section] and maintenance costs will be increasing.

Board Member Merritt felt that the Cemetery prices are way below what they should be. He stated that even if they were raised only \$200.00, it will not deter people from buying. He added that Hernando County really only has two public Cemeteries, which is Florida Hills on Spring Hill Drive in Spring Hill and the Brooksville Cemetery.

Chairman Hudak brought up, and City Clerk Battista confirmed, that the Dade City Cemetery has no more spaces for sale and that is driving more sales at the Brooksville Cemetery.

Council Liaison brought up for discussion the prices for a space for full burial right now is \$700.00 for City residents and \$850.00 for non-City resident. He was unsure of why that was established and he did not see the reason for that. Committee Member Merritt offered that he did not see the reason for that and felt that the cost should be the same. He also did not see the reason for

offering discounts to veterans if they can be buried at the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell for free.

Board Member Merritt advised that for burials at the Florida Hills Cemetery on Spring Hill Drive, the funeral homes are charging families double the opening and closing of grave sites as what it would be at the Brooksville Cemetery. The spaces at Florida Hills are much more expensive than Brooksville Cemetery.

Brayton suggested a base rate of \$1,000.00. The Committee discussed the discount to City residents. City Clerk Battista that it is time-intensive for the Cemetery Sexton to get proof of residency. She added that it leads to complaints from people who are one block out of the City limits, or who may get City water and sewer but do not live in the City. Committee Member Merritt has seen it where someone else who lives in the City is used to buy the lot to get the discount.

Committee Member Knowles offered her support that the rate should be the same for City and non-City residents.

Cemetery Sexton Stokholm advised that the prices have not increased since 2014 but yet more and more maintenance is needed. He stated that earlier on this date he sold a special cremains space and a full burial site. Brayton was unsure if rates for special cremains would be changed. Committee Member Merritt did not think columbarium prices should go up, which Sexton Stokholm and Liaison Brayton agreed. Brayton added that he was mainly thinking of full body burials. Committee Member Knowles and Chairman Hudak offered agreement.

City Clerk Battista went over some of the upcoming projects, which included the laying out of the northwest portion of the Cemetery. She stated that they would like to include some amenities to that portion such as a gazebo or a chapel. She further stated that she is planning to request an administrative assistant for the Cemetery in the 2023 budget.

Committee Member Lawson agreed with the increase to \$1,000.00.

It was unanimous that there would be no discount for veterans as the City has not offered that before and there is no veterans section. Also, the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell is free burial for veterans.

It was unanimous that the City Clerk would present to Council the recommendation of the Committee to raise the price to a flat fee of \$1,000.00 with no City resident discount. The City Clerk advised that it should be on the March 21st Council agenda and she would keep the Committee appraised.

4. Update on current projects

The City Clerk and Cemetery Sexton gave an update on:

- Old nursery area currently being demolished for new Garden of Innocence area
- Office repairs are done after flood in Cemetery office in December, 2021
- New paved roads in Cemetery
- Next budget year will begin process of laying out northwest section of Cemetery
- New special cremains section will soon need to be implemented

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

• Media Communications Training – Charlene Kuhn, City’s Public Information Officer. This item was tabled as Charlene Kuhn, PIO, was unable to attend the meeting.

• Board Member Knowles wondered where people could put yard debris when they clean off the gravesites and she was advised there was a dumpster and trash cans that can be used.

• Board Member Merritt requested that the committee consider, from a liability standpoint, requiring a licensed and insured contractor to dig graves in the Green Meadow burial section. Cemetery Sexton Stockholm did not know of an occasion when the family has not had the assistance of a funeral home who contracts for that service. Merritt pointed out that some funeral homes would not have that equipment. There was no objection to adding to the rules that you have to be a licensed contractor to dig the grave/open and close the grave in the Green Meadow burial section.

• The City Clerk reported on an individual who seems to be stealing water in the Cemetery for a personal pressure washing business. The Sheriff’s office has been informed and would be approaching him to ask him to cease this activity. If it does not stop, the City will have to consider issuing a trespassing warrant to prohibit him from entering into the Cemetery, which is a step the City is very reluctant to take.

CITIZEN INPUT

There was no citizen’s input.

NEXT MEETING DATE (tentative) – June 15, 2022 (5:30 p.m.)

There was no conflicted noted for this date.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Jennifer J. Battista, City Clerk
Recording Secretary

Chairman

Approved _____