



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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May 2017 Minutes

Tuesday, May 9, 2017; 10:00 -11:30 a.m.

The bi-monthly meeting of the Cemetery Preservation Advisory Board was held in the Ilchester Room 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; Fred Dorsey; Edward Glawe; Chip Plitt

Absent: Dottie Moore, Matthew Smithson, Mike Bennett

Staff Present: Beth Burgess, Ken Short, Yvette Zhou

Public: David Zinner, Liaison to the Maryland Advisory Council on Cemetery Oversight; Julia Nichols, Volunteer Oella; Alicia Osgood, Public; Melinda Chaney Farnsworth, Secretary of Savage Cemetery Company of Howard County; Tom Baldwin.

General Topics

Cemetery Updates:

- **Reimensneider Family Cemetery Update:**

Ms. Burgess, Ms. Larney and Mr. Dorsey summarized the April 20 Planning Board meeting with the Board. Elm Street Developers presented to the Planning Board seeking a favorable recommendation to the Planning Director to disinter the 11 remains at the Redd property in Elkridge. Some of the Reimensneider family descendants favored disinterment and relocating the remains to Mt. Zion church cemetery since there are other family members buried there. CPAB had made a recommendation to the Planning Board against disinterment but had emphasized the Board respected the wishes of the descendants. A few family members were not in favor of disinterring as they felt Charles Reimensneider has clearly articulated in his Will that he was to remain in that location and not be removed. A few citizens testified against disinterment expressing their concern for the precedent this sets for the County. The Planning Board voted against disinterment in 5-0 vote so their recommendation to the Planning Director is to not allow the disinterment of the Reimensneider remains.

Mr. Lazdins' DPZ Director has not made a final decision yet whether to allow moving the remains, or have them to stay in place. Comments from the Dept. of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) regarding the development plans currently submitted by the developer are due the third week in May. At this point

DPZ has been discussing options with the developer – nothing is resolved at this point. The Developer could request for an extension if they are still working on a final plan or decision.

Ms. Larney said she was asked to do an interview with Channel 2 news at the St. Mary's Cemetery. The news team wanted a different location from where the Reimensneider family was buried and where Mr. Van Kirk was interviewed. Ms. Larney stated the reporter clearly wanted a statement from her if the remains should be disinterred. Ms. Larney's response was that the decision will be based on the law rather than her personal preference and that it was a difficult decision to have to make. She expressed her hopes that the reporter does her homework on the facts and the law as she has suggested and that she hopes she is not misquoted. Mr. Lazdins was also contacted and he sent a response to the reporter that a final decision has not been made. The cemetery story will air May 11, 2017.

Ms. Larney expressed the need to follow State Law Section §5–505 (see attached) where a court judgement is needed to sell lots over a cemetery. Mr. Zinner said the current criteria on how a States Attorney makes the determination to disinter needs to change since most requests are for criminal investigations and there are usually no objections for disinterment. When disinterment is needed for new community development, a new set of guiding criteria need to be in place. He said the Board can find the right people to draft a reference guide. Mr. Dorsey recommended taking the issue to the next general assembly and provided a letter to the CPAB and to the Planning Board. Most agreed having stronger law would benefit the County. Mr. Plitt said the Cemetery Preservation Advisory Board is an advisory board that may not have the legal authority to determine what is legal. Ms. Burgess agreed with Mr. Plitt and said she will seek the CPAB Attorney, Cynthia Peltzman, for further advice.

Mr. Glawe asked how Mr. Lazdins' final decision will be made. Ms. Burgess said Mr. Lazdins will take all laws, the Planning Board recommendation and the plan and any facts including concerns about the cemetery being close to building lots into consideration. Ms. Burgess said the Developer could ask for an alternative compliance for issues like setbacks. The final decision comes down to Mr. Lazdins signing off on the plan to either approve as is or a modified plan.

- **Enclave at Tierney Farm:**

Alicia Osgood is a great-granddaughter to Denton Miller, who is located at site #34-1 adjacent to Tierney farm. She expressed how there is a lot of overgrown trees and shrubs and a tree fell on top of the grave that needs to be cleaned up first. The way the grave currently is could present marketing problems for Beazer Homes to their buyers- the builder is expected to start selling homes this summer. The descendant said it is unknown what or if the developer wants to do with the grave but it is important to protect and preserve. Ms. Osgood hopes the HOA can take the responsibility to maintain the grave. Ms. Osgood will contact Beazer Homes.

Ms. Osgood was unsure who was the current owner of the cemetery. Mr. Dorsey recommended Ms. Osgood contact Mr. Eddie Zepp since he was willing to clean up the cemetery in the past. The Cemetery will not be part of the development per DPZ records. The Developer will need to respect the 30 feet setback unless a alternative compliance request is made and approved. The HOA will not take the responsibility to maintain the grave since it is not part of the development but the Cemetery would be eligible for grant programs. Ms. Burgess will send details to Ms. Osgood. Ms. Osgood will update the Board with her contact with Beazer.

- **Gaithers Chance:**

A citizen called Ms. Burgess with a concern that the headstones were removed, the land regraded and the stones reconfigured in an attempt to clean up area. Ms. Burgess will set up a time for a site visit to address the citizen's call.

- **Savage Community Cemetery:**

Ms. Farnsworth said the cemetery has been working to be in compliance with the State. A maintenance contract has been secured for grass mowing for the remainder of the year. There are volunteers ready to clean up the cemetery. An email address, Facebook account and business card have been created to improve communication. The phone number on the sign at the cemetery goes directly to Mr. Ronnie Brown, one of the owners. All the lots have been sold. Burials are done by a third party and Savage Cemetery Company are not involved with, provide or contract for that service; that service is contracted by the family of the person being buried. The official business name is Savage Cemetery Company of Howard County.

Mr. Baldwin said his mother passed away two years ago and contacted the Savage Community Cemetery for burial but never received a response. Ms. Farnsworth said the all inquiries were handled but acknowledged that communication will be improved going forward.

Mr. Baldwin would like to volunteer to clean up the cemetery such as debris removal, overgrown trees & shrubs, and reset fallen headstones. He wants to know how to raise funds with the cleanup efforts.

Ms. Burgess cautioned about issues like liability and permission. Ms. Farnsworth said any volunteer cleanup requests should be coordinated through the owners and either Mr. Brown or Mr. Rushing will be on site with the volunteer.

Mr. Dorsey cautioned about the process for resetting heading a stone to prevent stone damage. He recommended contacting the Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites (CPMBS) for resources such as training and workshops about cemetery cleanup. Mr. Robert Mosko is a professional conservator that spoke at CPMBS and has the expertise to help. Mr. Baldwin will contact Mr. Dorsey for CPMBS information.

Mr. Baldwin raised questions about ownership of the Savage Cemetery. Mr. Dorsey said the company is obligated to provide confirmation of ownership as it is not the Cemetery Preservation Advisory Board's responsibility.

- **Tucker/Jones Cemetery:**

Mr. Dorsey said the Pastor of the church at the beginning of Church Lane is interested in cemetery clean up. Mr. Dorsey will walk the property with the Pastor to further discuss.

Cemetery Bike Ride:

A bike tour is planned and Mr. Zinner said he and Mr. Dorsey drove the 25-mile bike ride path which is part of the Howard County cycle to health program. There will be stops at six cemeteries. It is planned for the end of August and if all goes well, two similar bike rides are planned for 2018. Mr. Zinner suggested publishing the bike route for individuals to ride the path themselves. Mr. Zinner wanted to know if the bike ride can be promoted on the DPZ website to draw interests and sponsors. Mr. Dorsey said that ideas like this one could become future fundraisers for cemetery grants if there was a nominal charge.

Coalition (CPMBS) update from annual conference:

Ms. Burgess said the conference provided a great opportunity for the Coalition to network with all counties. The Coalition is looking at Howard County as good example in cemetery preservation efforts. They value the County's inventory and praises that the Board and website are always updated. It was expressed at the annual meeting that Howard County is setting the bar high since it is only county with a CPAB board in the state of Maryland. The Coalition expressed goals for next year and legislative advocacy was a priority.

Ms. Burgess shared Preservation Maryland has an innovative program called Six-to-Fix designed to help save threatened resources statewide. Preservation Maryland invests seed funding, expert professional staff and volunteer time, and statewide advocacy and outreach efforts to move projects towards preservation. Rather than creating lists of threatened buildings, they are doing something about it.

<http://www.preservationmaryland.org/programs/six-to-fix/>

Hands on History:

Thursday, August 10th at the Howard County Fair- The Board agreed that they will be participating in this year's event to promote & generate interest in the County's historic Cemeteries. Mr. Plitt, Ms. Larney and Mr. Zinner volunteered to help. Ms. Burgess suggested highlighting the current grants with before and after images.

July Meeting:

Next July's meeting the Board will have discussions about how the 2017 Grant process went. Ideas on improving or streamlining the 2018 grant are welcomed. There are currently three grant recipients who have already submitted for reimbursement. The Howard County Genealogy Society are managing the reimbursement to recipients. The July meeting, DPZ will give an update to the cemeteries that were in the development process.

It was noted as a concern that the burial (16-2) at Waverly Mansion is getting parked on when there are events at Waverly. Ms. Burgess will contact DRP to ensure protection of this burial.

Action Item Updates:

- Ms. Zhou has completed the creation of the new cemetery files for each inventory site.

Next Meetings:

Tuesday, July 11, 2017 at 10am in George Howard Building

Tuesday, September 12, 2017 at 10am in George Howard Building

Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 10am in George Howard Building