

**CEMETERY SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
CITY HALL 8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
Thursday July 9, 2015
3:30 P.M.**

Members	Attendance	Cumulative Attendance	
		2/2015 through 2/2016 Present	Absent
Michael Ruddy, Chair	P	3	0
Patricia Hayes, Vice Chair	P	3	0
Damon Adams	P	3	0
Victoria Mowrey	A	2	1
Larry Ott	P	3	0
John Sykes	A	2	1
Mark Van Rees	P	3	0
Myrna Pototsky	P	3	0
Avis Boyd-Gaines	P	1	0
Dennis Ulmer	P	3	0

City Staff

Yoly Colarusso, Parks & Recreation Cemetery Liaison/Recording Minutes
Lee Feldman, City Manager
Phil Thornburg, Parks & Recreation Director
Carl Williams, Parks & Recreation Deputy Director
Ryan Henderson, Assistant to City Manager
Zach McGinnis, Senior Management Fellow

Guests

Julius Delisio, Carriage Services
Scott Drzewiecki, Carriage Services
Chris Manceau, Carriage Services
Trevor Jackson, Carriage Services
Kim Krause, SunTrust
Edna Elijah, District 3 Community Leader
Lynn Kelley, FDOT
Susan Day, FDOT
Jack Baldwin, Ted Conner Landscape
Brent Hoover, Hoover Pumping
Nathan Dreher, Hoover Pumping

1. City Ordinance No. C-09-05, Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm and it was determined a quorum was present.

2. New Business

A. Requirement Minutes Approval

Motion to approve minutes of the May 14, 2015 meeting made by Mark Van Rees and seconded by Larry Ott. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Mark Van Rees made a motion to take up item D after item B, seconded by Dennis Ulmer. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

B. Cemetery Masterplan (Discussion/Motion)

Mr. Feldman addressed the Board to share his concerns with maintenance conditions in our four cemeteries and to discuss the direction we should be going as a City Cemetery System. Mr. Feldman presented slides of current City cemetery conditions in comparison to other cemeteries, showing turf, trees, and other issues that needed improvement. Mr. Feldman suggested new fencing, irrigation, inconsistent turf quality, dead trees, new plantings, and needed tree canopies in Lauderdale Memorial Park, Sunset Memorial Gardens, Evergreen, and Woodlawn. The overall maintenance in each Park needs to improve, and they need to be places where people feel safe. This is not a reflection on anyone or any company in terms of the conditions of the cemeteries.

Mr. Feldman stated that we have an opportunity now, as I looked at the finances, to start investing back into the cemeteries in terms of our capital. The Trust Fund has a very healthy corpus, and we need to take a step back and get some professional assistance to prepare a Cemetery Master Plan to start building a new Capital Improvement Plan for our cemeteries. Let's bring them up from where they are today to the standard I know we can get them to be at. It will be hard work, and the Board needs to be involved in setting the priorities and figure out the character for each of the cemeteries as we move forward. I wanted to approach you all today with the idea of us starting to invest more in the capital needs. Some things we know can improve immediately, such as better irrigation, and quality turf maintenance. In addition, a tree plan that recognizes the concerns with roots in relation to plots and markers, but still adds a canopy throughout each cemetery. What I would like the Board to consider in the near future is devoting some of the funds that we have towards bringing in a professional cemetery consultant to do a Cemetery Master Plan. The plan I like the most is one the City of Austin has done and is available online, we can provide you with the links to that if you would like to view it; basically looking at what we have now, where do we want to take it, how do we get there, and what will it cost to get there? That is the reason I wanted to speak with you today, because we have to bring these cemeteries up. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Ms. Hayes asked when you talk about relocating fencing and things of that nature, will the city's zoning department not be an obstacle and be of assistance instead? Mr. Feldman stated I am committed to once we have a plan we will implement it. I am committed to getting these cemeteries where they need to be. There are very few things in life that are precious to me, but honoring the dead is one of them.

Ms. Elijah thanked the City Manager for taking an interest in our cemeteries, and asked what will be done to improve the maintenance. Mr. Feldman stated I recognize, and will speak on the contractor's behalf, Scott jump in if you like; we recognize there have been certain deficiencies in maintenance and there is a corrective maintenance plan in place to do that. At the same time, we need to upgrade the facilities. I believe Carriage is committed to making those improvements as well.

Mr. Drzewiecki recognized the need to improve current conditions at our cemeteries and to address the public's concerns. Since I started four months ago, we have invested a lot of efforts in improving the conditions at Woodlawn. We painted the fencing, painted the wall, trimmed trees, increased the irrigation schedule, and did some over-seeding as well. Ms. Elijah added that she went by Woodlawn Cemetery and commended Carriage for the recent improvements.

Mr. Van Rees thanked Mr. Feldman for taking an interest in our cemeteries and noted that he was the first City Manager to do so. I see what you presented here today, noting some deficiencies here and there, and we have seen them too. We have not had a lot of rain and are suffering, but moving forward I agree investing in what we have is a good move.

Mr. Feldman stated it is more than just grass. It is building more amenities so people can sit and spend time with their families. My goal ultimately, is that the Board will support spending money out of the corpus to do this master plan. Based on what I hear today unless I hear an objection, we will put an RFP on the street to get a professional on board to do that type of work.

Mr. Van Rees asked if you put the request out, who is paying for the master plan. Mr. Feldman replied I would look for that to come from the Trust Fund.

Mark Van Rees made a motion to table the item to the next meeting when all Board members are present, seconded by Pat Hayes. Mr. Van Rees stated this discussion came up back in the 1990's with Carriage Services, and I believe in it but want the entire board present.

Dr. Ruddy asked for a clarified motion. Mark Van Rees made a motion to defer the item, Cemetery Master Plan to our next meeting; seconded by Pat Hayes. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

D. Capital Improvements Project Update (Discussion/Motion)

Mr. Delisio stated that we currently have three capital projects that we are working on. The Cremation Garden that was approved in January will be completed by the end of July; it will add 128 units to that area of the cemetery in Lauderdale Memorial Park. The next project is the fence replacement at Lauderdale Memorial Park that was approved last year by the Board and Commission not to exceed \$350,000.00; which the City asked Carriage to take over. We submitted the permit last week, and the zoning

department kicked it back as they did with the Sunset Memorial Gardens fence, wanting a 3' setback. Carriage will not move forward with this project because of the setback requirement and will ask the City to reevaluate this zoning decision.

Mr. Delisio stated the last project is the irrigation upgrades proposed for Lauderdale Memorial Park and Sunset Memorial Gardens, and the new irrigation pumps proposed at Lauderdale Memorial Park that we discussed at our last meeting. At that time, the Board requested an itemized proposal from Ted Conner Landscaping, and also to obtain a second itemized proposal from a different vendor. We want to have Hoover provide the new pumps, but obtained a second quote which is more money providing less features. I asked representatives from Hoover and Ted Conner to be here today to answer any questions, but we would like to move forward utilizing trust fund dollars for the proposals. Dr. Ruddy asked Mr. Delisio to introduce the guests.

Mr. Jack Baldwin introduced himself to the Board and explained the proposed irrigation project, and included his experience working in City of Fort Lauderdale cemeteries for many years.

Mr. Brent Hoover introduced himself to the Board and explained the proposed pump replacement in Lauderdale Memorial Park.

Mr. Delisio asked the Board to approve up to \$550,000.00 for the irrigation pumps at Lauderdale Memorial Park, and the irrigation upgrades at Sunset Memorial Gardens and Lauderdale Memorial Park.

Mr. Mark Van Rees made a motion to approve the proposal from Ted Conner Landscaping for the irrigation upgrades at Lauderdale Memorial Park and Sunset Memorial Gardens, and to approve the Hoover proposal for the two new pumps at Lauderdale Memorial Park not to exceed \$550,000.00, seconded by Mr. Damon Adams. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Mark Van Rees left at 4:10 pm.

C. Trust Fund Investment Review/SunTrust Bank (Discussion/Motion)

Ms. Krause from SunTrust distributed handouts to be Board to present Market update and portfolio review. Distractions in Greek debt negotiations in late June undercut stocks and bonds, increasing volatility for both; the Federal Reserve reduced its growth outlook, but stressed the likelihood of a rate increase in 2015, pushing prevailing rates upward.

Ms. Krause stated that after the soft winter months, most US economic data seemed to indicate a reacceleration during the second quarter. All of the major stock indices were negative for June, ending the quarter mostly flat. With higher volatility, interest rates finished the first half at the highest level in nine months.

Ms. Krause stated that higher rates for three straight months hurt most bond indices during the quarter; The Barclays Aggregate bond index declined 1.7% for the quarter, tipping it into

negative territory for 2015. Investment grade corporate bonds were hardest hit (-3.2%) as rates rose.

In looking at Portfolio Performance, Ms. Krause stated the market value of the trust as of June 30, 2015 was \$25,656,027. The trust has seen significant growth over the last four years with the initial market value starting at just over \$20 million. During the quarter, SunTrust liquidated the position in emerging market debt and reallocated the 2% exposure to Western Asset Core plus Fixed Income. While the position in emerging market debt provided diversification benefits and higher yield potential, we expect greater risk in this asset class going forward and continued currency volatility.

Ms. Krause stated that SunTrust's expectation for the remainder of the year is for earnings to surprise to the upside which should support a 2015 return within our expected range of 5-7% for the S&P 500.

E. Woodlawn Cemetery (Discussion/Motion)

Ms. Colarusso stated that although we spoke about Woodlawn Cemetery and the findings that FDOT discovered at our May meeting, the article included in the packet was on the front page of the Sun Sentinel six days later. Ms. Colarusso wanted to ensure that all members saw the article and asked if anyone wanted to discuss this further.

Lynn Kelley, from FDOT introduced herself and told the Board about a meeting to be held by Commissioner McKenzie on July 14, 2015 at 6:00 pm in Joseph Carter Park. The meeting will address the communities concerns and let everyone know where we will be heading in the future.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:23 pm.

Minutes prepared by: Y. Colarusso, Parks and Recreation