GREENWOOD CEMETERY ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2024
MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 151 MARTIN, ROOM 205
8:30 A.M.

The Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board provides the recommendations to the City Commission:

1. *Modifications: As to modifications of the rules and regulations governing Greenwood Cemetery.*
2. *Capital Improvements: As to what capital improvements should be made to the cemetery.*
3. *Future Demands: As to how to respond to future demands for cemetery services.*

The Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board shall hold at least one public meeting in each quarter.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson, Linda Buchanan

II. ROLL CALL

City Clerk, Alexandria Bingham

III. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

A. Presentation from Finance Director Mark Gerber and Finance Director Designee Mary Chavez

IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

A. Approval of meeting minutes of September 6, 2024.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Review of the 2023-2024 DRAFT GCAB Annual Report

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Recommendation for Grave Release
B. 2025 Proposed Meeting Schedule
C. Future Business
   a. November 1, 2024 – Cancel due to November Election
   b. December 6, 2024
   c. January 3, 2025 - Cancel
   d. Other Items for Consideration

VII. REPORTS

A. Update from Museum Director Leslie Pielack (when applicable)
B. Update from Clerk's Office
C. Financial Reports
D. Cemetery Sales & Activity
E. City Manager's Reports (September)

VIII. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

IX. BOARD COMMENTS

X. ADJOURN

Next Meeting: December 6, 2024

Should you wish to participate in this meeting, you are invited to attend the meeting in person or virtually through ZOOM:
https://zoom.us/j/98983856041 **Meeting ID:** 989 8385 6041
You may also present your written statement to the City Clerk,
151 Martin Street, P.O. Box 3001, Birmingham, Michigan 48012-3001 prior to the meeting.

NOTICE: Individuals requiring accommodations, such as mobility, visual, hearing, interpreter or other assistance, for effective participation in this meeting should contact the City Clerk's Office at (248) 530-1880 (voice), or (248) 644-3405 (TDD) at least one day in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.

Las personas que requieren alojamiento, tales como servicios de interpretación, la participación efectiva en esta reunión deben ponerse en contacto con la Oficina del Secretario Municipal al (248) 530-1880 por lo menos el día antes de la reunión pública. (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964).

Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board Minutes
September 6, 2024
Municipal Building, 151 Martin
8:30 a.m.

I. Call To Order

Linda Buchanan, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

II. Roll Call

Present: Chair Linda Buchanan; Paul Connell, Jacqueline Patt, Linda Peterson, Laura Schreiner, Margaret Suter

Absent: Joseph Vercellone

Staff: City Clerk Bingham

III. 2024-2025 Organization

A. Congratulations to reappointed and new members
B. Nomination and Selection of Chair and Vice Chair

MOTION: by Peterson, seconded by Suter:
To nominate Linda Buchanan for Chair.

VOTE: Yeas, 4
Nays, 2 (Schreiner and Patt)

Chair Buchanan was nominated for Chair first, and Ms. Patt was nominated for Chair second by Ms. Schreiner. Since the votes for the Chair position were taken in order of nomination, and Chair Buchanan was reappointed by majority vote, no vote was taken on Ms. Patt's candidacy.

MOTION: by Peterson, seconded by Suter:
To nominate Linda Peterson for Vice Chair.

VOTE: Yeas, 6
Nays, 0

IV. Approval of the Minutes

A. Review of the Minutes of May 10, 2024

MOTION: by Buchanan, seconded by Suter:
To approve the minutes of May 10, 2024.

VOTE: Yeas, 6
Nays, 0

V. Unfinished Business

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VI. New Business

A. Review of the 2023-2024 DRAFT GCAB Annual Report

The Board discussed updates to the draft annual report. CC Bingham answered informational questions from the Board and integrated updates into the draft during the discussion. All updates were added by GCAB consensus.

The Board agreed to review the changes at its next meeting.

B. Future Business
   a. October 4, 2024
   b. November 1, 2024 – Cancel due to November Election
   c. December 6, 2024
   d. January 3, 2025 - Cancel
   e. Other Items for Consideration

The Board discussed:

- Setting the 2025 meeting schedule at an upcoming meeting.
- Having training on Robert's Rules of Order and the City's Ethics Ordinance.

VII. Reports

Reports can be found in the meeting's agenda packet.

VIII. Open To The Public For Matters Not On The Agenda

IX. Board Comments

Board members:

- Thanked CC Bingham for her work on the reports and for providing hard copies of the reports.
- Provided information on Cemetery history and upcoming events.
- Noted the prices charged at Woodlawn Cemetery in Detroit.

X. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 a.m.

Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk

Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist

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GREENWOOD CEMETERY ADVISORY BOARD

2023/2024 ANNUAL REPORT - DRAFT

September 2024

Linda Buchanan, Chair
Linda Peterson, Vice Chair
Laura Schreiner
Margaret Suter
Joseph Vercellone
Jacqueline Patt
Paul Connell

INTRODUCTION

The Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board (GCAB) was established by the Birmingham City Commission on October 13, 2014. The board is charged with the duty of submitting a report to the City Commission on an annual basis of the general activities, operation and condition of the cemetery for the preceding 12-month period. The GCAB Annual Report includes a summary and update of the cemetery's status, related finances and the GCAB's planned activities for the next fiscal year.

In alignment with the city's fiscal year, the current GCAB report covers the period from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

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GENERAL ACTIVITIES

Meetings

The GCAB is required to meet at least quarterly. During the report period, the board met this requirement by conducting meeting on the dates listed below:

Q1
July 7, 2023
August 4, 2023
September 1, 2023
Q2
October 6, 2023
Q3
January 19, 2024
Q4
April 5, 2024
May 10, 2024

2023/2024 Accomplishments

- Produced the 2022-2023 Annual Report
- Reviewed a field survey report for remaining space in sections B and C.
- Proposed a grave release and fee schedule increases that were adopted by the City Commission on July 10, 2023 and became effective upon adoption of the City Commission

Greenwood Cemetery (126-26)	**Past Fee**	**Current Fee**
Grave space accommodating one full burial or three cremations	$4,000.00	$6,000.00
Additional Rights of Burial for cremated remains, each	$750.00	$1,000.00
Grave space accommodating two cremated remains	$2,600.00	$4,000.00
Grave space accommodating one cremated remains	$1,300.00	$2,000.00
Administrative fee for transfer of grave ownership	$200.00	$400.00

- Began discussions regarding a Memorial Preservation and Repair Policy
- Advocated for the repair of the State Historical sign at the west entrance of the cemetery
- Participated in a presentation by the City Attorney regarding Ethics, Rules of Procedure, and Potential Violations
- Revised and adopted a strategic plan
- Advocated for a budget expenditure request to the cemetery maintenance fund for cemetery preservation efforts that was adopted by the City Commission in the 2024-2025 FY Budget

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OPERATION

Sales and Financial Information

On December 1, 2019, Creative Collaborations, LLC became transitional provider for cemetery services, with the exception of grounds maintenance, which is provided by the City's Department of Public Services. On May 1, 2020, Creative Collaborations entered into a one-year renewable contract with the City to provide cemetery services on an ongoing basis. Grounds maintenance continues to be provided by DPS with ongoing communication and collaboration between Creative Collaborations, DPS, and the City Clerk's office.

On January 14, 2019, the City Commission approved a payment plan policy for cemetery plots that requires full payment within 24 months. During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, no new payment plans have been initiated. The Clerk's Office and Treasurer's Office monitors active payment plans. Plots under a payment plan are considered sold for purposes of availability unless the plot becomes available again in the event of a purchaser default.

Beginning December 1, 2019, Creative Collaborations, LLC, remits 100% of revenue to the City, which then makes payments to the contractor for services performed.

FY 23-24 Grand Totals	
Sales in B	7
Sales in C	3
Sales in Other	0
Resident Purchases	2
Non-Resident Purchases	8
Payment Plans Initiated	3
Total Graves Sold	**10**
Transfer of Ownership Filed	5
Additional Burial Rights Purchased	3

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Grave Releases

4/26/21 The City Commission approved the recommended release of Section B, Rows 17-C, 16-C, 15-C & 14-A for a total of 38 Graves, 9 of which are obstructed)

12/23/21 The City Commission approved the release of one grave in section B, row 2-A for an at-need situation for a family with adjacent space.

8/15/22 The City Commission approved the release of one grave in section B, row 12-A, for an at-need situation for a family with adjacent space.

7/24/23 The City Commission approved the release of 88 available graves suitable for burial in the flush rows in Section B, and to direct Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board to evaluate the fee schedule again for plot costs after 20% of these plots have been sold which would equate to 18 spaces.

Notes on Obstructed Graves

1/29/21 Creative Collaborations noted that graves 1 & 2 in Section C rows 18-A & 19-A are not able to be used due to obstructions.

3/25/21 DPS noted that graves in row 19-A 1,2,13,14,16 are obstructed by trees.

4/23/21 DPS noted Row 17-C: Graves 9 and 11 are affected by a 16" Red Maple located at the east edge of both graves. Row 15-C: Grave 5 is obstructed by a monument on the east edge. Grave 10 has a 16" Cedar (eastern arborvitae) obstructing it. Grave 17 has a marker on the east edge that is encroaching onto the grave site. Row 14-A: Graves 15 and 16 have a large shrub located over both sites. Graves 17 and 19 are obstructed by a large monument located east of them.

5/31/23 A field survey was completed for the following lots: A-1, 2-D, 3-A, 4-A, 5-C, 6-C, 7-D, 8-C, 9-D, 10-A, 11-A, 12-A and 13-A.

Of the 312 graves surveyed 189 of them are sold. There are 8 graves unsuitable for burial due to historic memorials. At this time there are 43 graves unsuitable for burial due to trees and tree roots. These graves would become suitable when the trees are removed should the city wish to make them available for sale. There are a total of 72 graves suitable for burial.

Price Increases

4/12/22 The City Commission approved the grave price increase for plots that can accommodate one full burial from $3,000 to $4,000 per plot. All graves sold in the 2021-22 FY were at the rate of $4,000 per grave.

7/24/23 The City Commission approved the grave price increase for plots that can accommodate one full burial from $4,000 to $6,000 per plot. All new sales after 7/24/23 will be subject to the new rates as indicated in the fee schedule.

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Grave Sales Detail, July 2023 - June 2024

Greenwood Cemetery Sales and Availability				
	Sec B	Sec C	Resident	Non-Resident
July 2023	0	1	0	1
August 2023	1	0	0	1
September 2023	0	0	0	0
October 2023	2	0	1	1
November 2023	2	0	0	2
December 2023	0	0	0	0
January 2024	0	0	0	0
February 2024	0	0	0	0
March 2024	0	0	0	0
April 2024	1	0	1	0
May 2024	0	2	0	2
June 2024	1	0	0	1
Total Sold	**7**	**3**	**2**	**8**
Available Under Current Authorization (20% of remaining inventory)	**8**			
Total Available	**75**			

Notes: Plots in Sections B and C sold under a payment plan are included in the number of sales made for the quarter in which the payment plan was initiated. The remittance to the Perpetual Care Fund of payment for the plots is recorded in total in the quarter in which the final payment is made.

One grave was sold outside of section B and C in the July 2022 – June 2023 fiscal year.

Section (total plots)	7/2015 - 6/2018	**7/2018 - 6/2019**	**7/2019 - 6/2020**	**7/2020 - 6/2021**	**7/2021 - 6/2022**	**7/2022 - 6/2023**	**7/2023 - 6/2024**	**TOTAL Number of Graves Sold To Date**	**Number of Graves Remaining** (obstructed)
B (408)	203	11	32	10	3	5	7	271	75 (62)
C (72)	3	5	10	9	3	9	3	42	0 (30)
TOTAL	206	16	42	19	6	14	10	313	75 (92)

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Burials and Inurnments, July 2023 - June 2024

Burials and inurnment activity during the period can be used to understand utilization of graves and assist in planning for future sales.

Cremation vs. Burial: According to National Funeral Directors Association 2023 Cremation and Burial Report, the 2023 cremation rate is projected to be 60.5% and the burial rate is projected to be 34.5%, the remaining 5% may be due to alternative methods such as green burials and scatter gardens, which are not available in Greenwood Cemetery. The City of Birmingham's 2023-2024 cremation rate is below the national average at 54% and the full burial rate is above the national average at 46%.

	Sec B		Sec C		Other		Total by Month	
	Full	Crem	Full	Crem	Full	Crem	Full	Crem
July 2023	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
August 2023	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	3
September 2023	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
October 2023	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
November 2023	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
December 2023	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
January 2024	3	1	0	0	1	2	4	3
February 2024	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
March 2024	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
April 2024	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
May 2024	0	0	0	0	2	1	2	1
June 2024	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	3
Totals	6	3	0	4	5	6	11	13

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Perpetual Care Fund

Revenues from grave sales are used to increase the Perpetual Care Fund for Greenwood Cemetery, with investment earnings remaining with the PCF. Currently all cemetery care and maintenance is funded through the general fund. Eventually the goal is for the perpetual care fund to be able to take over the financial burden of cemetery maintenance through interest accrued.

Detail for July 2023 through June 2024:

2023 Q Ending September 30	
Proceeds from cemetery plot sales and service fees	$ 5,800.00
Investment income	7,836.46
Revenue for Perpetual Care Fund	$ 13,636.46
2023 Q Ending December 31	
Proceeds from cemetery plot sales and service fees	$ 42,300.00
Investment income	9,784.37
Revenue for Perpetual Care Fund	$ 52,084.37
2023 Q Ending March 31	
Proceeds from cemetery plot sales and service fees	$ 1,300.00
Investment income	8,823.95
Revenue for Perpetual Care Fund	$ 10,123.95
2023 Q Ending June 30	
Proceeds from cemetery plot sales and service fees	$ 8,700.00
Investment income	9,870.60
Unrealized Gain	113,869.20
Revenue for Perpetual Care Fund	$ 132,439.80

Notes

1. An accounts was created within the General Fund to better track cemetery expenses by differentiating cemetery maintenance invoices from the maintenance of other city properties such as parks. This will allow the City to get a better estimate of costs that the perpetual care fund will need to cover in the future.

2. The fund has recaptured almost half of the market loss it sustained last fiscal year.

3. The focus of the perpetual care fund is long-term growth. To achieve this goal, the fund is invested in equity investments near the maximum allowed by state law with no more than 40% of the amount invested in equities in any one asset class (large cap, mid cap, small cap) as per our investment policy.

4. The fund is generating approximately enough funds to cover basic lawn maintenance and tree service based on current charges, but not enough for snow removal or other improvements to the cemetery.

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CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
PERPETUAL CARE FUNDS
INVESTMENT REPORT
6/30/2024

	PRINCIPAL	INCOME	TOTAL
BEGINNING BALANCE 6/30/2021	$ 1,024,278.34	$ 130,688.43	$ 1,154,966.77
SALE OF GRAVES	74,050.00	-	74,050.00
CAPITAL GAINS (LOSSES)	-	-	-
INTEREST/DIVIDENDS	-	36,315.38	36,315.38
CHANGE IN MARKET VALUE	113,869.20	-	113,869.20
ENDING BALANCE 6/30/2022	$ 1,212,197.54	$ 167,003.81	$ 1,379,201.35
INVESTMENTS			
BOND MUTUAL FUNDS	$ 594,380.07	43.1%	
EQUITY MUTUAL FUNDS	784,821.28	56.9%	
TOTAL	$ 1,379,201.35		

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
PERPETUAL CARE FUNDS
ANNUAL INVESTMENT REPORT
6/30/2024

	PRINCIPAL (NONSPENDABLE)		INCOME (SPENDABLE)		TOTAL
BEGINNING BALANCE 6/30/2023					
Pooled Funds	$ -		$ -		$ -
Bond Mutual Funds	412,539.46		88,525.27		501,064.73
Equity Mutual Funds	611,738.88		42,163.16		653,902.04
		$ 1,024,278.34		$ 130,688.43	$ 1,154,966.77
SALE OF PLOTS					
Bond Mutual Funds	57,600.00		-		
Equity Mutual Funds	16,450.00		-		
		$ 74,050.00		$ -	$ 74,050.00
CAPITAL GAINS (LOSSES)					
Pooled Fund	$ -				
Bond Mutual Funds	-				
Equity Mutual Funds	-				
		$ -			$ -
INTEREST/DIVIDENDS					
Pooled Fund			$ -		
Bond Mutual Funds			25,002.81		
Equity Mutual Funds			11,312.57		
				$ 36,315.38	$ 36,315.38
CHANGE IN MARKET VALUE					
Pooled Fund	$ -				
Bond Mutual Funds	10,712.53				
Equity Mutual Funds	103,156.67				
		$ 113,869.20			$ 113,869.20
ENDING BALANCE 6/30/2024		$ 1,212,197.54		$ 167,003.81	$ 1,379,201.35
INVESTMENTS					
BOND MUTUAL FUNDS	480,851.99		113,528.08		594,380.07
EQUITY MUTUAL FUNDS	731,345.55		53,475.73		784,821.28
TOTAL		$ 1,212,197.54		$ 167,003.81	$ 1,379,201.35

CONDITION

During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the City's Department of Public Services has overseen cemetery landscape maintenance, which has included:

- Oversight of lawn mowing contractor including weekly cuts and spring and fall cleanup
- Oversight of forestry contractor for tree maintenance as directed by DPS
- Maintenance of the tree inventory program
- Lawn fertilization twice a year
- Burial topsoil and seeding: spring and fall
- As-needed general clean up: grave blankets, old flowers, fallen branches
- Trash removal: 2 to 3 times per week
- Maintenance of water system: start up, winterizing, and repair as needed
- Repair of turf as needed
- Snow removal
- Building/fencing/road maintenance as needed

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STRATEGIC PLAN

The Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board adopted the following strategic plan on April 5, 2024:

BIRMINGHAM
A WALKABLE CITY

Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board
Strategic Plan
Mission, Values, & 5-year Vision

Mission

The mission of the Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board is to preserve, protect, and celebrate the rich historical, cultural, and natural heritage of the Historic Greenwood Cemetery. In respect to the ordinance establishing the parameters of the board, the board is committed to providing recommendations on modifying the rules and regulations as needed, recommending capital improvements to the Historic Greenwood Cemetery as needed, and examining future demands and making recommendations as to how to accommodate those demands. The board is dedicated to honoring the memories of those interred here, fostering an engaged and connected community, and ensuring the long-term sustainability and accessibility, while providing efficient and effective services that meet the current demands.

Values

1. Preservation: We value the preservation of Greenwood Cemetery's historical, architectural, and natural assets. We are committed to safeguarding its rich heritage, ensuring that future generations can appreciate its significance.
2. Service: Ensuring that exceptional service is available to plot owners and grieving families in Greenwood Cemetery is paramount as it not only honors the memory of their loved ones but also offers comfort, support, and a sense of dignity during their time of loss, fostering trust and lasting connections within the community.
3. Sustainability: We are committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of Greenwood Cemetery. This includes responsible environmental practices, financial stewardship, and strategic planning to guarantee its continued role as a cherished community resource.
4. Community Engagement: We believe in actively involving the community in our efforts. We strive to engage with residents, local organizations, and stakeholders to promote a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the cemetery's well-being.

What will the Historic Greenwood Cemetery look like in the next five years?

In the next five years, the Historic Greenwood Cemetery will continue to be beautifully maintained and well cared for. Visitors will encounter a serene landscape landscape, with preserved gravestones, monuments, and historical structures that tell the captivating stories of those interred here. Preserving the existing tree canopy is essential to maintaining the aesthetic beauty of our environment for future generations to enjoy. Educational programs and guided tours will offer immersive experiences, sharing the cemetery's rich history, cultural significance, and natural beauty with the community. Greenwood Cemetery will stand as a symbol of sustainability, with eco-friendly landscaping and energy-efficient amenities. Engaging community events will breathe life into the grounds, fostering a sense of belonging and remembrance. It will be a place where history thrives, where memories are honored, and where the spirit of preservation, education, and community truly flourishes.

What kind of accomplishments and projects will GCAB have made progress on in the next 5 years?

The accomplishments of the Historic Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board over the next five years could include:

1. Restoration and Preservation: Undertaking significant restoration projects to repair and conserve gravestones, monuments, and historical structures within the cemetery, ensuring the physical integrity of the site.
2. Increased Community Engagement & Educational Initiatives: Expanding efforts to increase awareness of the cemetery as a city treasure and involve more community members in cemetery tours, educational programs, and volunteer initiatives. This includes expanding online resources and communications to educate the public about the historical, cultural, and natural significance of the cemetery.
3. Enhanced Accessibility and Wayfinding: Improving the accessibility of Greenwood Cemetery by implementing signage, and facilities that accommodate visitors of all abilities, making it more welcoming to a diverse range of individuals.
4. Sustainability Measures: Implementing sustainable practices within the cemetery, such as environmentally friendly landscaping, and water conservation to reduce its environmental footprint.
5. Financial Stewardship: Ensuring the financial stability of the cemetery by implementing effective strategies, seeking grants, and exploring revenue-generating partnerships.
6. Collaborative Partnerships: Maintain and expand on existing partnerships with local schools, historical societies, and other organizations to foster collaborative initiatives that benefit both the cemetery and the community.
7. Maintenance and Security: Continuing regular maintenance and consider security measures as needed to ensure the safety and tranquility of the cemetery, including regular landscaping and regular review and updates to the Greenwood Cemetery Operational Procedures, Conditions, and Regulations.

   In conclusion, these accomplishments would not only contribute to the ongoing preservation of Greenwood Cemetery but also promote its role as a valuable community asset, a place for reflection and learning, and a testament to the rich history of the City of Birmingham.

PLAN FOR 2024/2025

The Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board has prioritized the following action items for 2023-2024:

CRITICAL GOALS

Short Term

- ***Developing and Updating Policy***
  - The GCAB is interested in streamlining policy documents to ensure that all policy is held in one document, the Greenwood Cemetery Operational Procedures, Conditions, and Regulations. This includes incorporating new policy regarding restoration efforts on monuments and incorporating the policy on installing monuments for persons of historic significance.

Long Term

- ***Monitor the continued growth of the perpetual care fund***
  - The GCAB monitors the growth of the perpetual care fund and may propose strategies for increasing the funds growth in order for the fund to reach a point where the interest accrued can cover most or all of the general maintenance requirements of the cemetery.
- ***Monitor the demand for cemetery services***
  - The GCAB members review cemetery data in regards to sales, interments and inurnments and consider trends in order to suggest ways Greenwood Cemetery may need to adapt in order to meet future demands.
- ***Continue historic preservation efforts***
  - GCAB encourages efforts by the Museum Board, the Friends of the Birmingham Museum (a.k.a. the Birmingham Historical society) and other organizations to conduct projects that increase community engagement and preservation efforts.

DESIRED GOALS

Short Term

- ***Inventory of signs in Greenwood Cemetery***
  - In order to update and streamline communication and wayfinding within the cemetery, the GCAB wishes to inventory and evaluate all signage in the cemetery to determine if updated signage should be budgeted for.

Long Term

- ***Monument/marker inventory survey***
  - The GCAB began working on planning for the process and survey for a monument/marker inventory with the guidance of Museum Director Pielack and City Clerk Bingham at the June 4, 2021 GCAB meeting. GCAB wishes to conduct this survey in the future with volunteers and the support of city staff in order to cross-reference general information and collect baseline condition data and photos that could potentially be linked with the GIS data project. Monuments or markers that may need maintenance may also be identified through this survey.
- ***GIS Mapping – Launching a digital map for public reference***
  - City Staff in the Planning Department with GIS expertise created a GIS map of the cemetery. Data points from DPS on tree locations within the cemetery were added as

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a layer to the map in the spring of 2021. This goal ties in with the monument/marker inventory survey and confirming the baseline information of known available plots in the cemetery. In the future efforts will be made made as time allows, the Clerk's office provides progress updates to the GCAB as needed.

- ***Determine Capital Outlay Projects***
  - The GCAB may discuss and study the potential benefits of a capital outlay project. The GCAB will provide a recommendation and report to the City Commission if a capital outlay project is identified.
- ***Explore Above Ground Columbarium Opportunities***
  - With the limited space in the cemetery and shifting demand towards cremation and inurnments, GCAB wishes to explore the costs, benefits, and opportunities for installing a columbarium.
- ***Review and update Greenwood Cemetery Operational Procedures, Conditions and Regulations***
  - The GCAB spent a considerable amount of time in the 2021-2022 FY reviewing and updating the rules and regulations. To keep the rules and regulations current going forward they will conduct an annual read through to maintain the document.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Grave sale activity primarily occurs in the newly laid out plots in B and C and is closely monitored by the City Clerk's office.

480 Total Graves in Sections B & C	Section C	Section B	Total
Obstructed – Temporary (trees/roots)	4	50	54
Obstructed – Permanently (monument)	26	12	38
Owned	42	271	313
Available	0	75	75

The GCAB, Clerks Office, DPS, Museum, and contracted cemetery service provider continue to work collaboratively to preserve the historic charm and ambiance of Greenwood Cemetery while ensuring the highest standards of maintenance and service are being provided. The GCAB will continue to monitor data as provided by the City Clerk, work on their goals as laid out in this document, and make recommendations for future grave releases and/or improvements for the preservation and operation of the Historic Greenwood Cemetery.

The cemetery is in a state of slow growth and preservation.

For the 2024-2025 FY, the GCAB is encouraged to continue working on the goals as identified in this report at their regular monthly meetings. Recommendations made by the Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board will be presented to the City Manager's Office for further direction and implementation.

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MEMORANDUM

Clerk's Office

DATE: **Wednesday, September 9, 2024**

TO: **Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board**

FROM: **Alexandria Bingham, City Clerk**

SUBJECT: **Recommendation to Release Graves for Sale**

INTRODUCTION:
The sale of graves in Greenwood Cemetery has depleted the number of plots released by the City Commission based on recommendations from the Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board (GCAB). Interest in purchasing plots has continued in recent months, and interest will continue in the near future.

GCAB last discussed grave releases and price increases on July 7, 2023 and voted 6 (Buchanan, Suter, Vercellone, Schreiner, Patt, Connell) to 1 (Peterson) to recommend the suggested action below that was unanimously adopted by the City Commission on July 24, 2023 under the consent agenda. There were no questions being asked from the commission or the public regarding the recommended action by GCAB.

Resolution to amend the fee schedule to increase the following fees for Greenwood Cemetery:

Greenwood Cemetery (126-26)	*Current Fee*	*Recommended Fee*
Grave space accommodating one full burial or three cremations	*$4,000.00*	*$6,000.00*
Additional Rights of Burial for cremated remains, each	*$750.00*	*$1,000.00*
Grave space accommodating two cremated remains	*$2,600.00*	*$4,000.00*
Grave space accommodating one cremated remains	*$1,300.00*	*$2,000.00*
Administrative fee for transfer of grave ownership	*$200.00*	*$400.00*

And to make a motion adopting a resolution to release the 88 available graves suitable for burial in the flush rows in Section B, and to direct GCAB to evaluate the fee schedule again for plot costs after 20% of these plots have been sold.

At this time, the cemetery is closing in on the 88 graves (or 20% of inventory) that was authorized for sale in July of 2023 and 4 of those graves remain available. **The next release of 20% of the remaining inventory would amount to 15 graves, making 19 graves available for purchase and having 60 graves in reserve for a future release.**

BACKGROUND:

Grave Releases

4/26/21 The City Commission approved the recommended release of Section B, Rows 17-C, 16-C, 15-C & 14-A for a total of 38 Graves, 9 of which are obstructed)

12/23/21 The City Commission approved the release of one grave in section B, row 2-A for an at-need situation for a family with adjacent space.

8/15/22 The City Commission approved the release of one grave in section B, row 12-A, for an at-need situation for a family with adjacent space.

7/24/23 The City Commission approved the release of 88 available graves suitable for burial in the flush rows in Section B, and to direct Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board to evaluate the fee schedule again for plot costs after 20% of these plots have been sold which would equate to 18 spaces.

Notes on Obstructed Graves

1/29/21 Creative Collaborations noted that graves 1 & 2 in Section C rows 18-A & 19-A are not able to be used due to obstructions.

3/25/21 DPS noted that graves in row 19-A 1,2,13,14,16 are obstructed by trees.

4/23/21 DPS noted Row 17-C: Graves 9 and 11 are affected by a 16" Red Maple located at the east edge of both graves. Row 15-C: Grave 5 is obstructed by a monument on the east edge. Grave 10 has a 16" Cedar (eastern arborvitae) obstructing it. Grave 17 has a marker on the east edge that is encroaching onto the grave site. Row 14-A: Graves 15 and 16 have a large shrub located over both sites. Graves 17 and 19 are obstructed by a large monument located east of them.

5/31/23 A field survey was completed for the following lots: A-1, 2-D, 3-A, 4-A, 5-C, 6-C, 7-D, 8-C, 9-D, 10-A, 11-A, 12-A and 13-A.

Of the 312 graves surveyed 189 of them are sold. There are 8 graves unsuitable for burial due to historic memorials. At this time there are 43 graves unsuitable for burial due to trees and tree roots. These graves would become suitable when the trees are removed should the city wish to make them available for sale. There are a total of 72 graves suitable for burial.

Price Increases

4/12/22 The City Commission approved the grave price increase for plots that can accommodate one full burial from $3,000 to $4,000 per plot. All graves sold in the 2021-22 FY were at the rate of $4,000 per grave.

7/24/23 The City Commission approved the grave price increase for plots that can accommodate one full burial from $4,000 to $6,000 per plot. All new sales after 7/24/23 will be subject to the new rates as indicated in the fee schedule.

In July of 2023 it was decided that after 20% of these plots are sold, GCAB will re-evaluate the current inventory, demand and pricing for each subsequent price increase. As the Clerk's Office monitors sales, all future consideration of grave releases will be tentatively scheduled in increments of 20% of the remaining inventory.

LEGAL REVIEW:
The City Attorney has reviewed the proposed recommendation.

FISCAL IMPACT:
The perpetual care fund portfolio's ending fund balance on September 30, 2024 was $1,476,334.46.

In the case of completely selling out the 4 released graves and next batch of 20% of the inventory 15 graves (72 remaining unreleased plots suitable for burial, the following projections demonstrate the potential contribution to the perpetual care fund if the 88 remaining plots are sold:

Unit Price	Contribution to the Perpetual Care fund for the sale of 19 plots
$6,000.00	$114,000.00
Unit Price	Contribution to the Perpetual Care fund for the sale of the remaining 60 plots
$6,000.00	$360,000.00
Unit Price	Contribution to the Perpetual Care fund all remaining 79 plots
$6,000.00	$474,000.00

There are several factors to consider regarding the perpetual care fund:

1. The current market, interest rates and inflation make the end goal of reaching a sustainable balance a moving target.
2. Even if all space in the cemetery were to sell, the fund balance will not reach $2 million without the help of accrued interest over time.
3. Reaching a sustainable fund balance for the perpetual care of the cemetery is not projected to happen in the near future; therefore, the city will continue to fund routine maintenance for the cemetery out of the general fund.

At this time, the city budgets for cemetery maintenance to be paid out of the general fund. This includes lawn care, tree care, snow removal and other routine maintenance in the cemetery. Eventually revenues contributed to the perpetual care fund and interest accrued should result in a perpetual fund balance that can sustain the cemetery's maintenance needs.

SUSTAINABILITY:
The purpose of this recommendation by GCAB to increase fees and release graves for sale is to secure financial sustainability for Greenwood Cemetery through the Perpetual Care Fund and reduce the burden on taxpayers. The goal is to grow the Perpetual Care Fund balance to an amount where the accrued interest on a yearly basis covers the cost of maintenance.

PUBLIC COMUNICATIONS:
The Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board meeting notices, agenda packets, and minutes are properly noticed according to the Open Meetings Act. The public is always welcome to participate virtually or in person at GCAB meetings. There were no comments from the public regarding this topic at a GCAB meeting.

SUMMARY:
Due to the depletion of available grave plots under the current release, continued interest in growing the Perpetual Care Fund balance and interest in accommodating persons wishing to secure final resting space in Greenwood Cemetery the release of additional grave plots is recommended.

ATTACHMENTS:
None.

SUGGESTED ACTION:
Make a motion recommending the release of 20% of the remaining inventory which would amount to 15 graves, making 19 graves available for purchase and withholding 60 graves in reserve for a future release and/or grave price evaluation.

BIRMINGHAM
A WALKABLE CITY

Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board
2025 Meeting Dates

January 3, 2025	DO NOT SCHEDULE
February 7, 2025	
March 7, 2025	
April 4, 2025	
May 2, 2025	DO NOT SCHEDULE (possible special election)
June 6, 2025	DO NOT SCHEDULE
July 4, 2025	DO NOT SCHEDULE
August 1, 2025	DO NOT SCHEDULE (possible special election)
September 5, 2025	
October 3, 2025	
November 7, 2025	DO NOT SCHEDULE (general election)
December 5, 2025	

October 2024 Updates

Clerk's Office Update

The City Clerk's office is focused on preparation for the November 5, 2024 General Election.

Cheri Arcome is working with David Carter of Carter's Preservation to begin scheduling the initial phase of budgeted preservation work in the amount of no more than $15,000.

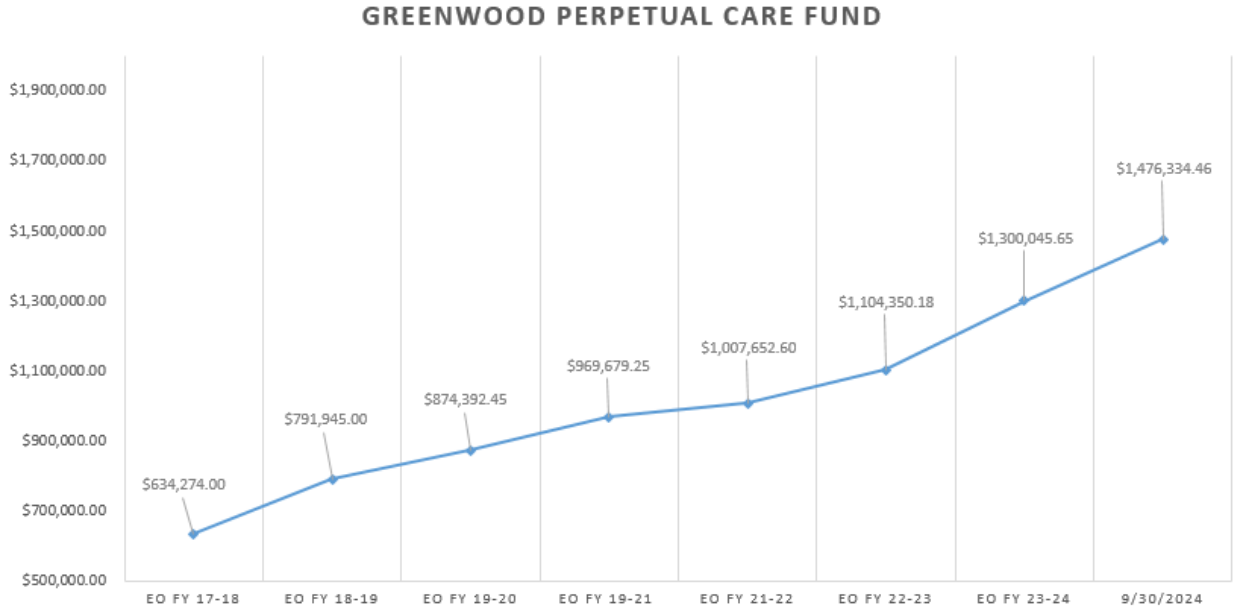
So far two batches of work have been completed amounting to almost $10,000. The remaining work for this budget cycle will be scheduled for the spring in 2025 before the end of the fiscal year.

Pictures of a stone recently impacted by storm damage as discussed at the September GCAB meeting.

DPS Updates

Fall fertilization has been completed, DPS is preparing to schedule fall cleanup. Water is scheduled for shut off the last week of October.

Perpetual Care Fund Update



Cemetery Sales

Greenwood Cemetery Sales and Availability				
	Sec B	Sec C	Resident	Non-Resident
July 2024	4	0	2	2
August 2024	0	0	0	0
September 2024	0	0	0	0
October 2024				
November 2024				
December 2024				
January 2025				
February 2025				
March 2025				
April 2025				
May 2025				
June 2025				
Total Sold				
Available Under Current Authorization (20% of remaining inventory)	**4**			
Total Available	**75**			

Cemetery Burials

	Sec B		Sec C		Other		Total by Month	
	Full	Crem	Full	Crem	Full	Crem	Full	Crem
July 2024	2	0	0	1	1	1	3	2
August 2024	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	2
September 2024	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
October 2024	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1
November 2024								
December 2024								
January 2025								
February 2025								
March 2025								
April 2025								
May 2025								
June 2025								
Totals	3	3	0	1	2	3	5	7

FY 23-24 Grand Totals	
Sales in B	4
Sales in C	0
Sales in Other	0
Resident Purchases	2
Non-Resident Purchases	2
Payment Plans Initiated	0
Total Graves Sold	**4**
Transfer of Ownership Filed	2
Additional Burial Rights Purchased	0