

Fairfield Cemetery Association – Annual Meeting Minutes

October 16, 2019; Bank Board Room, Fairfield, WA; 11:30 am

Read, approved, and corrected by a committee of: Corlee Johnson, John Johnson, and Cindy Williams

Welcome:

President Guy Williams welcomed everyone in attendance to the Fairfield Cemetery Association's 2019 Annual Meeting at 11:40 am. Those in attendance included: Cindy Williams, Vice President: Cheryl Fischer; Secretary/Treasure; and Cemetery Association Members John and Corlee Johnson.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the Annual Meeting held on October 24, 2018 had previously been read, approved, and corrected electronically by a committee of Kerry Schanzenbach, Corlee Johnson, and John Johnson following the meeting when the proceedings were current in everyone's mind. Copies of the minutes were available for review.

Old Business

1. Report on Grounds Contracts for 2018 Ed Huber was not in attendance to give the report, however, Cheryl Loeffler had provided information. She indicated that in the spring the Town Council had awarded a grounds contract for \$2,500. plus, the 8.1% service tax for a total of \$2,702.50 to John Thomas of JET Construction. John has mowed the Cemetery for the past several years and everyone had expressed satisfaction with his work. Information was not provided on whether the Town had sought competitive bids for the Cemetery mowing contract for 2019. This year the Council decided to grant a "flat fee" agreement that was not based on the number of times the Cemetery was mowed and it did not include the fees per type of mow that the Cemetery Board had worked with the Town to establish several years ago in an effort to arrive at a workable system to establish a mowing contract that had a realistic cap on what was spent each year and monitored what work was actually done. The contract we developed with the town over several years enabled us to control costs and have contractual accountability for the mowing at the Cemetery. The fees we had agreed on were \$175 for an East side mow, \$100, for west side, and \$250 to mowing the entire Cemetery. This year the council determined that Mr. Thomas will be paid \$2,702.50 for mowing regardless of what part of the Cemetery or how many times he mows. This was decided without seeking input from the Cemetery Association Board or considering the work that had been done over several years to establish a written contract. Those in attendance agreed that the Cemetery has looked well maintained the past few years but due to budget constraints we can't afford to pay for the mowing that is not needed or completed and the Association would like to return to a contract that provides the specifics of the agreement and budget control due to our limited funds which should always be a concern since it is our responsibility to care for the Cemetery into perpetuity. The Cemetery Mowing Study that was completed in 2010 showed that there was a big difference in the number of mows from one year to the next from 1990-2010. It varied from 9 mows per year (dry years) to 16 mows per season (wet season). From the beginning of July there are portions of the Cemetery that do not need mowing and some years it is the entire Cemetery. The Cemetery Association cannot afford to pay an annual flat rate for what was to have been a cap for the highest cost for mowing on the occasional wet year. Guy will meet with the Mayor to discuss the 2020 mowing contract and our desire to call for bids and to use a contract that enables the Town to pay for only the mowing that is needed and completed. He will check to see if Ed is able to also meet with the mayor.

2. Review progress on Goals approved for 2015-2020. The goals listed below were adopted by the board for the past 5 years and the status is indicated with each goal.

Completed in 2017 - Goal A: Increase the corpus in the INWCF Endowment Fund by \$1,000 each year over the next 5 years by conducting fund-raising efforts with a long-range goal of ultimately having the interest generated from this account increase to the point it covers anticipated expenses of ongoing maintenance of the Fairfield Cemetery. Goal Coordinators: Cheryl Fischer and Kerry Schanzenbach

Completed in 2016 - Goal B: Prepare a marketing packet to share with those interested in purchasing a burial site at the Fairfield Cemetery for local use. The packet should include a form requiring all the information we need for purchasing a lot along with a copy of the Cemetery rules, Association Membership, and the history of the cemetery. After a sample packet has been approved by the board, it will be used for all plot sales and they will be handled through the town office. After a lot is sold, the Town Clerk will scan the form the new member has completed and exchange it electronically with the Association Sexton and Secretary who need the information to complete their jobs. Goal Coordinators: Cheryl Loeffler and Cheryl Fischer

Completed in 2017 - Goal C: Plot Maps: Review, coordinate, and update all plot maps and put them into a computer program that is easy to maintain and update, so it can be used by Guy Williams, Cheryl Loeffler, the Sexton and other board members as needed. Goal Coordinator: Guy Williams

Although this goal was said to have been completed. Corlee Johnson mentioned that she has submitted corrections for the records of her family's gravesite that need to be made on the towns plot maps and she doesn't believe this has been completed.

Goal D: Identify and Locate Family of Abandoned Lot Owners: Toward a goal of getting all Association Members (lot owners) actively and financially involved in the operation and maintenance of the cemetery the board should take one or both of the following actions: 1) Assign a committee with the purpose of identifying and locating immediate family members of those on the "abandoned lots list" by doing research on-line and contacting them to determine their interest in their lots and the active membership in the Fairfield Cemetery Association or donating the lots back to the Association. 2) Continue through the legal procedure (RCW 68.36), which governs the process of reclaiming abandoned lots through the courts. Goal Coordinator: Cheryl Fischer

According to the minutes, the Cemetery Association efforts to located owners of abandoned lots began about 1950. Abandoned Lots are those that appear to be "forgotten" by their families because we haven't heard from any family member or had a burial in over 20 years. The plan was to eventually contact relatives to determine their interest in joining the Association and using the plots. The list of possible "abandoned lots" consisted of about 38 families with 188 plots - where at least 20 or more years had elapsed since the last internment of any immediate family member of the owner of record. In 2013, the Cemetery Board voted to move forward on steps 1 and 2 of the legal process to reclaim unoccupied lots after attorney James Hayner provided the Board with an outline of the required legal steps. However, when the board requested more details on placing the required markers on each plot in question for 3 years and were informed they needed to research a valid address for each of the heirs to demonstrate to the court they had exercised the required "due diligence," the Board put the decision to pursue the five year legal "abandoned lot" process on hold in 2016. Instead, they voted to begin researching valid addresses of the heirs of each of the owners and send them a letter explaining the situation and asking them to indicate their interest in using the lots for their family internments and becoming active members in our Cemetery Association on an enclosed check list so the Cemetery Association could determine the current owner. If they weren't interested, families could donate their share of lots back to the Cemetery as a possible tax deduction as determined by their Tax advisor. The research was undertaken to identify the heirs of four "abandoned plot" owners who together own a total of 64 plots. A letter, approved by the board was sent to each of the families who were related to one of the owners and they were directed to call the President, Guy Williams, if they had questions or wished to discuss the matter. Guy did not receive any phone calls. As the effort to secure addresses and prepare letters to all the heirs was so time intensive and the results were so unproductive the Board determined to put a hold further action.

Goal E: Update and correct the on-line information for the Fairfield Cemetery on Ancestry.com and "Find a Grave" using the instructions provided on those sites to enable those who are doing genealogy and/or want information to easily obtain it on-line by possible add a link from our Cemetery website. Goal Coordinator: Cheryl Loeffler

Cheryl Loeffler added the "Find a Grave" link to the Town of Fairfield Website. It is located at the bottom of the "Cemetery" link welcome statement. However, the information on recent burials at the Fairfield Cemetery still needs to be added to "Find a Grave".

3. Treasurers Report: Final Budget 2016 and 2017; Actual Budget for 2018, and Proposed budget for 2019

Cheryl Fischer circulated a draft of the final Cemetery budget for 2019 and two proposed Cemetery budgets for 2020. Draft #2 of the 2020 budget included the addition of a \$5,000 line item for gopher eradication. The budgets were prepared with the input from Cheryl Loeffler. Cheryl Fischer also distributed a summary of the status of the funds in the Fairfield Cemetery Fund at the Innovia Foundation along with a by quarter report on the corpus from 1999-2020. The budgets for 2019 was reviewed. It was noted that the price of mowing has increased beyond what would be our current annual income at Innovia and we can't afford to pay that every year. In addition, it was noted that the Sexton and Secretary are not collecting their expenses to hold down costs and conserve our funds. Cindy moved we approved the Final Budget for 2019, John seconded the motion and it was carried. As we are a country Cemetery, it was suggested we cap the mowing in the 2020 budget at \$2,000, including service tax and return to the mowing schedule that was based on a review of over 20 years of mowing. The change was made. *When discussing the gopher eradication proposal, those in attendance mentioned we are a country Cemetery surrounded on three sides by fields full of gophers, the legal restrictions involved in gopher eradication outlined in the research we completed in 2010 was reviewed as way a review of the limited funds that we have available to cover maintenance of the Cemetery into perpetuity, Corlee moved to approve Draft #1 of the Proposed Budget that did not include the expenditure for gopher eradication. As we are a country Cemetery, it was suggested we cap the mowing in the 2020 budget at \$2,000, including service tax and return to the mowing schedule that was based on a review of over 20 years of mowing. Guy felt the road around the flagpole needed more gravel and proposed it be added to the budget. These changes were made to the draft budget. With these changes, the motion was seconded by Cindy and approved.

Cheryl Fischer distributed and reviewed the handout on the Innovia Fund. Donations to the fund since 1996 totaled \$54,211.71, Interest generated at Innovia in that period has been \$54,211.71. Grants paid to the Town of Fairfield during portions of this period were \$26,751 for maintenance of the Cemetery. The current balance of the Innovia Fund is \$64,333.52. We pay .01% of the balance each year from the fund for management fees (2019 the management fee was \$492 and in 2020 it was \$538). The Town of Fairfield is only able to receive 4% of a rolling 13 quarter average of the funds annually for Cemetery maintenance into perpetuity. In 2019 that payment would have been \$1,969 for maintenance and in 2020 it would have been \$2,152. Our annual budgets have been exceeding this amount and we are rapidly spending down the CD in Fairfield. It was felt that it will be important to familiarize the council with the restricted funds available that must last into perpetuity and to work with the Council to prepare budgets that match the annual payouts we will ultimately be getting to maintain the Cemetery. Several Board members requested a report on the specific goals and procedures of the Innovia Fund be presented at next year's meeting as well as the year end balance of the CD in the Fairfield Bank from 2010 – 2019.

4. Grounds Maintenance Report and Proposed Projects

Cheryl Loeffler shared that Ed Huber had arranged to have the Cemetery fertilized by plane again this year in the spring. Although this is greatly appreciated, those present thought it would be good to check the benefits of fertilizing since it makes the trees and lawn grow and we are trying to hold down mowing and tree trimming costs. Guy Williams was asked to check with Ed. and see if he could help us look into gopher eradication and spraying the weeds in the roads or the dandelions in the grass during the spring/summer of 2020. All the trees were trimmed in 2018 by Out on a Limb Tree service. During the summer John Thomas, who has the contract to mow the Cemetery, made a presentation to the City Council expressing his concern that the mounds of dirt made by the gophers and the uneven ground at the Cemetery are hard on his equipment and his body. He requested that the Town hire a company to exterminate the gophers and then hire a landscaper to even the ground and then reseed the lawn to give him a smoother ride. The town has not sought any bids for the project to date but asked that the Cemetery Board approve taking \$5,000 out of the savings and budget it for 2020 to cover work on this proposed project. After discussion of this matter as part of the Treasurer's report (see * in #3) this was not approved.

Part of the entrance at the top of the hill had washed away in the winter and it was reported to the office as a safety concern. Cheryl Loeffler notified the County and it has been repaired. The window in the Cemetery Shed that was smashed by vandals in the winter of 2017 was replaced this spring with sheet metal donated by a volunteer so there was no cost to the Cemetery Association. As part of the Town of Fairfield Arbor Day Celebration two maple trees will be planted at the Cemetery where two trees had died. Maples were selected to stay with the current variety and because they have done well without watering – for 125 years!! At last years meeting several Board members noted that when they visited the Cemetery over the summer that there were empty beer bottles thrown in the grass and the trash can had not been emptied. It was suggested at that meeting that because the Cemetery is Town Property, the mayor be asked if the Town grounds person could add the Cemetery to his rounds about once a month and include the status of the Cemetery in the report he makes at the Town Council meeting and in the Town Newsletter. He could also check the trash can and empty it if needed and report any vandalism at the Cemetery. No changes had been made and although Kerry had volunteered to talk with the Mayor, he wasn't in attendance to give a report.

5. Sexton Report (# burials and lots sold in 2017)

Copies of the Sexton report were distributed. In summary, it indicated we had one burial, one memorial stone placed, and, to date, the Cemetery had not sold any lots in the past four years. The exact placement of the stones were not listed on the report. As there was no income noted in the 2019 budget for Sexton's fees collected, the board wondered if the sexton fees were not being collected by the Town Office or Sexton as outlined in the Cemetery Rules and Regulations. Guy will meet with the sexton to get clarification on both issues. It was requested that the Sexton give a report on the laws in the State of Washington on natural burials and if that is an option for the Fairfield Cemetery and that he contact Northwest Monuments on Sprague to see what can be done to correct our two leaning monuments.

The sexton Interment report was as follows:

List of those Interred at Fairfield Cemetery 2010 through 10/2019

2010

Tiffani Lewis, (1992) 9- 20-2010, Lot 19 site 23 * (lot sold with funeral home payment)
Levi Garratt Larrison, (1992) Sept 18, 2010, Lot 19 site 23
1 Lot sold to Ed and Jennifer Huber for B. J. Schindler, Lot 4 site 4.
1 Lot sold to MayLynn Curtis for Tiffani Lewis and Levi Larrison, Lot 19 site 23

2011

Derald Denny Bozarth, (1930), Feb. 11, 2011, Lot 83 site 14 – Veteran
Carolyn Catherine Welk, (1939) April 7, 2011, Lot 112 site 10
Brant Ames Thieren, (1974) August 4, 2010, Lot 3 site 6 – Veteran
Marc Richard Roecks, (1953) Nov. 14, 2011, Lot 68 site 7
1 Lot sold to Thieren Family for Brant Thieren, Lot 3 site 6

2012

Claire "Marty" Boleck, (6-21-1942) Jan. 13, 2012, Lot 2 site 3
George Boleck, (1940) March 2000, (Interred 2012) Lot 2 site 4 - Veteran
Frances Lorraine Montange, (1923) 2012, Lot 40 site 1
Jackie Huber Fuller, (1945) 1994 (interred 2012), Lot 2 site 9.
1 Lots sold to Al Fuller for Jackie Huber Fuller, Lot 2 site 9.

2013

Alfred Weyen, (4-8-23) March 20, 2013, Lot 43, site 3 - Veteran
Barbara Browning (1929) 2013 Lot 40 site 22 (Memorial)
Dorothy Ostheller, (1925) 2013, Lot 109 site 15
Lester Gerhauser, (1924) 2012 (interred 2013), Lot 130, site 16 - Veteran
8 gravesites sold to Joseph Ostheller, Lot 110 sites 17-24

2014

Carol Ann Ostheller, (1942) 2014 Lot 108 site 4
Gerald Holt (1930) 2014 Lot 69 site 12 (Memorial) Veteran
0 Lots sold

2015

Roger Moore (1937) April, 2015, Lot 83, site 8
Mario Rosetti, (1940) 2015, Lot 19, site 15 - Veteran
Bonnie Roecks Duncan (9-21-1940) July, 2015, Lot 107 site 9

1 lot sold to Deborah Hipple, Lot 56, site 1, for herself

2016

Barbara White Davis (6-28-1938) August, 8, 2016, Lot 40 site 18
0 Lots sold

2017

Gary Ostheller (2-7-1937) December 18, 2016, Lot 108, site 2 – Veteran
Alan Roecks (2-15-47) July 6, 2017, Lot 68, site 8
0 Lots Sold

2018

James Stuart Waugh (4-29-1929) January 17, 2018, Lot 85, site 7/15
Charles Brewster (4-1-1991) April 5, 2018, Lot 43, Site 9
0 Lots sold

2019

Emmy Gerhauser (6-30-1931) June 5, 2019, Lot 108109?, site 16
David Lasz (6-24-1949) January 27, 1917, next to Harry Lasz?? (Memorial)
0 Lots sold

6. Selection of Cemetery Goals for 2020-2025

A list of goals that have been proposed and accomplished since 2010 were distributed so board and association members could see what had been accomplished and use them to consider new goals to propose for 2020 -2025. It was suggested we draft a goal of working more closely with the Town Council so we provide more support and share what the Association has learned in operating the Cemetery for 130 years by giving presentations at 2 or more meetings a year. It was also suggested we draft a goal to working more closely with the Town of Fairfield and to participate in their events, like the Veterans Wall event. Another goal suggested was to get some additional local people interested in serving on the board.

7. Review of Cemetery Rules and Regulations: After discussion, Corlee moved and Cindy seconded that everyone read the Cemetery Rules and Regulations and bring suggestions for changes to the next year's meeting when all board members are in attendance. It was approved. Copies of the current Rules were circulated.

8. Selection of Dates for: 2019 Annual Meeting and Memorial Cleanup/flowers placement

As two of the five board members were unable to attend, it was decided to wait to select the date of the Annual meeting in 2020 until Guy had an opportunity to discuss a more convenient time and date for the annual meeting with those that were absent. Sat Oct 7th and Oct. 10th were suggested as they wouldn't interfere with work. He will also check to see what dates are best for grave cleaning, Cemetery cleanup and flag and flower placement by Veterans graves. Those present suggested either the Friday or Sat. the week before Memorial Day (May 15-16) or the weekend of (May 22-23).

9. Election of Officers: Cemetery Board of Directors, 2019

After discussion, it was determined that the board election will be conducted electronically before January 1, 2020 after Guy and Cindy have talked with several Association members that were nominated to determine their interest in serving on the board.

10. Other Items: As there were no other items, the meeting was adjourned at 1:50pm

