



**CITY OF DENISON
CEMETERY ADVISORY BOARD
AGENDA**

Tuesday, March 5, 2024

After determining that a quorum is present, the Cemetery Advisory Board of the City of Denison, Texas will convene in a Regular Meeting on **Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at 2:00 PM** in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 300 W. Main Street, Denison, Texas at which the following items will be considered:

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Citizens may speak on items listed on the Agenda. A “Request to Speak Card” should be completed and returned to the City Clerk upon arrival, prior to the Board reaching the Public Comment section of the agenda. Citizen comments are limited to three (3) minutes, unless otherwise required by law. Comments related to the Public Hearings listed below will be heard when the specific hearing starts.

3. ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

Citizens may speak on items listed on this agenda as Items for Individual Consideration. A “Request to Speak Card” should be completed and returned to the Board Secretary before the Board considers the item listed under Items for Individual Consideration. Citizen comments on Items for Individual Consideration are limited to three (3) minutes.

- A. Receive a report, hold a discussion, and take action on approving the Minutes from the Cemetery Advisory Board Meeting held on November 14, 2023.
- B. Receive a report, hold a discussion, and take action on the selection of the color and style of brick or rock for the columns in the Cemetery Fence Project.

4. STAFF UPDATES

- A. Receive a report and hold a discussion regarding 2023-2024 projects and events.

5. ADJOURNMENT

CERTIFICATION

I do hereby certify that a copy of this Notice of Meeting was posted on the front windows of City Hall readily accessible to the general public at all times and posted on the City of Denison website on the 1st day of March 2024.

Karen L. Avery, Deputy City Clerk

In compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, the City of Denison will provide for reasonable accommodations for persons attending Cemetery Advisory Board. To better serve you, requests should be received 48 hours prior to the meetings. Please contact the City Clerk's Office at 903-465-2720, Ext: 2437.



**CITY OF DENISON
CEMETERY ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES**

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Announce the presence of a quorum.

Board Members present were Board Chair Kris McKinney, Vice Chair Horace Groff, Board Member Anne Gary. Board members Obie Greenleaf and Janet Gott were not present.

Staff present were Justin Eastwood, Director of Parks and Recreation, Chip Egger, Parks Administrative Superintendent, Virginia Cantrell, Management Assistant of Parks and Recreation, Victor Ricano, Foreman of Fairview Cemetery, and Sherry Chance-Parrish, Administrative Assistant of Fairview Cemetery.

1. CALL TO ORDER

CALL TO ORDER

- A. Board Chair Kris McKinney called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM.
- B. Chris Wallentine, City Clerk, administered Statement of Officer and Oath of Office to newly reappointed Cemetery Advisory Board Member Anne Gary.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Request to Speak Cards were returned to the City Clerk by this point in the meeting. Therefore, no public comments were received.

3. ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

- A. Receive a report, hold a discussion, and take action on approving the Minutes from the Cemetery Advisory Board Meeting held on June 13, 2023.

Board Action

On motion by Vice Chair Horace Groff, seconded by Board Member Anne Gary, the Cemetery Advisory Board unanimously approved the Minutes from the Cemetery Advisory Board Meeting held on June 13, 2023.

- B. Receive a report, hold a discussion, and take action on the 2024 Cemetery Advisory Board meeting dates.

Board Action

Justin Eastwood, Parks and Recreation Director, provided an outline of proposed dates for future Cemetery Advisory Board meetings based on Board Member availability. Mr. Eastwood stated the proposed dates could be taken up together or separately for regular sessions. Mr. Eastwood explained that there would likely be an additional special session held early in 2024 in order to finalize the fence project design options.

On motion by Board Member Anne Gary, seconded by Vice Chair Horace Groff, the Cemetery Advisory Board unanimously approved the following dates for 2024 meetings:

Tuesday, March 5, 2024, at 2:00 pm

Tuesday, June 11, 2024, at 2:00 pm

Tuesday, September 10, 2024 at 2:00 pm

Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 2:00 pm

- C. Receive a report, hold a discussion, and take action on design options for the Cemetery Fence Project.

Board Action

Chip Egger provided a video outline of the four proposed design options for the gate of the Fence Project. The drawings were provided by Huitt Zollars. There were designs for the columns and the entry gates, however Mr. Egger pointed out that the column design had already been decided, and that the veneer, caps and signage designs will be discussed and decided on during an upcoming special session.

Option A (on the left – aka Option numbers 1 and 2) is the gate opening with a section of wrought iron fencing between the column and a somewhat square, flat-capped section of brick or stone. The signage on Option A is applied directly to the brick or stone veneer.

Option B (on the right – aka Option numbers 3 and 4) is the gate opening with a column directly attached to a long, arched section of brick or stone. The signage on Option B is on a matching arched plate, then the name of the cemetery is applied to the base plate.

On motion by Board Member Horace Groff, seconded by Vice Chair Anne Gary, the Cemetery Advisory Board unanimously approved Option number 3 for the design of the entry gate.

4. STAFF UPDATES

- A. Receive a report and hold a discussion regarding Fiscal Year 23/24 projects and events.

Chip Egger provided more information on the Fence project. He explained how the cemetery gates will be situated, and that they will be automated at Fairview because it is staffed. The gate at Magnolia will be manually operated. There will be video monitoring

at Fairview. The gates will close when the cemetery is not staffed. The gates will still allow people to leave even when they stay after dusk.

Mr. Egger outlined the Fence Project timeline which is projected to start in the Spring of 2024. The current funds allow Magnolia to be taken to completion, and the remaining funds will allow for all the entrances at Fairview. Future funding will be used for the remaining fencing. Some of the Grants have specific timelines and the cemetery may have to apply for more grants.

Mr. Egger reminded the Board of the upcoming 6th Annual Wreaths Across America Event at Fairview on Saturday, December 16, 2023. The event is sponsored and funded by the American Legion Post 62 and the Preston Trails DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) event. The Board members received official posters that can be copied and posted wherever they are allowed. The poster contains a QR code which points sponsors to sponsor wreaths specifically for Fairview Cemetery. Sherry Parrish explained that the QR code on the poster is linked to the American Legion, and that the NSDAR QR code is on the back of the cards they distributed at the Garden event the previous Saturday.

Mr. Egger noted that these wreaths are not provided by Fairview and are only available by sponsorship. The American Legion has requested 1,500 wreaths for the 2023 event. In 2022, based on the Veterans identified so far in the database at Fairview, only 900 were requested. Again, this is due to the ongoing project of identifying and digitizing the data, and as the Veterans are identified, the list continues to grow. Mr. Egger encouraged the board to distribute the flyers and help with sponsorship as much as possible.

Mr. Egger then gave an update on the CemSites software project. The project is well within the final stages and was the largest planned project for 2023. The software will go live within a few weeks with beta testing beginning shortly after installation. The project included digitizing over 29,000 records, scanning in over 5,000 Deeds to Laserfiche, and reviewing and processing over 22,000 paper records in the cemetery office. To date, 1,774 Veterans have been verified at Fairview and an additional 73 Veterans at Magnolia.

Mr. Egger outlined the 2023 staff accomplishments including attendance at the San Antonio Conference by the Texas Cemeteries and Crematories Association. Mr. Egger mentioned that there was a good deal of valuable information presented at the conference.

Mr. Egger commended Foreman Victor Ricano and the utility staff for completing the renovation of the iron bridge at Fairview. Mr. Groff offered a history on the bridge. It was part of a State incentive to identify insufficient bridges, and when they were removed. The archivist named them as historical and said they had to be placed elsewhere and not destroyed. One of them was placed at Waterloo and Loy Lake (which is still in place). And the one at Fairview was placed over the creek to preserve it. Mr. Egger asked if there was a way to find out more about the “off system bridge” project. He would like to have a sign placed on it as historical.

Mr. Egger also commended Mr. Ricano and the utility staff on renovating a scrapped tool box into a useful utility trailer to move tents, chairs and lowering devices to gravesites. The trailer was acquired from the City auction pile, then repainted and retooled. It even acquired a City of Denison logo which makes it look very professional. Mr. Egger pointed

out that the staff's resourcefulness saved the City a lot of money – this trailer would have cost the City at least \$20K if purchased new.

Mr. Egger also commended Mr. Ricano for assisting the Texoma Workforce with their Summer Earn and Learn program (SEAL) by organizing and mentoring young people with work projects at the cemetery. He received a very nice letter from Texoma Workforce thanking him for his assistance and engagement in the project.

Mr. Egger outlined the budgeted items that were approved and expected to begin in 2024. One was the Pre-emergent Program to take control of weeds in all cemeteries. This will reduce the need for such frequent mowing, and it will save a lot of money on the cost of weed-eating and mowing. This may take 1-2 years to make a visible impact, but once established, it will be maintained every year to keep the grounds in good condition.

More funding approvals were discussed including new equipment such as mowers, excavating equipment, and road maintenance for Oakwood and Magnolia gravel areas. Board member Anne Gary pointed out that the roads in Fairview are also in need of repair, and Mr. Egger stated that he will continue to work on that project and funding. He explained that the requested funding for Fairview was not approved this year. The County can help with an interlocal agreement if the cost for the materials could be approved.

Chair Kris McKinney asked if the City Council knows how much has been raised by Grants for the Fence Project, and Mr. Egger deferred to Justin Eastwood. Mr. Eastwood stated that although he has not personally presented to Council on the subject, they are aware because this is an important project to the Mayor.

Ms. McKinney commended Mr. Ricano on an excellent job of developing his staff and managing projects at the cemetery. She also mentioned that she is interested in establishing a volunteer effort at Fairview, and that Peggy Gardner (Coffman-Layne Volunteer Project) offered to help train volunteers but did not want to be involved in the actual work as Coffman-Layne takes a lot of time. Mr. Egger explained how the volunteer effort at Coffman-Layne began and how to initiate a volunteer project. He used the Adopt-a-Park model for submitting a request, and then Ms. Gardner used that as a basis for making a volunteer project request. He pointed the board to Peggy Gardner and said that she has all of the information needed to initiate the effort. Ms. McKinney asked if Mr. Egger would share what was presented by Ms. Gardner at the last request. The board seemed interested in how to clean stones, and Mr. Egger cautioned that there are several methods for several types of stones – there is not one method that cleans them all – and that would have to be submitted in detail on a proposal for volunteers. Anne Gary pointed to a Dallas Morning News article about restoring stones, and asked if restoration was possible. Mr. Egger was hesitant to speak on the subject because of the liabilities involved.

Ms. McKinney asked if they could be trained on cleaning and restoring and Mr. Egger said that several new techniques that were discussed at the San Antonio Conference. There are a lot of cleaning products and methods but did not mention that this could be accomplished by volunteers. Ms. McKinney appointed Anne Gary to coordinate a volunteer project at Fairview. Ms. Gary asked if Spring was the best time to start and Mr. Egger stated that gathering and organizing a volunteer group is a year-round effort – he prefers a short project within a quarter to a year.

Ms. McKinney commended the cemetery office staff for the software migration work completed to date. Mr. Groff added that it would be appropriate for the City Public Information Officer to conduct a press release on the accomplishments at some point.

There being no further business to come before the Cemetery Advisory Board, the meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

KRIS McKINNEY, Board Chair

ATTEST
