

Saratoga Cemetery District
Board of Trustees
Minutes – July 15, 2009
Multi-Purpose Room, Oak Street School
14592 Oak Street, Saratoga, CA 95070

1. CALL TO ORDER:

1.1 Meeting called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairwoman Victoria Bosworth.

2. ROLL CALL:

2.1 Trustees present: Victoria Bosworth, Jim Sorden, Judy Johnstone and Gregory Fox.
Trustee absent: Jane Hopkins. Staff present: Gary Reed and Tim Zadel.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:

3.1 Judy Johnstone said that Jane Hopkins requested a word correction on item 9.2.

Vicky

Bosworth said that since Jane was not present that Judy would have to request the correction. Judy Johnstone requested a correction to item 9.2 but did not know what the correct wording should be. Approval of the minutes continued to the August Board meeting.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

4.1 Fifteen members of the public attended the meeting plus Pattie DeMelloPine from Supervisor Liz Kniss' office.

John Teeter asked when the results of the master plan questionnaire would be available.
Judy Johnstone responded that it would be presented at the August Board meeting.
Jill Hunter asked that the board meeting be changed to another day since it conflicts with the City Council meeting.

5. AGENDA CHANGES:

5.1 None.

6. COMMUNICATIONS:

6.1 Written: Staff presented:

a) Four buy notices from Wachovia Securities for bonds that were added to the District's portfolio.

b) A resolution and election ballot from the SDRMA for the election of members to the the SDRMA Board of Directors. There are eight candidates running for four open seats. Chairwoman Vicky Bosworth told staff to include the information in the August board packet and agendize for the August board meeting.

6.2 Oral:

a) Staff reported that former Board member Phillip Boyce called the office to inquire if Jane Hopkins was participating in Board decisions. Staff responded that she was. Mr. Boyce said that he was lodging a complaint to the Board due to her ownership of real property within 500 feet of the cemetery and other properties which have been or

7/15/09

6.2 Oral: continued:

may be subject to Board actions and she has failed to recuse herself. Mr. Boyce stated that he intends to file a complaint with the FPPC.

b) Staff presented semi-annual burial and sales statistics.

Compared to last year, full grave sales were up 16%, half grave sales were down 62.5%, and niche sales were down 26.7%. Full burials were up 26.7%, cremation burials were down 13.3%, and niche inurnments were down 37.5%.

Using 21 year averages: full grave sales were 33.3% below average, half grave sales were 36.8% below average, and niche sales were 24.8% below average. Total burials were 14.7% above average, full burials were 7% above average, cremation burials were 19.9% above average, and niche inurnments were 36.4% above average.

Using 10 year averages: full grave sales were 27.9% below average, half grave sales were 42.7% below average, and niche sales were 39.2% below average. Total burials were 6.3% above average, full burials were 4.6% above average, cremation burials were 10.8% above average, and niche inurnments were 2% above average.

7. CONTRACTORS AND PURVEYORS ATTENDING:

7.1 None

8. GROUNDSKEEPING AND MAINTENANCE REPORT:

8.1 Staff reported that:

a) A notice was received from San Jose Water Company that a backflow preventer had failed testing. Staff had it repaired.

b) The rental house sewer/drain pipe has been repeatedly clogged by roots. After rooting out the drain several times staff called a professional company to evaluate the problem. It was found that the pipe was broken outside the house and was filled with roots. Staff had the pipe repaired and an outside cleanout installed.

d) Binkley Associates has completed the engineering drawings and bidding documents for connecting the new well to the existing water system. Staff will solicit bids for performing the work.

e) Steve Smith from PG&E called today to say that the easement documents for supplying power to the new well were completed and would be mailed next week. The documents require the signature of an official from the Home of Christ Church on Lomita Avenue and the signature needs to be notarized. Staff will arrange for the signing of the documents.

9. CONTINUING BUSINESS:

9.1 Staff reported annual returns on the District's four investment accounts: Endowment Interest 4.94%, Endowment Principal 4.65%, Pre-Need 4.86%, and Land Acquisition and Capital Improvement 3.97%. It was also reported that the transfer of funds from Maintenance and Operations to Land Acquisition and Capital Improvements approved at the June Board meeting was accomplished.

7/15/09

9.2 Judy Johnstone thought that figures provided by EDA Land Planning concerning the longevity of the cemetery might be confusing. She did a statistical analysis of grave site availability and interments and presented it to the Board. She estimated that with the existing property that the cemetery owns, the life of the cemetery (based on availability of grave sites) should be between 45 and 68 years. See report for details.

Jim Sorden said that statistical averages are representations of what happened in the past and do not necessarily reflect what will happen the future.

Greg Fox said he thought the special meeting presentation was very poor, that we had spent a lot of money, over \$25,000, and received little value for it. He suggested ending the District's relationship with EDA Land Planning with the completion of the current contract.

9.3 Review of policy concerning placing stones on headstones: Vicky Bosworth said the Jewish section of Oak Hill Cemetery allowed placing stones only on the upright (die) portion of a monument but picks them up when they fall off. Continued to next meeting.

10. NEW BUSINESS:

10.1 Review of temporary marker policy continued to next meeting.

10.2 Judy Johnstone stated that the web site is up and running but is at the point where it needs to be set up so staff can add the monthly agenda and minutes. Also, the burial data base will need to be added when it is completed. Staff said the data base should be ready in about six months depending on the work load. Judy said the funds allocated for setting up the web site have been expended and additional funds are needed. She thought that \$600.00 should be sufficient to finish the work. Greg Fox moved to approve \$600.00 in additional funds for the web site. Second by Jim Sorden. Unanimous.

10.3 The Board discussed moving part of the Land Acquisition and Capital Improvement funds from the County to investment accounts. Staff said that \$800,000 in funds could be moved to LAIF or the Wells Fargo investment account. Funds with LAIF typically earn a little less than at Wells Fargo but are more readily accessible if needed for capital improvement projects. Funds with Wells Fargo typically earn more interest but there is a penalty if a bond is sold before its maturity to access the funds. Jim Sorden moved to transfer \$800,000 in Land Acquisition and Capital Improvement funds from the County and deposit \$400,000 with LAIF and \$400,000 with Wells Fargo. Second by Greg Fox. Unanimous.

10.4 The Board discussed changing the day, week and time of the board meetings. The Board opened the question for public discussion. Both Tuesdays and Thursdays were mentioned as alternative days, while 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. were suggested as alternative times. Continued to the next board meeting.

10.5 Vicky Bosworth said that all the Board Policies should be reviewed. Vicky and Greg Fox volunteered to be on a committee to review the policies. Continued to next Board meeting.

11. CLOSED SESSION:

11.1 None Scheduled.

12. BOARD SIGNATURES:

12.1 Board signed Certificates of Ownership of Burial Rights and warrants.

13. ADJOURNMENT:

13.1 Meeting adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

Gary T.S. Reed, General Manager

Victoria Bosworth, Chairman

James Sorden, Vice-Chairman

Judy Johnstone, Financial Officer

Gregory T. Fox, Trustee

Jane Hopkins, Trustee

7/15/09