OFFICE OF CEMETERY OVERSIGHT

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON CEMETERY OPERATIONS

MINUTES

DATE: October 21, 2021

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

PLACE: Mount Olivet Cemetery 515 S Market St, Frederick, MD 21701

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Porter called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Frank Porter, Chair

Craig Huff

Ronald Pearcey

David Zinner

Erich March

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Walter Tegeler

Bruce Hultquist

Rebecca Edmiston

J. Michael Bennett

Yvonne Fisher

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Deborah Rappazzo- Executive Director, Office of Cemetery Oversight

John Hart- Assistant Attorney General, Office of Cemetery Oversight

Leila Whitley-Administrative Aide, Office of Cemetery Oversight

Dreama Anderson- Investigator, Office of Cemetery Oversight

**STAFF ABSENT:**

Jay Wilson- Financial compliance Administrator, Office of Cemetery Oversight

**GUEST SPEAKERS:**

* Ronald Pearcey, Mount Olivet Superintendent
* Chris Haugh, Mount Olivet Community Relations & Historic-Preservation Manager
* Secretary Robert L. Green, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
* Commissioner Gregory J. Morgan, Occupational and Professional Licensing

**VISITORS:**

* Lieutenant Tera Reed, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
* Nanette Markey, Friends of Mount Olivet Cemetery
* Sylvia Sears, Friends of Mount Olivet Cemetery

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Porter called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

**MINUTES**

The minutes from September 23, 2021 were reviewed, but not approved. Minutes will be revisited for approval at our December 2, 2021 meeting.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Executive Director Rappazzo extended a welcome to all attendees of the Office of Cemetery Oversight’s Advisory Council Meeting. A special “Thank You” was extended to the staff of Mount Olivet for hosting the Advisory Council meeting.

* **Mount Olivet Cemetery-History, Events and Restoration**

**Presentation by Ronald Pearcey, Cemetery Superintendent and Chris Haugh, Community Relations & Historic-Preservation Manager**

Council Member Pearcey shared with the Council an overview of the restoration training that was held at Mount Olivet Cemetery in October 2021, for the returning citizens working on the River View Restoration Project in Williamsport, Maryland. A credited gravestone conservator and preservation mason, Jon Appell, delivered the weeklong training to the group. The on hands training taught the group work skills from cleaning stones to restoring broken memorials as well as up righting fallen and slanting ones. By the end of training, the group not only completed restoration work to approximately 80 memorials, each participant received a certificate for their accomplishments.

Chris Haugh, shared with the Council Mount Olivet Cemetery’s extensive history as well as the many programs offered to the public. A few of these programs are as follows:

* + “Stories in Stone”- Once a month a memorial in the cemetery is identified and a story is written about this individual’s life.
  + Self-guided tours-Visitors are able to listen to the wayside interpretive panels to obtain background information on the cemetery and notable individuals residing within such as Francis Scott Key. In addition, special history walking tours can be provide along with lecture presentations.
  + Friends of Mount Olivet Cemetery-This group is responsible for not only helping to clean memorials throughout the cemetery, but assist with special events and anniversary commemorations.
* **River View Cemetery Restoration Project Overview and Updates,**

**Presentation by Secretary Robert L. Green, Department of Public Safety and Correctional Service**

Secretary Green shared with the Council his involvement with the River View Cemetery Restoration Project along with how this project benefits returning citizens and our communities. He stressed the importance of providing returning citizens with work skills that will enable them to obtain gainful employment.

Secretary Green extended a thank you to the Office of Cemetery Oversight, Mount Olivet Cemetery, Tegeler Monument Company, Jon Appell and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services for working together to establish the initial restoration project at River View Cemetery.

In ending, Secretary Green stated he is looking forward to collaborating with the Department of Labor to formalize a Cemetery Restoration Program for returning citizens.

* **Remarks, Presented by Commissioner Gregory J. Morgan, Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing**

Commissioner Morgan thanked Secretary Green for coming and sharing his passion pertaining to the River View Cemetery Restoration Project along with his ideas of developing an ongoing training program for returning citizens.

Commissioner Morgan commented to arranging a meeting between other divisions under the Department of Labor to establish a joint program between the Department of Labor and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to address the need to implement a program such as this for returning citizens.

Commissioner Morgan informed the Council, that the Office of Occupational and Professional Licensing would be moving to 1100 N. Eutaw Street, in the beginning of 2022.

Executive Director Rappazzo provided Council Members with copies of the following documents:

* Perpetual Care Trust-Distribution Of Income Election and Conversion Application Form
* Copy of the Office of Cemetery Oversight’s Budget - (FY 2014-FY 2025)
* Riverview Cemetery, Williamsport, Maryland, History written by Sandra Izer, Williamsport History Museum, Williamsport Area Historical Association
* Copy of “OCO Report”, article about the River View Cemetery Restoration Project

If anyone has any questions pertaining to these documents, please send me an email and/or bring your questions to our next meeting on December 2, 2021.

**INVESTIGATOR’S, REPORT:**

Deferred to December 2, 2021 meeting.

**FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE ADMINISTRATOR’s Report:**

Deferred to December 2, 2021 meeting.

**LICENSING SPECIALIST’S REPORTS:**

Deferred to December 2, 2021 meeting.

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:**

John Hart, AAG shared with the Council that HB 5/ SB192 HB Cemeteries - Perpetual Care - Distribution From Perpetual Care Trust Fund-passed and became effective on October 1, 2021. The Office has updated their website to include the new “Perpetual Care Trust – Distribution of Income Election and Conversion Application Form”. As of date, the Office has not received any applications for consideration.

Council Member March posed a question surrounding the new Perpetual Care Trust law asking if the Office of Cemetery Oversight will be providing investment guidance. John Hart, AAG responded to the question, noting that the Office of Cemetery Oversight does not currently provide investment guidance to its registrants and this practice will continue going forward.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None

**COUNCIL CONCERNS:**

None

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

A question was presented to the Council from the floor pertaining to if a cemetery is allowed to charge for a second right of interment. A response was provided that the Office of Cemetery Oversight dose not regulate pricing. However, this fee is a usual and customary charge within the death care industry.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the meeting adjournedat 11:45 A.M.

Motion- David Zinner and 2nd-Craig Huff

The next monthly business meeting is Thursday, December 2, 2021.

APPROVED AS PRESENTED \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Frank Porter, Chair

APPROVED AS AMENDED \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Frank Porter, Chair