

Cherokee County Cemetery Preservation Committee

Meeting Minutes

13 January 2014

Cherokee County Administration Building

Business Center Conference Room

Canton, Georgia

Members Present: Harold Silvey, Jean Vredenburg, Loriann White, and Reuben Wilson

Members Not Present: John Cadle

Staff Present: Michael Chapman and Margaret Stallings

The committee meeting began at 9:05 am.

The committee welcomed back Ms. Stallings after being on maternity leave.

Mr. Chapman informed the committee that he received an e-mail from Mr. Cadle indicating that he would be unable to attend the committee meeting.

Ms. White asked if it would be appropriate for the committee to establish some by-laws to govern the committee. Ms. White thought that as the committee grows and takes on more responsibilities it may be useful to have some adopted by-laws. Ms. White also suggested that an attendance policy could be incorporated into the by-laws. Ms. Stallings said that she could provide examples of by-laws used by existing Cherokee County committees.

Ms. White inquired about the possibility of changing the committee's meeting time. Because Mr. Cadle is a Cherokee County school bus driver, it is often difficult for him to regularly attend committee meetings. Ms. Stallings noted that the one constraint to rescheduling the meeting is that the meetings not occur on weeks when the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners meet. Mr. Chapman said that weeks when the Board of Commissioners meet are often quite busy for staff. Mr. Chapman said he would e-mail a contact list to all committee members so they can discuss new potential meeting times among themselves. A decision to reschedule future committee meetings was not made.

Ms. White and Ms. Stallings discussed the evolving role of the Cemetery Preservation Committee. Ms. Stallings noted that originally the committee was established because of rapid growth and development in Cherokee County. The committee was formed because of a fear that small, private cemeteries could be damaged or destroyed as Cherokee County rapidly developed. However, during the recession of 2008-2009 development pressure in Cherokee County eased considerably and the committee began to take on other duties. The committee is still responsible for reviewing development projects near cemeteries but also carries out community service and advocacy type activities related to cemeteries.

Mr. Chapman asked Ms. White about the status of her grant application to the R.J. Taylor, Jr. Foundation for Enon Cemetery. The foundation promotes genealogical research in Georgia by providing grants to individuals and organizations to defray the cost of publishing approved projects (print and digital). Ms. White submitted the grant application at the end of December and the foundation will notify her by e-mail as to their decision. Ms. White furnished a copy of the application to the committee.

Ms. White asked if Ms. Stallings or Mr. Chapman had any contacts with cemetery preservation organizations in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Neither Ms. Stallings nor Mr. Chapman have any contacts related to cemetery preservation in Chattanooga. Ms. Stallings pointed out that multi-state Planning can be difficult because of the different rules and regulations in each state.

Ms. Vredenburgh asked about status of the Cherokee County Historic Preservation ordinance. Ms. Stallings said that Jeff Watkins (director of the Planning and Land Use Department) sent a draft of the ordinance to the Commissioners for their review. Ms. Stallings said the Board of Commissioners may discuss the Historic Preservation ordinance at their January 21 work session. Ms. Vredenburgh asked if the committee should attend the work session as a show of support for the Historic Preservation ordinance. Mr. Chapman said that would be a very good idea.

Ms. White asked if the committee's webpage could be improved. Mr. White said that the committee's webpage on the Cherokee County website is difficult to access and does not provide much information. Ms. Stallings said that she and Mr. Chapman would revise the committee's webpage in February after Cherokee County's Information Technology Services Agency completes upgrades and changes to the county's computer system.

Ms. White asked where grant money would be deposited if the committee were awarded any funds. Ms. Stallings would unsure where the money would be deposited but it would be important to note that those funds belong only to the Cemetery Preservation Committee. Ms. Stallings suggested that the Cherokee County Animal Shelter may offer some examples because that organization receives donations.

Ms. White asked about Heritage Trees and how they are designated. A Heritage Tree is determined to be of unique and intrinsic value to the general public because of its size, age, historic association, unique species to the region, ecological value or any tree designated a Georgia State Champion, United States Champion or World Champion by the American Forestry Association. The Cherokee County Board of Commissioners can designate a tree as a Heritage Tree. If the tree is on private property the property owner must approve of the designation. Ms. White raised the possibility of designating several trees as Heritage Trees in Riverview Cemetery in Canton. Ms. White suggested that the tree could be designated and named in honor of some of the "Founding Families" of Cherokee County. Ms. Stallings suggested that, because Riverview Cemetery is located in Canton, the committee partner with Canton on such a project. Ms. Stallings also suggested partnering with the Cherokee County Historical Society. Ms. White asked committee members to consider other tree which could be designated as Heritage Trees.

Mr. Silvey said that he recently tried to locate a cemetery in the southern part of Cherokee County but was unable to locate it. Ms. Stallings asked Mr. Silvey to stay after the meeting adjourned in order to look at Cherokee County's online map and see if the cemetery could be located using aerial photographs. Ms. Stallings said that during an upcoming meeting she and Mr. Chapman could provide the committee with a tutorial on using Cherokee County's online map program. In the meantime, Mr. Chapman said he would e-mail the committee a link to the online map program.

Mr. Silvey said that he was still exploring options for identification badges for committee members. Mr. Chapman said that he and Ms. Stallings had recently discussed identification badges and plan to use the equipment at the Development Service Center to make badges. The Development Service Center makes similar badges for solicitors and taxi drivers.

Ms. White asked when the committee should update the cemetery surveys completed in the last few years. Mr. Chapman noted that this topic had come up before; however, there was no consensus as to

when updates should be made to the surveys. Ms. Stallings suggested possibly every three years. Ms. Stallings also said that it would be helpful to update the GPS coordinates at all cemeteries because the county's existing cemetery GPS data has many errors. The Cherokee County GIS department has equipment which can accurately capture GPS data.

Mr. Wilson pointed out that the committee did not approve the December 2013 meeting minutes at the beginning of today's meeting. Mr. Wilson made a motion to approve the December 2013 meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Vredenburgh. The motion to approve the minutes was unanimously approved by the committee.

Having no further business Mr. Wilson made a motion to adjourn the Cemetery Preservation Committee meeting. Mr. Silvey seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 10:35am.

The next Cherokee County Cemetery Preservation Cemetery Preservation Committee meeting will be 10 February 2014 at the Cherokee County Administration Building in Canton.