



HOWARD COUNTY CEMETERY PRESERVATION ADVISORY BOARD

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Administered by the Department of Planning and Zoning

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March 2025 Minutes

Tuesday, March 11, 2025; 10:00 -11:00 am

The bi-monthly meeting of the Cemetery Preservation Advisory Board was held as a hybrid meeting both virtually as a web meeting/conference call and in person. All cases are public meetings unless otherwise indicated. All inquiries should be made to: 410-313-2350.

Members Present: In person: Katie Myers, Kelly Palich; Virtual: Roberta Kelly,

Members Absent: Kelli Shimabukuro

Staff Present: Beth Burgess

Public: David Zinner; Kyla Cools; St. Marks representatives: Dan Sweeney, Sang Oh, Timothy K. Swygert, Richard T. Roca, Father Chris Tang

January Minutes: Ms. Myers asked the Board to approve the January 2025 minutes. Ms. Palich moved to approve the minutes, and Ms. Kelly seconded. All approved.

General Topics

St. Marks Church addition and cemetery advisory comments.

Mr. Sweeney of Gutschick, Little, & Weber, P.A. representing St. Marks presented the scope of work for the parish hall church addition and the new limit of disturbance (LOD) of the cemetery. Mr. Sweeney stated the church and cemetery were established in 1872 and they function together, one was not there before the other. Mr. Sweeney said the Church keeps very accurate records from when it was built along with the location of the grave plots as well as any burials and can attest that no burials have occurred within 10' of the building footprint. Mr. Sweeney explained the extensive survey work on how the burial grids were established and mapped and how the limit of disturbance was established. Mr. Sweeney explained how the ground penetrating radar (GPR) report flagged 3 anomalies, 2 of which were outside burial plots so excavation was done to ensure there were no human remains and nothing was discovered. As part of the new burial sections, all markers were surveyed and confirmed no burials were in that section. The area omitted from GPR was reserved for the septic system but there are no burials in that area as that parcel was added years later and was not part of the original church and the cemetery property. Proposed improvements for the new parish hall will be set 10 feet off the limit of cemetery boundary. There will be minor grading between the building and the edge of the cemetery boundary for installing footers and downspouts and to address the drainage from the cemetery area running toward the building. St. Marks anticipates

installing a French drain along the limit of disturbance line to minimize the amount of grading on that side of the building.

Mr. Sweeney explained a septic system is not allowed to be under the parking lot as it currently exists so a new septic system is being added to the upper northwest corner of the property that used to be a residential lot. The Church has an approved site plan from 1990 and this addition will be a red line to that plan. Except for a couple minor areas, the previously approved LOD is within the 1990 LOD.

Ms. Palich's only concern was the proposed septic field area and if GPR had been done. Mr. Sweeney said that septic field parcel was added in later years and was not part of the church and did not ever have burials on that parcel. Mr. Sweeney said 5 parcels were combined over the years from the 1880's to 1953. Ms. Palich's concern for burials was relieved knowing this information and confirmation of no burials in that new septic area. Ms. Kelly asked about the 1990's limit of disturbance verses current proposal; she asked for clarification on the couple areas where the building infringes on the line. The CPAB was complimentary to the attention of detail for this site. There were no other comments or concerns for the church addition. The Cemetery Preservation Advisory Board did not have concern for impacts to the burials and the limit of the cemetery boundary.

CPAB Administration/ Board Updates

- Ms. Burgess informed the Board of Ms. Margaret Stella leaving her Planner I role with the County. There are plans to fill the Planner I position and the job is currently advertised.
- Ms. Myers informed the Board of two upcoming events:
 - Oella cemetery is hosting a spring clean-up the first weekend, April 5th.
 - The Coalition to Protect Maryland Burial Sites will be hosting their annual conference in Hagerstown on May 3, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm.
- Ms. Kelly asked if the Board can host a table for the County's Diversity Day. Discussed a few other event options prior to that October date.
- Ms. Burgess shared that Ms. Kyla Cools submitted her Letter of Interest and will be considered for a Board position; she was observing the meeting today. Ms. Cools works for Patapsco Heritage Greenway and has an anthropology background.

Cemetery Grant FY25

- Ms. Burgess updated the Board that the grant packets did go out in February as planned and the schedule is being followed but there was a concern that many of the letters were return undeliverable. There is a concern that this Friday is the grant deadline and no applications have been submitted to date. Ms. Burgess will keep the subcommittee of Ms. Kelly and Ms. Palich looped into applications and a meeting with the Genealogical Society committee members to determine funding. Ms. Kelly asked if the grant deadline should be extended. Ms. Burgess said the MOU includes deadlines so she will follow up with options if no grants are submitted.

State Legislative Updates-

- David Zinner shared updates on six State Bills that a committee of 12 have been working on throughout this year. He summarized each Bill:

- One Bill is to revive the 'check box' for cemetery funding which was objected to last year but Mr. Zinner is hoping to see this Bill go through this year.
- The second Bill was to establish a Commission to identify 15-20 things that could be done to support cemetery's even without money.
- The Penalties Bill is in regards to cemetery desecration and wanting to see a felony charge. Mr. Zinner said the outcome seems to be more of an agreement to make a cemetery crime a misdemeanor with no statute of limitations.
- Mr. Zinner said there is a proposal to create a unified Statewide cemetery inventory involving more information like GIS info and conditions of the site.
- Another Bill is how an abandoned cemetery in a county could have the ability to be turned over to a non-profit in order to be maintained. Also, if an entity wanted to sell property that had a cemetery on it, but change its use, the plan would have to go through a process similar as a request for disinterment that goes through the Office of Cemetery Oversight.
- Finally, there was an Environmental Bill around emissions and crematories. Mr. Zinner said he just testified on allowing non-profit funeral homes. Mr. Zinner said there are sponsors for all of the Bills; Delegate Gary Simmons has supported these Bills. The Bills are still currently in the process of reviews and testimonies. The Governors office may want to pull some of these Bills together. Mr. Zinner stated there has been a lot of hard work on all the legislation this year as the committee has been meeting weekly since July.

P.R.I.N.C.E Updates

- Mr. Zinner said PRINCE is just maintaining since legislation has taken a lot of time. The last large project and training was at St. Peter's cemetery this winter. PRINCE also did some work at Brown's cemetery in Howard County. The program is looking for new sites to work on this year. Funds are needed for this program.

Cemetery Updates-

- Rosa Bonheur: Mr. Zinner mentioned Rosa Bonheur Memorial Park with both human and pet burials has development impacts. The Friends of Rosa Bonheur attended a pre-submission meeting where they were told there was a proposal of a gas station on the front portion of the cemetery. Mr. Zinner said the Office of Cemetery Oversight is trying to determine who owns the site because the Memorial Park is currently unlicensed and needs to be licensed with the State.
- Shipley's Grant: Ms. Palich asked about Shipley's Grant cemetery because Ms. Burgess' contact was given in a public setting. Ms. Burgess was contacted about an owner update. Ms. Palich noted she was made aware of a complaint on the site.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be May 13, 2025 at 10 am both online and at the George Howard Building.

Closing:

Ms. Kelly moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Palich seconded. The motion was unanimously approved at 10:46 am.