

Girdwood Cemetery Committee

Date: August 24, 2023

12PM

Minutes Draft

This meeting is taking place via teams with in-person attendance in the Girdwood Community Room, 250 Egloff Rd.

The Girdwood Board of Supervisors, its committees, and subcommittees are subject to the Alaska Open Meetings Act as found in Alaska Statute 44.62.310 and Anchorage Municipal Code 1.25 - Public Meetings.

The Girdwood Cemetery Committee operates under the Girdwood Public Meetings Standards of Conduct.

Call to order 12PM Tommy O'Malley, Chair

Introduction of Guests: Jack Goodnoe, Cemetery Planner; Bob Ferrell, Anch Memorial Park Advisory Board member; Rachel Burnhardt, AK Natural Burials; Kevin Cross, Assembly member from Chugiak/ER; Scott Meyers, Assembly member from Chugiak/ER; Rob Jones, Director Anchorage Memorial Park; Dean Gates, Assembly Counsel; Mike Braniff, Director Anchorage Parks and Rec.

Agenda Approval for August 24 2023 meeting	Guy Wade/Briana Sullivan	Assent
Notes review from July 20 2023 meeting	no action needed	
Minutes approval from June 15 2023 meeting	Guy Wade/Briana Sullivan	Assent

Old Business:

1. Discuss bonding in Spring 2024 election: 3 cemetery projects to move forward on bonding together. Girdwood and Eagle River are working on design and construction as well as operation; Anchorage memorial park seeks improvements and upgrades.
 - Status of MOA cemetery bond propositions: projects need estimates to send forward to Office of Management and Budget to prepare for bond effort. Costs include estimates for design, construction, administration, operations, and plan for maintenance. OMB will work on financing and bond information to provide to Assembly for vote to put it on the ballot. Kevin Cross confirms that he is planning to work with Zac Johnson and Randy Sulte to recommend it's approval for the Spring 2024 election.
 - Review Fact Sheet and talking points: information provided from last year, when the effort was unable to move forward as the Areawide role of Cemeteries was not clear in Anchorage Municipal code. This information will be updated as the project moves along.
 - Assistance from Lane & Sloan for economic plans. Lane and Sloan are professionals at handling cemetery operating plans and may be key in later work on creation of rules, regulations by which the cemeteries will operate. The 3 cemeteries will have some rules in common, others not in common with each other. Changing the existing rules by adding additional cemeteries will require changes in code that addresses cemeteries. Creation of the rules and changes to municipal code related to them would be a project after the election and approval of the bond.
For bonding effort, estimates extrapolated from existing cemetery operation in Anchorage should be sufficient.
 - Discuss groups/dates to address targeted voting population prior to vote-by-mail upon approval of bond prop by Assembly. Effort received several resolutions of support from community councils in Anchorage and other entities last year. This will need to be repeated for 2024, however response was very positive. Coordination among members of the Cemetery Committees will be helpful.

Timeline:

Cost estimates provided to Office of Management and Budget for review now thru early October
Presentation and Inclusion on MOA Capital Improvements Project list to be approved via Assembly budget process Sept-Nov 2023

Final Language for ballot item to be introduced at Assembly by December 2023 and approved for ballot by mid-January 2024

Bond approval by Anchorage Assembly for April Election: January 2024

Voter engagement and outreach Jan-March 2024

Election Spring 2024 (vote by mail, ballots accepted March 12 - April 2)

2. Update on status of request for Girdwood Inc Account and authorized members of Friends of Girdwood Cemetery Account. Related to item #5. Girdwood Cemetery Committee is opening an account with Girdwood Inc in order to hold non-municipal funds to be used in cemetery effort.

3. Update on study of Original Girdwood Cemetery site and handling of remains - tabled

New Business

4. Synopsys of proposed Eagle River Cemetery and Anchorage Memorial Park Improvements. Meeting packet includes Eagle River site selection process and parcel selected through that process and a white paper from 2017 regarding Anchorage Memorial Park status and needs. Since that time, Memorial Park has used more of its available space for burials; timeline for projects in the 6-15 year future phase have accelerated.
5. Discuss changes to GBOS Girdwood Cemetery power and Consider structure of Friends of Girdwood Cemetery group if bonding effort passes.

Girdwood Cemetery has not used tax-based funds since completion of the feasibility study several years ago. Friends of the Cemetery group will take over the current official GBOS Committee. There is no method in code to de-authorize a tax authority of GBOS.

Public Comment:

Eagle River Assembly member notes that Cemeteries will need to address how to handle maintenance in their plans. In discussion, Girdwood has plans to have Roads contractor plow the parking lot during winter and reflect that cost in the annual roads budget. No other maintenance is anticipated as there is no mowing, watering, etc. Other services (toilets, trash) would be handled by contracts or summer staff and would be reflected in those budgets.

Other Business:

Anchorage Memorial park advisory board will need to be changed/expanded to include all 3 cemeteries and have representation from each on the board.

Next meeting Sept 21 2023, tentatively

Adjourn 12:50PM