



**CITY OF AUSTIN
PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
CEMETERY MANAGEMENT
FALL 2013 QUARTERLY PUBLIC INPUT MEETING**

Thursday, October 24, 2013
6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

NORTHWEST RECREATION CENTER

PURPOSE

The purpose of this meeting is to provide a forum for staff to present cemetery information and for the public to submit comments to the Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) on cemetery management and operations

AGENDA

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Update on Cemetery Improvements
3. Report of Cemetery Financial Operations
4. Proposed 5-year Cemetery CIP
5. Update on Proposed Rules Enforcement Program
6. Public Comment

Please visit the City's Cemetery Website for updated meeting information and notices:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/blog/cemetery-updates>

2. Update on Cemetery Improvements

In addition to the ongoing maintenance and repair projects completed by both cemetery maintenance and Interment Services, the following specific improvements have been completed:

Austin Memorial Park Cemetery

1. Fuel Storage Tanks Removed
2. Installation of Section and Space Available Signs
3. Relocation of spoils from northern plateau to shop area
4. Ongoing tree pruning and removal of dead trees
5. Application of fertilizer and pre-emergent, mulch and sod installation
6. Installed fence to secure yard and equipment
7. Reset 24 headstones where families could not be located
8. Implemented available space marker program

Evergreen Cemetery

1. Installed information and Space Available section signage
2. Installed new marquee sign
3. Ongoing tree pruning and removal of dead trees
4. Enhanced top dressing of graves
5. Removed Spoils from being store onsite

Oakwood and Oakwood Annex Cemeteries

1. Secured Chapel/Office
2. Repaired water system
3. Installed speed bumps on Main St.
4. Repaired fence damage on MLK St.
5. Oakwood Annex Roof project completed
6. Drainage Canal cleared and support brackets now being fabricated
7. Dedicated tree removal and pruning, began Oct. 1, 2013

Plummers Cemetery

1. Ongoing removal of dumped items
2. Cleaned entry signage and added new signage information

As of September 30, 2013, cemetery administrative and maintenance staffs have completed over 880 work orders in addition to regular cemetery grounds maintenance.

City of Austin Cemetery Work Orders

Customer Requests	Apr-Jun	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Total
Dirt - Fill For Sunken Graves	46	10	7	6	69
Sod / Grass - Installation or Estimates	35	1	1	41	78
Grave Markings - Interment Flagging	84	45	43	37	209
Monument Setting - New Monument Installation Flagging	120	7	14	41	182
Monument Re-Setting - (Measurements of Headstones)	35	6	16	19	76
Pest Control - Insects / Rodents / Ants	7	2	-	1	10
Tree & Tree Branches, Leaves - Trimming / Picked-up/ Removal/ Relocation / Raking / Ball Moss / Visuals	16	17	7	10	50
Shrub - Planting / Trimming / Removal / Relocation	3	-	-	4	7
Restroom - Clean-up / Paper Products Missing	1	3	-	-	4
Pick-up (Trash, Dead Flowers, Rocks, Dirt etc)	7	4	-	-	11
Other- Customer Inquiries - (headstone encroachment, property visual checks, headstone checks, missing flowers, bench removal or relocated, lot description requests , to meet customers regarding locating graves, broken faucet repairs, watering requests for new plants/trees, taking photos, etc)	93	31	32	32	188
Total Work Orders - Requests	447	126	120	191	884

Figure 1: Work Order Summary

3. Report on Cemetery Financial Operations

Cemetery Operations ended the fiscal year September 30, 2013 within the approved budget of \$1.4 million for the six month period beginning April, 2013. For FY 14, City Council appropriated a total of \$2.4 million and \$423k for equipment, for a total allocation of \$2.8 million. The following table shows the unaudited financial activity for FY 13 and approved budget distribution for FY 14.

Report of Cemetery Financial Operations

	2013 (6 Months)			2014
	Amended Budget	Actual	Balance	Approved Budget
Revenue				
General Fund (Incl. Encumbrances)	\$ 476,157	\$ 741,281	\$ (265,124)	\$ 1,346,327
Perpetual Care Fund Transfer	255,000	-	255,000	-
Cemetery Revenue	700,000	771,888	(71,888)	1,150,000
Total	\$ 1,431,157	\$ 1,513,169	\$ (82,012)	\$ 2,496,327
Expenses				
Personnel	\$ 666,367	\$ 410,825	\$ 255,542	\$ 1,218,767
Contractual	641,940	681,039	(39,099)	1,154,710
Commodities	122,850	142,089	(19,239)	122,850
Total	\$ 1,431,157	\$ 1,233,953	\$ 197,204	\$ 2,496,327

Figure 2: 2013 Actuals Unaudited

4. Proposed 5-Year Cemetery CIP Presentation

Kevin Johnson, PARD
Please see attached backup

5. Update on Proposed Rules Enforcement Program

At the October 17, 2013 City Council meeting, the City staff was directed by a City Council resolution to implement a policy allowing grave ornamentation for an interim period that effectively **suspends** the enforcement of the Cemetery Rules and Regulations that was scheduled to begin on November 1, 2013. The City will not remove personal items currently placed at gravesites at Austin Memorial Park, but will continue provide "basic enforcement" to review and address graves sites that are not in compliance in three (3) main areas:

- 1: Obvious safety issues;
- 2: Inflammatory or offensive language or symbolism;
- 3: Improvements or items that are outside of the boundaries of the formal grave site.

Cemetery staff will provide notice to families on gravesites for items identified above, invite families to contact cemetery management to address these issues, and if unsuccessful remove these items as necessary. This proposed action does not include personal items placed as per the direction by City Council. Please visit <http://austintexas.gov/department/cemeteries> for updated information.

Please see the attached Rules Enforcement FAQ

6. Public Comments

City of Austin Cemeteries Rules Enforcement Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. Will Cemetery Rules be enforced beginning November 1, 2013?

What's happening?

Yes and No.

At the October 17, 2013 City Council meeting, city staff was directed by a City Council resolution to implement a policy allowing grave ornamentation for an interim period that effectively **suspends** the enforcement of the Cemetery Rules and Regulations that was scheduled to begin on November 1, 2013. Cemetery staff will not remove personal items currently placed at gravesites at Austin Memorial Park or Evergreen Cemetery, but will continue to provide "basic enforcement" to review and address graves sites that are not in compliance in three (3) main areas:

- 1: Obvious safety issues;
- 2: Inflammatory or offensive language or symbolism;
- 3: Improvements or items that are outside of the boundaries of the formal grave site.

Cemetery staff will provide notice to families on gravesites for items identified above, invite families to contact cemetery management to address these issues, and if unsuccessful remove these items as necessary. This proposed action does not include personal items placed as per the direction by City Council. Please visit <http://austintexas.gov/departments/cemeteries> for updated information.

2. Are Cemetery Rules and Regulations going to be updated or revised?

Yes. City Council directed the City Manager to evaluate current cemetery policies using a stakeholder process and evaluate whether the current policies related to grave ornamentation are appropriately sensitive to personal and cultural expressions. PARD will begin to draft an action plan to address the council resolution to have this completed within six (6) months. Any updates to the rules and regulations will require approval by the PARD board and City Council prior to implementation.

3. Do I need to remove my bench, wind chimes or other items?

Generally no, until the cemetery rules are updated existing items can remain, but should be placed within the boundaries of the grave site. If you are unsure of the grave size or boundaries, please visit the cemetery office and we will set the boundaries at no cost.

4. Are the rules new and why are you enforcing them now?

No, these rules are not new. City Council approved cemetery rules and regulations in 1978 and while there has been sporadic enforcement, PARD staff assumed cemetery management and maintenance responsibilities on April 1, 2013, including onsite inspections and rules enforcement.

In 2012, City Council directed PARD to engage community stakeholders to identify cemetery issues and develop a list of improvement recommendations. PARD board under the leadership of Chairwoman Jane Rivera and member, Lynn Osgood, convened a Cemetery Working Group in response to this council directive. One of the items listed as an issue priority was the lack of cemetery rules enforcement. Cemetery staff, in response to this working group recommendation and numerous written and verbal complaints, began the process to enforce cemetery rules.



Parks and Recreation Department Municipal Cemeteries

Capital Improvement Progress

October 2013



Oakwood Annex Roof Restoration



PICA 25455, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library



Oakwood Annex Roof Restoration



- Remaining improvements to be completed:
 - ❑ New wood entry door and windows
 - ❑ Replace trellises on façade
 - ❑ Masonry cleaning & mortar repair
 - ❑ Minor landscaping
 - ❑ Run new electrical on interior



Road Improvements – All Sites



- Dept. of Public Works Street & Bridge Division has provided road assessment and cost for rehabilitation of primary roadways



Irrigation System Improvements – All Sites

- Standardize head & coupler system to optimize grounds-crew efficiency



Drainage Improvements – All Sites



- Watershed Protection Dept. to dedicate funding to repairs of Oakwood Drainage channel





Tree Removal - Oakwood

- PARD's Forestry Division is updating inventory at Oakwood Cemetery and identifying trees for removal & replacement



Restoration of Oakwood Chapel

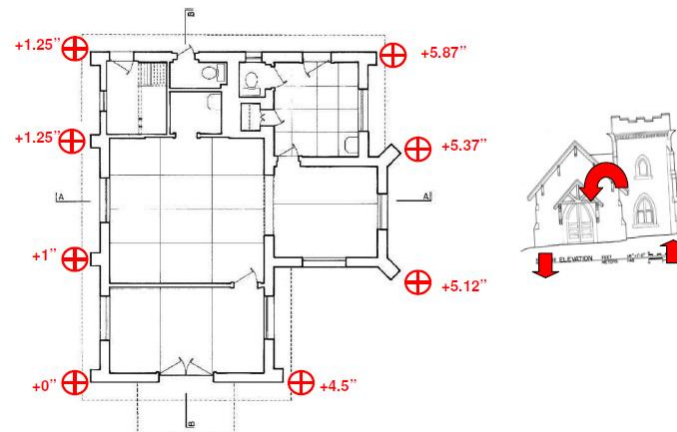


Restoration of Oakwood Chapel



- Beginning contract assignment for design consultant to assemble construction documents for the Chapel, as outlined in architectural and structural Feasibility Reports

Attachment B
ELEVATION SURVEY



Differences in level for low coping stones in buttresses (left). Settling trend of the Chapel (right)



Austin Memorial Park Compound Conceptual Design

Beginning contract assignment for design consultant to assemble design documents for improvements to the compound





Austin Memorial Park Compound Conceptual Design

- Goals
 - ❑ ADA accessibility, including a new accessible public restroom facility
 - ❑ Structural, Roof, and Drainage improvements
 - ❑ Site wall & masonry improvements
 - ❑ Tower Building program

