

SPECIAL CEMETERY BOARD MEETING

March 2, 2006

Present: Bill Lulham, Chairperson; John Austin, Jack Boursmith, Tim Crawford; Sexton, Joe Sawyer, City Manager; Shauna Bayless, Recording Secretary.

Guest: Jim Postema from Great Lakes Monument.

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chairperson Bill Lulham. The agenda was approved.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Discussion of Columbarium Bids:

Lulham asked if any of the bids included sales tax. Sawyer stated that had not been determined. If that becomes the deciding factor, then it will be looked into.

Jim Postema then introduced himself as the owner of Great Lakes Monuments. He explained that he wanted to be at this meeting to answer any questions that the board might have regarding his bids.

Sawyer explained to the board about the difference in niches and spaces. Crawford asked Mr. Postema about this and he confirmed that his 124 niche columbarium does not have 124 actual niches. They are spaces. The total niche (or cavity) count is 76 with 28 single and 48 double niches. This discrepancy was true for many of the columbarium bids.

Mr. Postema was asked if two temporary cremain containers would fit in a single niche. He felt that they probably would. However, the board would have to make sure people understood that only certain sizes of urns would fit inside the niche. Austin asked how many people buy a single as opposed to double niche. Mr. Postema stated that he felt most people buy double niches. Volek asked Mr. Postema if he would recommend a square or a rectangle style. He stated that it would depend on what the board wanted to present to the public. Rectangles are cheaper, but squares are more attractive. A series of columbaria could be planned using different styles.

Great Lakes Monument's columbaria use a rosette system of niche closure. When one granite front is removed, it exposes two niches at a time. It was suggested to purchase an extra niche cover as a temporary cover and in case of breakage. Mr. Postema thought that an extra cover might cost under \$100.

When asked about engraving, Mr. Postema responded that he thought engraving not only looked better for the niche front, but may actually be cheaper than plaques. Plaques will oxidize over time and discolor. Engraving will never change appearance. His company also offers custom artwork that could be added to the front. He suggested that we insist on one type of font to be used in the engraving so the outside of the columbarium would look consistent. His company would agree to do the engraving of the niche fronts, on site, for \$125 per niche (names and dates only) if the cemetery would pull the niche cover for him.

It would be an extra cost for any artwork. Austin suggested that the artwork be limited to just one side of the columbarium rather than allowing it anywhere on the structure. It was decided to table discussion of engraving until later.

There was discussion about who is liable if there is damage to the columbarium. Mr. Postema stated that the homeowner's insurance of whoever is next of kin, minus the deductible, will cover damage to a headstone. He was not sure about a columbarium. The city's deductible for damage is \$1,000. Crawford asked what the cost would be to replace the most expensive artwork he does on a niche cover. Mr. Postema stated probably under \$1,000.

Sawyer asked about the columbaria offered by KMI with the aluminum interiors. Mr. Postema stated that he really did not know much about those types, except that the weight of the structure will tell you a lot about the quality.

Austin wondered why Great Lakes Monument's bid was higher than the same model offered by Mid Michigan. He felt that Great Lakes Monument's square columbarium was more than the board could afford to spend. Sawyer explained that 50% of the Perpetual Care Fund could be used for this project, but if the total is a little over 50%, then Sawyer would recommend to council that the remainder be taken from Cemetery Operating Expenses.

It was explained to the board that Great Lakes Monument's bids all offered a four-foot walkway around the columbarium, extending 12 feet to the street, as a part of the foundation bid. Their bid explained in detail how they would pour four concrete pillars, two feet in diameter and four feet deep, and then lay six inches of concrete around the pillars to support the square columbarium. Austin suggested that we extend the sidewalk, either in concrete or limestone, all of the way to the street. He also suggested that a six-foot diameter walkway would be better to meet handicapped requirements. Mr. Postema did not know how much increasing the walkway to six feet in diameter would add to the foundation cost. He would have to figure that out and get back with us. Mr. Postema offered two matching black granite benches to the bid at no extra cost.

Austin felt that it was hard to make a comparison because the other companies, such as Mid Michigan, did not include a walkway in their foundation bids. Crawford stated that a walkway was not asked for in the bid; Great Lakes Monument offered the walkway as an extra addition. Crawford then asked Mr. Postema the cost of the square columbarium foundation, excluding the walkway. Mr. Postema stated it would probably be around \$1,400.

Mr. Postema stated that he was the sole representative, in this area, for Royal Melrose, the company that offers the square columbarium. Mid-Michigan did not represent Royal Melrose products and felt that they should not be offering the square columbarium. Crawford also pointed out that the foundation bid offered by Mid-Michigan did not include specifications on how the foundation would be laid, as required by the bid.

Volek stated that he liked the idea of having a local company do the work. Mr. Postema was only 15 miles away and could be easily called if there was a problem. He asked how long Mr. Postema had been in business and he stated for seven years on his own.

Motion by Boursmith, Seconded by Volek, to purchase the columbarium offered by Great Lakes Monuments, listed as Proposal C, for a total columbarium and foundation cost of \$42,400 and also accepts the addition of two matching granite benches at no additional cost.

Roll Call Vote: Boursmith-Aye, Austin- Aye, Volek-Aye, Lulham-Aye. Vote was unanimous. Motion Carried.

Boursmith needed to leave for an appointment and was excused at 4:25 p.m.

Sawyer stated that it was suggested by Austin to increase the walkway to six feet. He felt that this was a good idea and, as the construction date gets closer, that issue should be revisited.

A May groundbreaking was suggested by Mr. Postema with the columbarium in place by early summer.

Lulham asked if council needed to vote on this purchase. Sawyer stated that council was leaving this columbarium purchase up to the board, but he would inform them of the decision.

Crawford stated that the board needs to understand that the addition of the concrete to the walk, increasing it from four to six feet, will add to the cost of the original bid. He also stated that the columbarium needs to be placed more toward the center of the strip of land in New East rather than on the corner of Margaret and Cherry. This change was suggested by many of the bidding companies.

Motion made to adjourn by Volek, seconded by Austin.

Ayes: All.

Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Mr. Postema was thanked by the board for helping them through this process. Crawford stated that an official letter of acceptance would be sent in the next few days to Great Lakes Monument.

The next meeting of the board will be on April 6, 2006, 3 p.m., to go over granite colors, engraving choices, rules, location, pricing, naming the columbarium, and other details.

Bill Lulham, Chairperson