



CITY OF NORTON

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Mayor Mike Zita

PARKS and CEMETERY BOARD

February 15, 2023

Minutes

The Parks and Cemetery Board meeting was called to order by Ms. Gibson, Chair, at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 15, 2023.

Roll Call:

Neva Gibson
Ruth Stimac (excused)
Robert Fritz
Kaitlin Witzberger
Richard Witwer

Also Present:

Mayor Mike Zita
Kerry Macomber, Acting Secretary

Ms. Gibson noted that tonight's Agenda needs to be amended to add discussion of Green Up Day under New Business. Mr. Fritz moved to add Green Up Day to New Business; seconded by Ms. Gibson.

Roll Call: Yes: Fritz, Gibson, Witzberger, Witwer
No: None

Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes

Ms. Witzberger moved to approve the Minutes of January 18, 2023 as submitted; seconded by Mr. Fritz.

Roll Call: Yes: Witzberger, Fritz, Gibson, Witwer
No: None

Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Update on Norton Center Cemetery: Mayor Zita noted that the legislation awarding the fencing did not include emergency language; therefore, they had to wait 30 days to enter into the contract. Phil Turske, Administrative Officer, is now working with the company to establish a schedule. Ms. Gibson said she has talked with Joe Blackburn, Boy Scout Troop #3132 and his son, Ethan, and Mr. Noon from Summit Memorial. She reported that if the cemetery has been abandoned or if there have been no burials for over 40 years, it is up to the governmental entity to take care of it

and the monuments. Ms. Gibson said that Mr. Noon gave Mr. Blackburn and his son tips on how to renovate cemeteries. She said that he will be supervising the Boy Scouts that work in the Norton Center Cemetery. Mr. Noon originally fixed the Western Star Cemetery and he was present at the City Council Veterans' Memorial presentation. Mr. Noon has volunteered to assist with the cemetery repair. Ms. Gibson acknowledged there was some insurance issues and she said she has forwarded the Boy Scouts insurance information to Ms. Macomber. Ms. Macomber reported that she has forwarded the information to the Administrative Officer and the Law Director for review to ensure the City would not be liable for the children working in the cemetery. There has not been a ruling, yet. Mr. Witwer asked about the process repairing tilted and broken grave stones. Ms. Gibson said some broken stones can be repaired with an epoxy material. If the stone cannot be restored, they will be placed flush on the ground near the gravesite. Ms. Gibson said grave sites will be marked with an engraved slab identifying the decedent's name, date of birth, and date of death, but she has not found the specific material for this project. Mr. Witwer said the Mayor and he have had conversations and it was brought up at previous meetings that there may be potential liability for the city to work in the cemetery. Mayor Zita clarified that it is personal versus public property; therefore, public funds cannot be used. Ms. Gibson said she checked and the last burial was in 1890. Mr. Fritz said the only marker that has been placed in the cemetery lately is the Black Plague Memorial along with four headstones; no remains were moved here. Ms. Gibson noted that only adults will drive the heavy equipment and the children will be supervised by Mr. Noon.

New Business

Green-Up Day: Mayor Zita announced April 22, 2023 will be the 22nd Annual Green-Up Day from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. This is a Community clean-up day with roadside trash pickup, leaf clean up and mulching. There will be an Arbor Day Tree Planting in compliance with Tree City USA membership. Mayor Zita noted this is an excellent opportunity for any groups wanting to help, including graduating seniors to receive volunteer hours. Ms. Gibson requested flyers and said she will make sure it is announced at the schools and the boy scout troops. Mayor Zita said pre-registration is suggested; however, all groups will be welcomed up to the day of the event. Registration will be available at City Hall and on the website. Mayor Zita encouraged the Parks and Cemetery board members to join them. The Mayor will solicit the food donations of donuts for the morning and pizza for the afternoon. Mr. Witwer agreed this is excellent way for Juniors and Senior High School students to obtain volunteer hours. Ms. Gibson said the National Honor Society also requires volunteer community hours. Ms. Gibson will make sure the Principal makes the announcement. Mr. Witwer agreed to contact the coaches, as well. Ms. Macomber agreed to provide flyers to the Board members. Mayor Zita asked the Board Members to let him know if they would like to nominate someone special in the community to honor or memorialize with the tree planting.

Adopt-A-Spot: Mayor Zita announced the planning for the Adopt-A-Spot Program is beginning. Last year, they purchased and installed new signs depicting the donors and caretakers at each site. The letter to area businesses and mailing list is being updated (attached herewith). There were about 20 sponsors last year, and he is hoping for more this year. Sponsors can send a monetary donation or send a group to take care of a spot. He encouraged the Board members to reach out to any local businesses where they have a contact and see if they may be interested in participating in the program. Mayor Zita noted that the sponsorship request has been lowered from \$150 to

\$100 this year and is tax deductible sent to the City for the purchase of flowers. The Service Department will begin preparing the 15 flower beds (spots) soon. Mayor Zita said two additional spots will be added this year. He is hoping for more monetary donations, as well as caretakers this year. Ms. Gibson remarked that some folks want their previous or specific spots. Mr. Witwer reported that someone told him that they found it difficult to maintain their adopt-a-spot because watering was an issue. Mayor Zita said he will be providing a 50-gallon drum that can be filled with water at City Hall and driven to the site. There will be a spicket at the bottom of the drum with a hose so the drum won't have to be moved. He requested that the empty drum be returned to City Hall for the next user. Mr. Witwer said that Tom Dayton has big barrels of nutrient-rich water and maybe he could deliver it to sites. Mayor Zita said that may require someone to pick it up so it may be better to use the City Hall water. Ms. Gibson said she may be able to find people willing to help with watering.

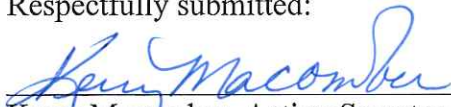
Communications from the Public

Denise Mullins, 2886 Wilbanks Dr, Norton – Ms. Mullins stated that she understands that if the cemetery has not been attended to in over 40 years and is abandoned, it potentially becomes the responsibility of the governing body. She asked if this means mowing and/or repairing the gravestones and if so, who will be paying for that service. Ms. Gibson responded that the Eagle Scouts they raise their own funds. The Boy Scouts will be purchasing the materials and paying for everything. It will not be public funds. Ms. Mullins noted that the Norton Women's Club has adopted the spot in front of City Hall. They mulched the area prior to planting the flowers, which were beautiful. However, the Service Department mulched the edging area so thick (almost 8 inches) that it was difficult to plant. Plus, the plantings did not thrive. Mayor Zita agreed and said they will make sure the mulching is done correctly this year. Ms. Gibson also requested that grass clippings be blown away from the sites when the Service Department mows the Adopt-A-Spot areas.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business coming before the Parks and Cemetery Board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:


Kerry Macomber, Acting Secretary

3-15-23
Date

Approved:


Parks and Cemetery Board Chairperson
or Vice-Chairperson

3-15-23
Date

