

Minutes

Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries

OPRD Headquarters North Mall Office Building, Salem, OR
March 14th, 2008
1:00-4:00 pm

- I. Welcome and Introductions (15 min)
Present: Dale Ivan, Nick Eddy, Bob Keeler, Judy Juntunen, Diana LaSarge, Dirk Siedlecki, Kuri Gill, Kyle Jansson, Roger Roper
- II. Approval of July 20, 2007 minutes (5 min)
Moved to approve with the additional of Dale Ivan noted as present by Nick Eddy.
Seconded by Siedlecki. Approved.
- III. Additions to the Agenda (5 min)
*Keeler noted that there had been vandalism at Columbian Cemetery in Portland.
Announcements from Judy Juntunen added to agenda.*
- IV. National Register Program – Cara Kaser and Ian Johnson (30 min)
*Follow up to National Register presentation.
Keeler noted that there must be constant contact with State Historic Preservation Office staff to succeed.
Juntunen noted that Benton County hired a cemetery expert to get it done. It is not a walk in the park.
New members of the commission should have a copy of the National Register Bulletin.
Audience member Baker asked what the restrictions are for list locations. Kaser responded that it depends on local jurisdiction. Johnson noted that there are restrictions with the State level Preserving Oregon grants. Audience member Clarke noted that in Portland they have design guidelines and changes must be reviewed by the landmarks commission.*
- V. Review of the 2008-2009 workplan (20 min)
Gill summarized recent workshop reports. See handout.
- VI. Workshops: completed, planned, and assessments (15 min)
November 14 & 15, 2007 Researching People and Places Workshop
January 11 Operating Cemetery and Nonprofit Workshop results
Potential upcoming dates and workshops – not confirmed unless noted
March 15, 2008 – Digging Up Money – Fundraising for Historic Cemeteries (Salem)
May 4, 2008 – General Cemetery Care and Maintenance (Eugene)
May 4, 2008 – Intermediate Cemetery Care and Maintenance (Eugene)
Aug 9, 2008 – Gathering, Training & Keeping Volunteers (Phoenix)
Oct 11, 2008 – Getting your Cemetery on the Map – Interpretation and Event Ideas (Ontario)
- VII. Grants Update – Grant progress (15 min) –Kuri
Gill summarized grant progress. See handout. Siedlecki noted that several grant recipients have been encourage to hold some sort of event to celebrate the completion of their projects.

There was conversation regarding the placement and replacement of markers. Juntunen described the Benton County decision to select the markers that match the historic ones.

VIII. Current Projects and Legislation (30 min)

Sub-committee reports -

Legislation – grants rules change, historic cemeteries definition change

Proposed grant rules changes passed and is in place. See handout for new language.

Roper presented the status of the historic cemetery definition change legislation. The concept was sent through the OPRD process to be included on the concepts sent to the governor's office by OPRD. OPRD director Tim Wood is not moving the concept forward for two reasons. One is that anything sent to the governor must meet review there. Wood thinks it likely that it won't be approved. The second reason is based on Wood's personal opinion that this proposal expands the program well beyond the original legislative intent. It will create more competition for the grant program. He understands the value of the cemeteries.

Keeler discussed the issue with Wood and presented his understanding of the situation. Keeler agreed the Wood was concern about the change from the original intent. That it would stretch grant moneys too thin. Keeler argued that this is bringing the treatment of cemeteries more in line with how Oregon treats historic resources. Having an ever-expanding pool of applicants makes the argument for expanding the pool of funds. Keeler felt that Wood left the door open to continue work on this issue, but not for this session. If there were a groundswell of support then Wood and the legislature would be more likely to support it.

Roper appreciates the effort that has gone into it so far. Wood anticipates having to argue it to legislators and doesn't feel he can adequately do it.

Keeler stated that the popular support would help him argue it.

Audience member Jory asked to whom letters should be directed.

Keeler responded – OPRD, Wood, Keeler or Gill

Ivan recognized that this internally difficult in Wood's position because is the program is small potatoes. He noted that when program have strong partnership there is more money. Cited the ORPA and Western Advocates partnership bringing funds to Veteran's and ATV programs. Ivan has seen the Commission do much advocacy to get folks to tell others they want the program.

Roper stated another issue, the question of how big a problem this is. Is this really worth the effort.

Ivan pointed out that there were many things not tackled before and now they have been. We are in a forward mode and we want to continue that.

Roper suggested that when the Commission solicits support, they should address the issues and concerns raised by past discussion and brought up by Wood. He also noted that there is scrutiny on the use of lottery funds for heritage programs as opposed to park programs. There is concern when these programs grow.

Ivan asked how the State Fair is doing.

Roper responded that it continues to improve.

Audience member Jory suggested that the Commission use a Blog to generate support. He asked what start this discussion and Keeler explained the origins. Jory pointed out that grant dollars don't go as far as they used to.

LaSarge suggested an online petition.

Ivan clarified that those who are concerned about the heritage programs growing are the legislature.

Roper confirmed that it is, based on the legislation that provided lottery funds to OPRD.

Siedlecki noted that tomorrow will be history. The later cemeteries have historic value. As a grant applicant, I think it is worth having more competition for the grants to protect more significant cemeteries.

Juntunen pointed out that there has been a concerted effort to encourage people to choose a specific project rather than a laundry list. This has improved the grant process.

LaSarge pointed out that the dates only applies to two or three of the cemeteries she is in charge on CTUIR land. Many could not afford markers until the late 30s.

Audience member Clarke pointed out that the designation is not just grant dollars, but additional protection in vandalism cases to cover the cost of repairs in restitution.

Roper suggested that we document case where restitution was used and when it was not.

Ivan noted that the issue is not us vs. them.

Roper agreed that the door was left open to the subject.

Keeler noted that OPRD would not move this forward in this session.

Audience member Jory asked why historical things fall under OPRD. Gill responded that it was set out in the 1999 legislation because OPRD housed the State Historic Preservation office.

Ivan noted that we couldn't ask for a better association.

Jory asked how the commission works with the counties.

Ivan noted that we don't directly. They receive our information.

Gill stated the OPRD will not move the concept of the Commission giving permission to people to care for abandoned or unowned cemeteries. It may not be necessary. The Commission had put it forward to that the law could be considered and if it was appropriate move forward. We will seek a legal opinion regard these cemeteries; access, care and liability.

Keeler agreed that liability is the issue and if we can have a legal opinion, it would be helpful.

Education *Continue adding new Heritage Bulletins. New ones are the Cemetery Symbols and Choosing a Consultant or Contractor. Upcoming ones may include grant management, how to protect a historic cemetery, how to research places.*

Burial index *Continuing to contact organizations, have support from 27 counties*

Heritage Bulletins *See above.*

Seminar *Nothing start, Keeler said he would meet with Gill to get it rolling*

Commissioner gatherings *None scheduled, but being planned. Siedlecki held another one with fewer people, but equal enthusiasm.*

Cemetery Signs – *Will be available at the Heritage Conference and OHCA meeting*

Heritage Conference *Jansson presented information about conference content, highlighting good cemetery sessions. Encourage all to attend.*

IX. Partnership Updates (5 min)

OMCB – Presenting prior to three meetings in 2008

OCHA – Annual meeting in Eugene the day before the Heritage Conference

CAO – Offered membership rates to their conference

Ivan noted that DAR might be good supporters for our legislative efforts.

X. Public Comment (30 min) (3-minute limit per person)

Van Orden commented that they had sent a deed to the descendants of the original donation land claim on which sits the Milliorn Cemetery in Junction City, but he has not responded since. Their lawyer has a process in place if he does not sign.

XI. 2008 Meeting Schedule – May 4th Eugene Heritage Conference, August 8th Phoenix/Medford, October 10th Ontario

XII. Meeting Adjourned