

# Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries

## Meeting Minutes

Crossroads Carnegie Art Center  
2020 Auburn Avenue, Baker City OR  
July 24, 2009 / 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Kendell Phillips, Judy Juntunen-Chair, Dirk Siedlecki-Vice Chair, Robert Keeler, Lynn Reagan, Robert Keeler

**EXCUSED:** Diana LaSarge

**STAFF:** Kuri Gill, Kimarie Lamb

**GUESTS AND PROPONENTS:** Shari Gray-North Powder Cemetery

**Travel Oregon 101**

**Workshop: Emphasis on Heritage Tourism 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 a.m.**

**Commissioner working lunch 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

### **Call to Order and introductions**

Chairwoman Judy Juntunen gave opening remarks and called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. All Commissioners, staff and guests introduced themselves.

### **Approval of April Minutes**

Bob had corrections that he will pass along to staff. **A motion was made by Ken to approve the April minutes and Dirk seconded it. All approved and it passed unanimously**

### **Additions to the Agenda**

**A motion was made to approve the agenda. All were in favor and it passed unanimously.**

### **Commissioner Comments/Reports**

- **Kendell** reported that he is preparing to host his first brown bag lunch in Grants Pass. The date will be announced at a later time. Between him and his contacts there will be quite a few people.
- **Dirk** reported on his May activities: the Memorial Day Meet 'N Greet, the Oregon 150 and the pre-Memorial Day cleanup were all successes. Time was worth while and the Press coverage on the Oregon 150 cleanup was impressive. The local paper was contacted for volunteers and Jacksonville was added to the list. A local news paper was contacted and they ran an ad seeking volunteers. Eight new volunteers came forward from Medford, Ashland and Phoenix. One of

the volunteers was a professional photographer that wanted to help out and offered his services. He suggested that it's a good idea to reach out to the local newspaper.

His next brown bag lunch is scheduled for August 13<sup>th</sup> and is expecting one of the best turnouts there's been in a while. Invites have been sent out and several genealogy groups will do a presentation on Google that will identify where all cemeteries are located in Jackson County. There will also be a presentation on the Weed Abatement Program.

There's preparation for the October tours and everyone involved is lined up. He was contacted by a woman in Ashland connected with the Unitarian Church and is working with them on their first tour which was done at the Ashland Cemetery.

The goal with brown bag lunches is to eventually work together. The Phoenix Pioneer Cemetery and the Jacksonville Historic Cemetery got together and placed flags together. Also supplies were loaned to another cemetery that was doing a cleanup and repairs. They did what they needed and returned the supplies back.

- **Bob** reported that he had a brown bag lunch on July 1<sup>st</sup> at the Washington County Museum. Kuri did a grant workshop in the afternoon with a good turnout. The group would like to see this happen about three times a year: Fall, Spring and in the Summer of 2010. He will work within the broader Tri-County area to do the brown bag lunches. Estacada might be willing to host one.

He attended the Association for Gravestone Studies Conference which was in Schenectady, NY and did a power point presentation in conjunction with Judy Juntunen on the work of the Commission. About 25 people turned out and there was lots of interest. North Carolina has an active cemetery program but wasn't able to send their people out this year. The conference will be in Ohio next year about the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of June and encouraged Commissioners to attend. He and Judy will be in charge of the coordinating sessions, receiving proposals, etc.

- **Lynn** reported his contact with a woman who is concerned about the West Falls Cemetery. He mentioned the new grant applications coming out and his interest in meeting with her once their board was in place. He attended a meeting with the City Board of Directors, shared the purpose of the Commission and how they can help. His neighbor brought to his attention an unmarked gravesite on the Charles Becker Ranch. The only indication is four steel posts there. He will contact the land owner about preserving this gravesite about getting a marker for the gravesite. It's possible that it could be the first wife of Charles Becker who died in childbirth.

The OHCA Ledger shows a restoration project in Vail and all the kids that did the project are High School students. One of the students who was a single mom received a Valedictorian award from the Governor. The program was done

through the Training Employment Consortium and the grant was funded by OCHC.

He applied for and won an election with the school district and is now on the Vale School Board. He is very excited about this.

- **Kuri** commented on Ken wearing his Heritage name badge and encouraged Commissioners to wear them when attending various Commission functions. Diana was ill and could not attend today's meeting.

Tim Wood has appointed Mike Leany as a Commissioner who is working with the Greenwood Cemetery in Astoria. He met the coast qualifications and lots of folks are becoming interested in the maintenance district. He will attend the October meeting.

Kuri's making in-roads with the Cemetery Association of Oregon as well as the Funeral Association Director who offered his lobbyists. Partnerships are very important.

- **Judy** reported her attendance at the Association of Gravestone Studies Conference. She's thinking outside of the cemetery workshop on how to make a cemetery part of a community. Crystal Lake has another brochure called "Iconology" and she uses it as a handout during tours and lectures.

There are no brown bag lunches planned but was approached by a woman regarding a discussion. Twin Oaks Cemetery outside of Albany had a big scandal on misappropriation of funds. Past owners are being fined and the gentleman involved was blameless on what was going on.

- **Kendell** reported he had a gathering on May 16<sup>th</sup> on his cemetery cleanup day. At a subsequent meeting the members mentioned on how well it looked. Another woman said that she couldn't see that there was any cleanup done to the cemetery. It was suggested that the cleanup be an annual event. There was suggestion not to continue cleanup because of one person's negative comment but thinks they will continue in spite of the one negative comment.
- **Judy** reported that while flagging the Odd Fellows Cemetery she met the person in charge and now knows who to contact for next year's flagging. They will take over the flagging for next year.

### **Grant Report and Upcoming Cycle**

Kuri reported that there were two out of thirty-five projects that canceled and one is still in progress. There is a problem in Heritage Programs where there are grants\ monies that go unspent but that hasn't happened with any of these cemetery grants. One cemetery canceled due to an uncertainty that the woman is buried in a particular cemetery so they're working to confirm that before the marker goes up.

The new grant cycle is open with the deadline of Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>. If the budget holds up there will be \$35,000 for this grant cycle but if the budget doesn't there will only be \$15,000 available. The next grant cycle will be open in November and the application will be available in February with applications due in March. October 19<sup>th</sup> will be the grant reviews and conference calls can be done if needed. The next review committee will consist of Bob and Kendell.

### **Position Papers – Discussion**

The Oregon and Mortuary Board posts their opinions regarding different topics. The Commission was encouraged to write a one-page opinion about issues or about information that could be useful on the website such as grave witching, genealogists preserving the information and not the object, the Commission's purpose in preserving cemeteries, the laws of marker replacement, etc. It's a good idea to be consistent in giving information. Kuri will draft the list of topics and others can add to it as they go.

### **BREAK**

### **2011-2012 Legislative requests to OPRD, issues, approach, etc**

The commission discussed the effort to change the date in the definition of historic cemetery. Some concerns about the change included: some cemeteries don't meet the qualifications proposed and the concerns were stretching resources too far, making every cemetery a historic cemetery, the Legislative mandate, the date change, the purpose of the Commission. The commission discussed how to approach the effort again. The Oregon Historic Cemeteries Association is interested in taking this on in the next Legislative session. Were it to come up through OCHC or any other source they would encourage people to contact their legislators.

There's a need to discuss the next move and how to approach the Parks Director. It will be easier if the legislation is approached through OPRD or meeting with the Director and asking the legislature to make this law.

Other items discussed:

- what criteria is being suggested to make judgment on what is or isn't historic
- if there's another historic significance to the cemetery
- if the cemetery historically significant if it contains remains
- confirming why the 1909 span was established - The original was based on the 50 years of Oregon's statehood 1909 and 1959. Over time the commission wanted to protect all historic cemeteries and not just for the Pioneer Cemeteries. The majority of the cemeteries in the state meet the qualifications so that would add about 100-200 more cemeteries with the change of date.
- the centennial mark has past - it might be more palatable to say 100 years instead of 75 years to make it 1910 cemeteries and forth. The 75 years can be tied into the archaeology laws.
- showing the cemetery's significance to the community – this will tell the community story. It should be about the story and not about the criteria.

- relaying the goal which is to preserve and protect Oregon's Historic Cemeteries

Kuri proposed to have a meeting with Tim Wood. Roger and the Commissioners agreed to proceed in this way. She suggested that two or more be present at this meeting and do a conference call for those who want to be in on the meeting. The Oregon Cemetery and Mortuary Board had no opinion on the change which would be beneficial to the commission at this point. Presenting the case and to have a vote from the Commission stating why this should be done and what the Commission proposes to do would be very helpful.

**Lynn made a motion that the OCHC pursue changing the legislation defining a historic cemetery from ... “including the burial of at least one person who died before February 14, 1909” to “including the burial of at least one person who died 75 years before today’s date.”**

**Judy restated the motion that the commission resolves that the legislation of the Historic Cemeteries be changed from 1909 to 75 years. Bob seconded it and all were in favor. It passed unanimously.**

Bob commented that the commission size is 7 and proposed that if legislation can change that size to 9 for better coverage and for a little more representation around the state, it will strengthen the program. Kuri will present that proposal to Roger for consideration.

Kuri mentioned that there are more people buried in the Clackamas County area besides in the Willamette Cemetery so more coverage in the tri-cities area would be great. More about this issue will be discussed at a later date.

#### **Clean Up Volunteer Corps - Kuri**

The way volunteerism is going; most people are not interested in a long term commitment. There is an “iLearn program” online that could be designed online for a cemeteries clean-up class. When people pass the program, they can print out their certificate afterwards and Kuri would keep their information. When cemeteries need a volunteer, that information can be passed along to them.

People who know the rules can be helpful and this might get some great publicity. It can also be tied to Obama's volunteer promotion which may get people to become more proactive in their community. People can become somewhat official and help out as many cemeteries as they'd like. This would be a great brown bag lunch discussion item.

#### **Upcoming meetings and workshops**

The next meeting is scheduled for October 23<sup>rd</sup> in Silverton in conjunction with the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation meeting. This will be the meeting where the grant selection is approved.

Comments, ideas and suggestions for workshop topics can be given to Kuri as they come up. Workshop suggestions were: Education in Cemeteries workshop, Volunteers

workshop, Headstone Cleaning workshop, Mapping/Surveying workshop. These and other workshop will be announced as people become interested.

Upcoming meetings: March 5<sup>th</sup>, the last Friday of April, early July, mid-Sept. and late Oct. Times and locations will be announced.

The pre-Memorial Day campaign for marker cleaning is to promote the correct way to clean markers, which cemeteries are on board with. To make it fun a suggestion was to give out stickers or to give “Headstone Heroes” awards. Commissioners were encouraged to think about a good pre-Memorial Day promotion that could be in March or April.

There won't be a Heritage Extravaganza meeting next year but there will three regional one-day conferences that will be held throughout western and southern Oregon.

### **Public Comment**

Shari commented on how much information she's gleaned from being here at the meeting. The mapping workshop would be good to get more information on. They just purchased a new lawnmower which helps care for their cemetery. It would be suggested to pickup the Heritage Bulletins and other information available.

Lynn mentioned that he would be glad to come and attend one of their board meetings to have the presence of a Commissioner there. Their next meeting is on Tuesday.

### **Meeting Adjourned**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

### **Cemetery Tour**

**Tour of Juniper Haven Cemetery 4:15 p.m.-5:00 p.m.**