

Minutes

Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries

Conference Call Meeting

Salem, OR

June 13, 2012, 1:00pm-2:00pm

1:00 – 4:00 OCHC Public Business Meeting

I. Welcome and Introductions (5 min)

Present: Dirk Siedlecki, Bob Keeler, Mike Leamy, Diana LaSarge

Excused: Diane Elder, Judy Juntunen, Ken Phillips

Guests: Meagan Atiyah, Jodie Jones, Annie Han, Daniel Mihalyo

II. Oregon State Hospital Memorial Project

Siedlecki opened the meeting to discussion the Oregon State Hospital Memorial project. This is a public art project funded by the Oregon Arts Commission. Meagan Atiyah with the Oregon Arts Commission was asked to start the presentation.

Atiyah noted some points about this project.

-She believes it is the most important memorial that the OAC has been involved in.

-It is emotionally and politically charged.

-People have divergent opinions of how it should be handled.

-There is still a lot of work ahead.

The project is being completed using guiding principles of what it should be.

-safe, respectful resting place

-meaningful history

-mental health community

-change to history

-contemplation and security

-age gracefully

-honest & transparent

The artists were selected from a National competition, they were selected for several reasons including:

-sensitivity to history

-approach was honest and open in a respectful way.

Atiyah pointed out some key issues

-3500 cremains are nearly entirely documented

-OAC and the State Hospital are working government to government with Tribes to care for the Native American remains.

-canisters are corroded to structural failure.

-the building to be used was recommended by the cremains committee

-OAC is consulting chemistry and conservation experts to find out if the remains can be fully separated from the canisters and to develop a process and care report for the handling of the canisters.

-Current information is that corrosion can be stopped with the right climate control.

-The project is supported by NAMI and MHA

-All aspects of the project will be carried out following all applicable laws.

Artists presented the project.

Siedlecki initiated questions from the commissioners

Siedlecki – Is there is a limited timeframe for the claiming of remains? No, they will always be available.

Keeler – In the previous meeting it was thought that it wasn't possible to completely remove the cremains from the canister, that they are fused. The OAC is working on a chemist report and conservation report. According to the OAC, the current understanding is that if they are fused, it is on the atomic level.

Keeler – What is the cost comparison for this compared to the back up plan. Jones noted that this project is funded by the one percent program and so the cost to the State Hospital will be the same either way.

La Sarge – Will people claiming remains also get the canister? Yes, part of the design is to celebrate the claims.

Leamy – Copper is valuable. What is the security? There will be video surveillance, secure glazing, and 24x7 staff security is about 200ft away. There are historic windows that can't be altered, but they have metal mesh covering.

There will be a museum. The entire project will be documented and there will be a brochure.

Discussion

Leamy – The cremain fusion question has been answered.

Siedlecki – That was the biggest concern.

Keeler – If the report is that the remains that can be separated, it could be appropriate.

LaSarge – It may be hard to tell which of remains are Native American or not.

Siedlecki – Everybody has the right to a final resting place.

Keeler - They won't remain where they are now, so the decision about their final resting place is happening now.

Keeler – Proposed a letter to the OCA and the Oregon State Hospital that the commission goes along with this concept if:

-it is feasible to fully remove remains from canisters

-vigorous pursuit of repatriation by communicating with the Tribes

-that it not be more expensive

Seconded by Mike Leamy Approved.

III. Meeting adjourned.