

**VILLAGE OF CHAGRIN FALLS
CEMETERY COMMISSION
January 11, 2017**

Members present: Trace, White, Carr
Also present: Arnold, Brockway, Buddenhagen

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Mr. Trace.

ORGANIZATION

Moved by Mrs. White, seconded by Mrs. Carr that Mr. Trace serve as Chairman of the Cemetery Commission for the year 2017. Carried. Ayes: Trace, White, Carr. Nays: None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Mrs. Carr, seconded by Mrs. White that the Board of Cemetery Trustees minutes dated December 14, 2016 be approved. Carried. Ayes: Trace, White, Carr. Nays: None.

AVAILABLE GRAVES/EXPANSION

Mr. Arnold reported that there are less than one 100 full-burial graves available. In Section 53 there are only 15 of the \$600 cremation-only graves available and in Section 3C there are only 50-75 of the \$1,200 cremation-only graves available. There are still 27 niches available in the columbarium and all four benches have been sold. At this rate Evergreen Hill Cemetery will be closed to new purchases within three years. A plan for expansion is much needed. Mr. Trace suggested that the village hires an actual cemetery engineer for the planning of the expansion.

CIVIL WAR MEMORIAL

There was general discussion regarding the refurbish project.

FOUNDATIONS FOR HEADSTONES

There was discussion regarding offering complimentary foundations for headstones for veterans.

MISCELLANEOUS

Price increases will be discussed at the next meeting along with possibly adding a second columbarium to Evergreen Hill Cemetery.

The meeting adjourned at 10:08 a.m.

Larry Trace, Chairman
lgb

On September 10, 1867, the Village of Chagrin Falls dedicated a monument to the 21 soldiers who gave their lives in the war of the rebellion. The monument was erected on a hill in Evergreen Hill Cemetery and for years dominated the skyline of the Village. The monument was a daily reminder of the sacrifice that 'Chagrin Boys' made to preserve the Union—and of the sacrifice of the Villagers who were deeply effected by the war. This monument was born out of the pain and suffering of a small Village, and we believe it was one of the first of its kind erected following the war. For almost 150 years the monument has been the centerpiece for Memorial Day activities in Chagrin Falls.

The monument is in disrepair, and without restoration will be lost.

A private donor provided funds to have the monument assessed by Mark Erdman, objects conservator for the Intermuseum Conservation Association. The cost for a total restoration is estimated to be around \$120,000. A copy of his assessment is attached.

There are many organizations and individuals in the Chagrin Valley who are willing to provide some funds for the restoration of this monument, but they are also aware of ORC 5901.37 which states that the County has responsibility for the cost of restoration and ask the question, "what is the County going to do to meet their obligation under ORC 5901.37.

We would like to be able to have the monument fully restored in time to rededicate it on September 10, 2017, 150 years after its original dedication. Our timeline would be to have the necessary funds in hand by May of 2017, and following Memorial Day activities begin the restoration.

John Bourisseau, a local American Legion member and President of the Chagrin Falls Historical Society, has spoken to Jack Schron about this project. Ted Prasse, President of the Cuyahoga Soldiers and Sailors Monument Commission is also involved. We would like to meet with you to discuss the Counties commitment to our endeavors at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely

CEMETERIES

Continued from B1

"When it was originally laid out, the plots were significantly smaller than are required today. And because of its age, we were concerned about disrupting an existing grave."

Few have requested burial there in recent years, said Bodnar. And the township's Africa Cemetery has ample future capacity for those who do.

But the burial stoppage underscores a growing concern: the aging population and limited land use.

"Eventually all cemeteries will have to consider this," said Scott Harmon, president of the Ohio Cemetery Association. "It's going to be an obstacle that each township will have to explore."

While it's been said that the true character of a community is best judged by how it takes care of its cemeteries, operators treat cemetery grounds much like miniature housing developments, with engineering, landscape design and master plans, said Harmon, who operates Dover Cemetery in Tuscarawas County.

Pre-purchased burial plots and the uncertain timing of death can create planning challenges, said Harmon, who said he has not heard of many cemeteries closing people out. The Dover Cemetery should have capacity for at least another 100 years.

The Ohio Department of Commerce keeps a registry of Ohio's 4,000 public and private cemeteries. But it doesn't track when they reach capacity or have to turn away business, said spokeswoman

Lindsey Burnworth.

A national expert said cemeteries were built long ago, driven by supply and demand, to be near people and to serve them for generations.

"They're the only business that has to service what they sell forever," said Robert Fells, executive director and general counsel of the Virginia-based International Cemetery Cremation and Funeral Association, a national trade association. Most have endowment care accounts comprised of a percentage of revenue that must go toward perpetual maintenance.

When cemeteries become landlocked, as often happens in urban areas, "we call them dormant cemeteries, when they run out of spaces." But many in rural areas "have so much acreage, that even 200 years from now they will not have used it all."

The rise of cremation has taken some of the pressure off cemetery land, Fells said.

"The cremation rate is nationally about 50 percent," he said. "That alone has extended the useful life of many cemeteries."

Funeral directors point to options other than burial, including columbaria that store ashes, said Melissa Sullivan, executive director of the Ohio Funeral Directors Association. Cemeteries, she said, likely will have to eventually expand into less-developed areas.

"Are you having to move further out? Probably," she said. "But we still have quite a bit of ground. And we're having more and more choices."

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ORANGE TOWNSHIP Cemeteries running out of room

By Dean Narciso
The Columbus Dispatch

Cemeteries have only so much space. And yet with an endless supply of new customers, they rarely have to put up "no vacancy" signs.

This week, tiny Williams-ville Cemetery in Orange Township in Delaware County essentially did that, declaring that it was suspending new burials because the grounds had reached their useful capacity.

"It's an old, aged cemetery," said Lee Bodnar, Orange Township administrator.

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CM/K