

# Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries

## Meeting Minutes

Milwaukie Community Club

10666 SE 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave. Milwaukie, OR

October 23, 2009 / 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Kendell Phillips, Judy Juntunen-Chair, Dirk Siedlecki-Vice Chair, Diana LaSarge, Robert Keeler, Mike Leamy

**EXCUSED:** Lynn Reagan

**STAFF:** Kuri Gill

**GUESTS AND PROPONENTS:** Carol Surrency (OHCA), W.L. “ Andy Andersen (Fairgrove Cemetery), Becky Oswald (Friends of Lone Fir Cemetery), Stanley Clarke, Bob & Alice Leitner (Etna Cemetery), Judy Goldmann (Harrison Cemetery), Lynne Pagan (OHCA), Barb Ledbury (Damascus Pioneer Cemetery), Linda VanOrden (Milliorn Cemetery), Bob Biswell (Milliorn Cemetery)

### **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**

Corrections were submitted from Diana, Bob, Dirk and Ken. **A motion was made by Ken to approve the April minutes and Bob seconded it. All approved and it passed unanimously.**

### **Additions to the Agenda**

None.

**Kimberly Howard of the Oregon Cultural Trust offered general information about the trust.**

### **Commissioner Comments/Reports**

- **Dirk** held a brown bag meeting on Aug 13 that included two presentations. One was about a weed abatement program and one was about the Rogue Valley Genealogical Society cemetery information on their website. Two presentations were too much. Participants look forward to the sharing time and that seems to be a high priority for the group. He will host a November or December brown bag meeting.

They held the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Meet the Pioneers. Over 650 attended which was down only 7%. The October clean up day brought in 136 bags of leaves.

**Bob** – He is working on a position paper about pet burials and historic cemeteries. He has discovered a variety of laws and policies related to the topic.

He attended the August marker repair training in Hillsboro hosted by the OHCA. It was a great workshop.

**Ken** He will hold a brown bag meeting on Nov. 6 at the Josephine County Historical Society. If all the folks invited attend, there should be around 40 people.

He is researching Wilderville & Sloane Pioneer cemeteries.

He served on the grant selection committee. It was an interesting process.

- **Mike** He works at the Greenwood Cemetery in Astoria, which was established in 1891. The oldest death date is 1868. He shared some stories of the how burials used to take place at the cemetery.

He wrote the marker replacement position paper.

**Diana** She recorded Agency Cemetery and Homily (sp?) Cemetery. She discovered issues with Star Thistle and has since worked with CTUIR to put a weed eradication program in place.

She has fielded several calls from people in the region – some folks from Ontario and one about a cemetery near Starky.

She attended the Hillsboro marker repair training as well.

A person in possession of a Native American skull was linked by evidence to vandalism in Luper Cemetery sometime in 2008, but he wasn't convicted of the Luper crime. The skull will be appropriately cared for by CTUIR.

She visited the BC museum and attended a radio program. The topic was historic cemeteries and burial practices so she learned, shared and discussed the issue with those folks.

**Judy** A Polk County cemetery group has invited Judy to speak. She hasn't been able, but has coordinated other related presenters for them.

She was featured in the Boomer News publication. This resulted in a call about Hilltop cemetery.

She wrote the position paper on preserving paper records. She discusses the value of pictures of markers in context and the whole landscape of the cemetery rather than only ones of markers alone. She also gave a reminder that current records should be saved as well.

There was some discussion about digital records.

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

The selection committee met on October 15, 2009.

**Ken moved that all grants proposed by the committee, excluding the CTUIR, Friends of Jacksonville Historic Cemetery and Benton County, be approved. Bob seconded. Passed unanimously.**

**Ken moved that the Benton County grant be approved. Seconded by Diana. Judy stated that she is a volunteer with the county for the cemetery and that she advised on the grant and the project. Judy abstained from voting. Passed unanimously.**

**Bob moved that the Friends of Jacksonville Historic Cemetery grant be approved. Seconded by Ken. Dirk stated that he is a volunteer with the Friends he advised on the grant and the project and that he will participate on the project. Dirk abstained from voting. Passed unanimously.**

**Dirk moved that the CTUIR be approved. Seconded by Bob. Diana stated that she works for the CTUIR, that she advised on the grant and the project and that she will work on the project. Diana abstained from voting. Passed unanimously.**

The next grant deadline will be April 2, 2010 and OCHC will approve the grants at the May meeting.

### **Position Papers**

General – These should be viewed as working documents, they are changeable. The author should be noted for OCHC records, but the position paper should be by the OCHC.

Dowsing – Ken did further research and found no solid evidence to support dowsing for graves. He didn't feel that the commission could strongly take a position on this matter. Kuri suggested that the OCHC have an educational document about all the ways that graves can be found without digging including pros, cons, cost, results, etc. This will be a very useful document and help the grant process as well. Ken and Bob agreed to help with this document.

Marker replacement – All agreed with the document in general. Kuri brought up a concern for the use of replicas. All were in agreement that it should be included as an option, but that for preservation purposes, the OCHC doesn't want people to use exact replicas. Kuri will edit this in and send via email for consensus.

Records – All liked the paper. We should include a small statement of the value of a digital version. This version should be update with current software, media, etc. They should keep an additional copy of that as well. There was short discussion about the web locations for info storage. Kuri will edit and email it out for consensus.

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

Kyle Jansson of the Oregon Heritage Commission discussed the “white paper” that will be created by the OCHC based on various input and research. He asked for people’s input.

The OCHC will approach OPRD director Tim Wood to incorporate the historic cemetery definition change into the OPRD legislative proposal. We need to gather information about the cemeteries that are not included, ones that have or cannot taken advantage of the vandalism law that apply restitution for the punishment. If he will not include it, we will ask his blessing to pursue it another way.

Diana will compile some data on the cemeteries that would be included should the date change. Judy will help compile information and attend the meeting.

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

This will be a winter project for Kuri. Dirk agreed to review the training.

### **Upcoming meetings and workshops**

Kuri gave suggested meeting dates, locations and topics and asked for input from others.  
March 5, 2010 Meeting; March 6 Cemetery Records workshop – Willamette Valley  
May 7, 2010 Meeting; May 8 Marker cleaning workshop – Columbia or Clatsop County  
July 23, 2010 Meeting; July 24 workshop (need suggestions) – Klamath Falls  
November 5, 2010 Meeting; November 6 workshop (need suggestions) – Mosier?

### **Public Comment**

Bob Biswell – Commented on vandalism. He noted that having the informational brochure at the cemetery has really helped with the vandalism problem. He is working the Junction City High School service teams. This is a good way to step vandalism and get work done.

Linda VanOrden – She has had work on inaccurate information on the internet including Find-A-Grave. She also shared her article about the discovery of the grave marker during the cemetery workshop.

Becky Oswald – She thanked the OCHC for the grant. This is a big day for the Friends group and for her. She promised to put the money to good use. She stated that the OCHC has done a great job of sharing its mission in the last few years. People count on the commission for information and support.

She also shared the story of a lost angel stone. Since they have done some work on a shed at the cemetery, it is now a "headstone hospital." Metro gathered all the odds and ends from all the storage areas and brought them to the hospital. The angel that was thought to be gone appeared with these items. The friends plan to repair her in summer 2010.

**Meeting Adjourned**

Ken moved that the meeting be adjourned. Bob seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 4:30.