



# County of El Dorado Cemetery Advisory Committee

## **Committee Members:**

Creighton Avila, Deputy CAO, Cemetery Director  
Julianne Melchor, Cemetery Director Alternate  
Melinda Peak, District I, Second Vice Chair  
Mary Tran, District II, First Vice Chair  
Mike Roberts, District III, Chair  
Frank Clark, District IV  
Vacant, District V

John Hidahl, Board of Supervisors  
Kathy Witherow, BOS Alternate  
Sgt. Eric Palmberg, Coroner's Office  
Charlane Gross, Archeological Representative  
Ramona Tripp-Verbeck, Native American Cemeteries  
Mark McCusker, Fraternal Organizations

## **MINUTES November 20, 2019**

- 1) The meeting was called to order by Chair Mike Roberts at 3:00 p.m.
  - a. Committee members present: Creighton Avila, Julianne Melchor, Melinda Peak, Mary Tran, Mike Roberts, John Hidahl, Sgt. Eric Palmberg, Ramona Tripp-Verbeck, Mark McCusker.
  - b. Staff present: Roger Runkle.
  - c. The agenda was adopted, with a motion by Mary Tran and a second by John Hidahl.
- 2) The minutes from September 25, 2019, were approved with a motion by Mary Tran and a second by Mark McCusker.
- 3) Introductions and announcements: No introductions.
- 4) Staff reports:
  - a. Julianne Melchor distributed the burial counts (due at the October meeting, which didn't have a quorum). During November there were a total of 8 burials in county cemeteries, the highest number per month handled to date. Staff will avoid selling plots in Placerville Union Cemetery walkways unless absolutely necessary. Work being done by several volunteers has helped identify areas without burials or pre-sales and approximately 50+ various-sized plots could be available for sale. Findings from GPR studies and scouring of current and older records will confirm where plots are available.
  - b. Changes to the cemetery fee schedule.
    - i. A "Marker Deposit" fee of \$500 has been added to the fee schedule. Its purpose is to ensure that each burial site receives a marker. If a marker is not placed within one year by the family, the county will place a simple marker. The fee covers: \$200 for the marker and engraving (which will include the person's name and dates), and \$200 to install the marker at the site. If the family does place a marker within a year

of the burial, they will receive a \$450 refund. The remaining \$50 is retained to cover administrative costs for tracking deposits, notifications, and field checks to verify markers.

- ii. The “Companion” fee was deleted from the fee schedule, and the “Administration” fee will be applied at the time of an interment instead of when a plot, niche or crypt is purchased. Staff will distribute the revised fee schedule at the December meeting.

5) Discussion and action items:

- a. Field trip to Kilgore Cemetery: The date is not yet determined but by consensus Mike will try to schedule it on a weekend day in January. At the December meeting it will be discussed in the Old Business agenda.
- b. Zone of Benefit: The Board of Supervisors voted in favor of forming a cemetery Zone of Benefit, subject to 66% approval of the related ballot measure. The ballot measure will be placed on the ballot in November 2021, not in March 2020 as originally planned. This will allow additional time to conduct outreach in the community (by interested supporters) to promote cemetery care. The current general fund liability for cemetery maintenance is approximately \$250,000 per year. Creighton Avila will report back to the CAC on the ballot measure periodically, as things develop.
- c. The Save the Graves events that took place on Oct. 25 (V.I.P. event) and Oct. 26 were very successful. About 300 people participated in the Saturday event; about 75 attended the V.I.P. event. The response was very positive and planning for next year has already started. Funds were raised from various sources: \$5,300 from donations, \$8,000 from ads in the souvenir booklet, \$3,400 from tickets, \$500 from the Masons.

6) Old business:

- a. Changes to the Board Resolution that formed the CAC: No further action has happened.
- b. NCIC information exchange: No further action has happened.

7) Representative Reports:

- a. District I, Melinda Peak: No report was possible because the Green Valley widening project has made visiting the Mormon Island Cemetery unsafe.
- b. District II, Mary Tran: Weeds and brush have been cleared in the Bryant, Fairplay, and Shingle Springs Cemeteries. However, there are still numerous fallen trees lying around in the Grizzly Flats Cemetery. Creighton Avila confirmed that the Grizzly Flats Cemetery is not owned by the county, so it will be removed from lists of county cemeteries and the CAC need not report on its condition. The list of County-owned cemeteries will be distributed at the next CAC meeting.
- c. District III, Mike Roberts: No report.

- d. Coroner's Office, Sgt. Eric Palmberg: The new Sheriff's Department complex, located at 200 Industrial Drive (just off Missouri Flat Road) has a morgue, and funds have been made available for improved cremains storage; cremains had previously been stored at Green Valley Cemetery.
- e. Native American cemeteries, Ramona Tripp-Verbeck: No report.
- f. Fraternal Organizations: Mark McCusker: On Feb.4, 2020, the Masons will conduct a Cornerstone Dedication for the new Sheriff's Building.
- g. Kelsey Cemetery District, Ray LeVitt: The Kelsey Cemetery District has met the requirements to place a measure on the March 2020 ballot (Measure C). It will need 1,500 votes to pass. If it passes, they will have \$1,800 - \$1,900 available for cemetery maintenance. This is necessary because the District (originally formed in 1938) lost its Post Office in the 1960s and lost funding from parcel taxes in 1978 following passage of the State Prop 13.

#### 8) Public Comment

- a. Marilyn Gillum expressed her opinion that the county is doing a very poor job of cemetery maintenance, failing to keep the county cemeteries clean and safe. Her specific concerns were 1) poor use/non-use of budgeted funds for cemetery care, and 2) excess barriers and red tape making it too hard for volunteers to contribute to cemetery care. Creighton Avila will discuss the cemetery budget with the CAC at the January meeting.
- b. In response, Roger Runkle, Deputy County Counsel, explained that some of the paperwork was necessary to prevent lawsuits against the county in case of injury to volunteers. Creighton Avila explained that contracting for services was a very complex and lengthy process, making it difficult to obtain the necessary contracts to provide landscape maintenance services until later in the year. Julianne Melchor explained that Facilities usually begins landscape maintenance in cemeteries in January/February, but due to staffing shortages this year, most of the maintenance was not begin until late summer, once landscape maintenance contracts were finalized.

9) Next meeting: December 18, 2019. Agenda items are due two weeks before the meeting. Chair Mike Roberts plans to lead a discussion of CAC goals.

10) Adjournment: Mary Tran made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Staff: Mary Cory, Administrator, El Dorado County Museum  
Roger Runkle, Office of County Counsel  
Sherrie Busby, Administrative Services Officer, CAO Office, Airports and Cemeteries Division  
Julie Hart, Administrative Technician, CAO Office, Airports and Cemeteries Division

*Copies of attachments will be available at the meeting. Advance copies may be obtained by calling Julianne Melchor at (530) 621-5910. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you are a disabled person and need a disability-related modification or accommodation to participate in the meeting, please contact Julianne Melchor at (530) 621-5910. Requests must be made as early as possible, and at least one full business day before the start of the meeting.*