

# New Philadelphia City Council

## Public Works & Economic Development Committee

### Meeting Notes

July 28, 2014

6:30 p.m.

**Present for all or portions of the meeting were the following:** Committee chairman Darrin Lautenschleger and committee members Sandy Cox and Rob Maurer; City Council members Cheryl Ramos, John Zucal and Dan Lanzer; City Council President Sam Hitchcock; Clerk of Council Patti McKay; Mayor Dave Johnson; Service Director James Zucal; Safety Director Greg Popham; City Law Director Marvin Fete; City Treasurer Beth Gundy; Nathan Cozart of WTUZ Radio; and city residents Mark Cox and Ethan Zucal.

**Items To Be Discussed:** Proposed Ordinance 13-2014 and city cemetery land discussion.

Chairman Lautenschleger said that proposed Ordinance 13-2014 is the public records request policy for the city that needs to be approved by City Council. The policy is based on the Ohio Attorney General's Model Public Records Request Policy that was reviewed by the committee at a recent meeting and provided to the law director for review and consideration. Mr. Fete has made the appropriate updates and has submitted it to the committee for final review.

On a motion by Ms. Cox, seconded by Mr. Maurer, the committee voted unanimously (3-0) to place Ordinance 13-2014 on the agenda for first reading at the Aug. 11, 2014, regular session of City Council and recommend passage of the legislation on third reading.

Chairman Lautenschleger opened a discussion about the city cemetery land space by reminding committee members that the assignment from President Hitchcock involves reviewing the space issues that the cemetery is currently dealing with, along with reviewing the future of the city's cemetery services as requested by Mayor Johnson.

Lautenschleger said he recently met with the cemetery service staff members and a member of the City Cemetery Board of Trustees and that he believes that along with the space issues, there are numerous other items that have been identified and must be considered as a part of how the city will manage its future cemetery services. (The city manages three cemetery locations, the Fair Avenue Cemetery and the side-by-side cemeteries of East Avenue and Evergreen Burial Park off Delaware Dr. SE.)

These items include:

1. There no longer are family grave spaces of two or more plots available for purchase at the city cemeteries. Many families from New Philadelphia are going outside the city to purchase family spaces. There are some single spaces available for purchase.
2. The potential for the purchase of additional cemetery land exists, but a plan to pay for it must be developed and management issues depending on location of any additional land will need to be considered as a part of any expansion.
3. Even if the city decides not to expand beyond its current locations, there are pre-purchased grave spaces that will be used in upcoming decades and routine

maintenance of the facilities will continue. The city has an estimated 35,000 markers to mow and trim around.

4. The current cemetery service office building is old, it is not in ADA compliance, does not have air conditioning and is inadequate for providing an acceptable level of customer service. In addition, the computer hardware and software used by the staff is old and outdated.
5. Maintenance equipment used by the cemetery staff members is stored at several locations around the city, which can hamper routine operations. The cemetery staff consists of three full-time employees, one part-time employee and four seasonal (summer) employees.
6. Areas originally set aside as walkways and roads have been utilized as grave space in recent years, adding to routine maintenance. In addition, the roads in the cemeteries are crumbling in many locations.
7. The Cemetery Board of Trustees has not met for many years, according to records on file.

Because of these issues, it would be impossible and imprudent to consider any recommendation or advice to full Council and the city on the cemetery operations, Lautenschleger said. In order to provide as broad-based of an effort and discussion as possible on these issues, he said he suggests that a meeting of the Cemetery Board of Trustees be convened as soon as practical and that some priorities be established between the members of the Cemetery Board and city administration. Lautenschleger said he plans to attend any meetings and to report back to the committee and City Council about any information and progress.

Mayor Johnson said he will contact the members of the Cemetery Board to determine their level of interest in continuing on the Board, and to establish a meeting date.

With no other business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Darrin Lautenschleger  
Committee Chairman