

1 Minutes of the Centerville City Council **work session** held Wednesday, March 1, 2017 at 7:00  
2 p.m. in the Centerville City Council Chambers, 250 North Main Street, Centerville, Utah.

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4 **MEMBERS PRESENT**

5  
6 Mayor Paul A. Cutler  
7  
8 Council Members Tamilyn Fillmore  
9 William Ince  
10 Stephanie Ivie  
11 George McEwan  
12 Robyn Mecham

13  
14 **STAFF PRESENT**

15 Steve Thacker, City Manager  
16 Lisa Romney, City Attorney  
17 Bruce Cox, Parks and Recreation Director  
18 Kevin Campbell, City Engineer  
19 Jacob Smith, Assistant to the City Manager  
20 Katie Rust, Recording Secretary

21 **STAFF ABSENT**

22 Blaine Lutz, Finance Director/Assistant City Manager

23 **CEMETERY WEST SLOPE ANALYSIS**

24  
25 Mayor Cutler introduced the topic of discussion by commenting that the possibility of  
26 expanding cemetery space in Centerville is an emotional issue, particularly in two ways: there  
27 are citizens with the expectation that they will be able to bury a loved one in Centerville; and  
28 there are neighbors of the cemetery that would like their backyard space and their desires to be  
29 respected. The Mayor emphasized that the purpose of the work session is to receive technical  
30 information regarding the possibility of expanding the cemetery with a retaining wall along the  
31 west portion of the cemetery. Kevin Campbell, City Engineer, showed photographs of the west  
32 side of the cemetery and adjacent properties. The existing slope is approximately 25% grade  
33 (25 foot drop over 100 feet). A 2-4% grade is ideal for cemetery use. Mr. Campbell presented  
34 four scenarios analyzed by staff.

- 35  
36 • Option (B) – A terraced format with an eight-foot wall adjacent to the Ford and  
37 Tanner properties, and a six-foot wall 30 feet east of the eight-foot wall. The  
38 estimated cost of this option is approximately \$859 per burial space, with 682  
39 additional burial spaces.  
40

41 Mr. Campbell explained that the terraced format of Option B would not work  
42 operationally, and is the most expensive of the options analyzed per burial space. Bruce Cox,  
43 Parks and Recreation Director, explained the process and equipment involved in digging a  
44 burial space. He explained that Option B does not provide adequate space for necessary  
45 equipment.

- 46  
47 • Option (A) – A twelve-foot wall along the Ford and Tanner properties, and an eight-  
48 foot wall (i.e. exposed portion) along the Decker and Heller properties. The  
49 estimated cost of this option is approximately \$685 per burial space, with 700  
50 additional spaces.  
51

52 Mr. Campbell emphasized that all walls would have a 42-inch safety fence on top, and a  
53 six-foot space between the existing Ford privacy wall and the new retaining wall. Mr. Cox  
54 explained requirements for putting burial vaults in place.

- 1 • Option (C) – An eight-and-a-half-foot wall along the Ford and Tanner properties, and  
2 a six-and-a-half-foot wall along the Decker and Heller properties. This option would  
3 allow five rows instead of the six rows possible with Options (A) and (B). The  
4 estimated cost would be approximately \$807 per burial space, with 490 additional  
5 spaces.
- 6
- 7 • Option (D) – An eight-and-a-half-foot wall along the Ford and Tanner properties, with  
8 no new wall along the Decker and Heller properties. The estimated cost of this  
9 option is approximately \$627 per burial space, with 450 additional spaces.

10  
11 Mr. Campbell explained that staff considered using a rock wall, but ruled it out due to  
12 insufficient structural integrity. Richard Mickelson, a member of the audience, asked if the City  
13 has considered adding new cemetery space elsewhere in the city, considering the estimated  
14 cost of the expansion. Mayor Cutler responded that he has spoken with several owners of  
15 undeveloped property in the city, and all have indicated they could get more money from  
16 residential development of their properties. Mr. Thacker stated that over a four-year period the  
17 City sold an average of 122 burial rights per year, and the city digs approximately 75 burial sites  
18 per year. Mr. Thacker stated that in the last few years the city has only sold burial rights to  
19 nonresidents at time of need. Mayor Cutler commented that basic calculations show the cost of  
20 starting a new cemetery involves significant fixed costs. A municipal cemetery is a subsidized  
21 service, and the general trend is for cities to get out of the cemetery business. Mayor Cutler  
22 said the city has had conversations with Russon Brothers Mortuary regarding the possibility of  
23 partnering for mausoleum or columbarium space. The city is in the process of gathering facts  
24 and considering all options. Scott Cheney, a member of the audience, said he feels all  
25 alternatives should be considered, and said he believes the citizens would like to see the costs  
26 and benefits of all alternatives presented together.

27  
28 Mr. Mickelson suggested the better solution would have been for the city to purchase the  
29 Roberts property when it was available. Mr. Thacker responded that he and Mayor Hirschi  
30 approached the Roberts before their property was developed and made an offer based on an  
31 appraisal, and when that was rejected, he and Mayor Hirschi expressed interest in negotiating  
32 the price. He said his impression was the Roberts were advised that they would receive more  
33 money with development of a residential subdivision. Mr. Thacker said he did not see a  
34 willingness to negotiate with the city. The City Council has had several discussions over the  
35 years regarding possible use of the City's hillside property for cemetery space. Prior Councils  
36 chose not to pursue that idea, in part based on the cost of establishing infrastructure on the  
37 hillside. The current Council discussed the possibility of converting a portion of Island View  
38 Park to cemetery space, but a decision was made that residents near the park would probably  
39 not appreciate that option. Mr. Thacker said it is his opinion that the private sector will be able  
40 to meet the need, albeit at a greater price to the consumer.

41  
42 Mr. Cox presented a comparison of cemetery fees for cemeteries in Davis County.  
43 Councilwoman Fillmore commented that the Council has agreed they only want to take on the  
44 expansion project if it would pay for itself. The Council responded to a question from the  
45 audience stating they are absolutely considering the option of not doing anything. Councilman  
46 Ince asked those in attendance how many of them feel the City has a responsibility to provide  
47 burial space to citizens, with very little response. Councilwoman Fillmore asked how many  
48 already had purchased burial space, and almost all raised their hands.

49  
50 Mr. Thacker explained an approach recently authorized by the Council – The City  
51 contacted approximately 100 owners of four or more currently unused burial rights with an  
52 incentive to sell back unneeded rights to the City. No response has been received at this point.  
53 Mr. Cox clarified the City recently became aware that Island View Park was originally

1 constructed with Federal grant funds, requiring that the park continue as park use, or the funds  
2 would need to be repaid or equal park space replaced elsewhere in the community. The option  
3 to convert any portion of Island View Park to cemetery space is not receiving further  
4 consideration by the City Council.  
5

6 Mr. Campbell responded to a question from the audience stating that construction of any  
7 of the walls would probably take 3 months. Councilman McEwan pointed out that construction  
8 would need to cease when burials take place, which would extend the construction period. Mr.  
9 Mickelson asked if the City has considered purchasing the County-owned property on 100  
10 South for cemetery space. Mayor Cutler responded it has been considered at a conceptual  
11 level. The City is currently negotiating with the County to make sure the north portion of the  
12 property remains open public space. The County intends to sell the south portion for residential  
13 development.  
14

15 Bob Ford gave a presentation on behalf of a group of citizens (attached). He showed  
16 changes in elevation on the west side of the cemetery from 1983 to the present, and showed  
17 photographic evidence of water buildup along property lines on the west side of the cemetery.  
18 He listed concerns and issues with the retaining wall option (included in the attached  
19 presentation). Mr. Ford stated that the citizens he represents do not feel Centerville City needs  
20 to provide burial plots to citizens. The retaining wall option is a short-term solution, and any  
21 option would expose the City to perpetual and considerable liability.  
22

23 Jenny Decker, attorney and neighboring resident, stated that she would advise any client  
24 to include ongoing liability cost in the calculations. She applauded the Council for fully  
25 examining the options, and asked the City to fully consider the liabilities associated with a  
26 retaining wall. She said from experience she knows the City does not pay attention to the west  
27 portion of the cemetery. She added that failure of an engineered wall would invalidate her  
28 insurance policy whether the failed wall is on her property or not.  
29

30 Neil Tanner, neighboring property owner, presented personal research on construction  
31 costs for the proposed retaining wall, and said there would not be enough revenue to cover the  
32 costs. He presented his concerns, and suggested the City leave the western slope as it is. He  
33 suggested the City add a mausoleum wall on the east side of the cemetery, continue the  
34 repurchase program of unused spaces, and refer people to other cemeteries. A copy of his  
35 presentation is attached.  
36

37 Mr. Campbell explained the difficulties of using a rock wall in this situation. Responding  
38 to a question from Councilwoman Mecham, Mr. Campbell stated that maybe 1,000 burial  
39 spaces could fit in one acre of land. The Council emphasized that many options need to be  
40 analyzed and considered before a decision is made. Councilman Ince indicated he does not  
41 anticipate a decision on this issue soon. A member of the audience commented that the recent  
42 survey regarding parks and recreation was available to the entire community, and she feels the  
43 cemetery issue should also involve input from the entire community. The Council expressed  
44 their desire to receive input from those who would be impacted the most before moving forward.  
45 Councilwoman Mecham said she suspects a majority of Centerville citizens would indicate they  
46 are in favor of cemetery expansion. Mayor Cutler agreed that the drainage problem is a serious  
47 issue that needs to be resolved. He encouraged citizens to communicate their concerns to  
48 Deuel Creek Irrigation about the risk of breaks in the existing old irrigation water line.  
49

50 At 9:08 p.m. the Council took a break, returning at 9:26 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT AND CLOSED MEETING

At 9:26 p.m. Councilman Ince made a motion to adjourn the work session and move to a closed meeting in the Council Chambers for the purpose of discussing the character and competence of individuals. Councilwoman Ivie seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote (5-0). In attendance at the closed meeting were: Paul A. Cutler, Mayor; Council members Fillmore, Ince, Ivie, McEwan, and Mecham; Steve Thacker, City Manager; and Lisa Romney, City Attorney.

Marsha L. Morrow

Marsha L. Morrow, City Recorder

3-21-2017

Date Approved

Katie Rust

Katie Rust, Recording Secretary

