



Legislation Text

File #: 24-0125, **Version:** 1

Ad Hoc Cemetery Committee in conjunction with Planning and Building and the Cemetery Advisory Committee, recommending the Board dissolve the Cemetery Advisory Committee, and incorporate items A - G listed within the associated staff report into the existing Board-reviewed annual Cemeteries Work Plan as discussed at the December 19, 2023 meeting of the Cemetery Advisory Committee.

FUNDING: N/A

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

The Cemetery Advisory Committee (CAC) was formed in 2002 with specific goals which have largely been completed. On November 14, 2023, the Board of Supervisors appointed Supervisors Parlin and Turnboo to form an Ad Hoc Committee to formulate a plan for transitioning the Cemetery Advisory Committee's purpose.

The Ad Hoc Committee met on December 19, 2023, with the remaining members of the CAC to discuss dissolving the CAC and focusing on more hands-on efforts and programs, specifically:

- A. **Adopt-a-Cemetery-Project Program** (Ongoing) - The program was established in 2017 with a goal to facilitate and oversee projects that can be completed by volunteers that support County goals at each of the County-maintained cemeteries or result in a betterment at County-maintained cemeteries. The program is designed to provide oversight by Cemetery Administration, as well as to collect liability releases from individuals performing work in County-maintained cemeteries. Volunteers involved in this program often serve as an ongoing source of feedback to staff on issues they see when working in the cemeteries.
- B. **Updating the cemeteries maintenance plan** (April 2024) - To include the maintenance needs for each cemetery.
- C. **County support for Save the Graves, Inc.** (Save the Graves) (Ongoing) - Continued participation by Cemetery Administration staff as voting members on the Board of Save the Graves, in addition to providing support for Save the Graves events. As in item A, Save the Graves volunteers provide feedback to staff related to problems or opportunities they observe in County-maintained cemeteries.
- D. **Partnering with the Chamber of Commerce to promote cemetery tourism** (Quarters 1 and 2 of FY 24/25) - Work with the Chamber to develop supportive materials to be made available both online and in-person.
- E. **Retaining and building volunteer support for cemeteries** (Ongoing) - Similar to strategy "A" above, but more focused on recruiting and supporting volunteers, separately from Save the Graves, to support County goals for County-maintained cemeteries.
- F. **Identifying veterans' graves in County cemeteries** (December 2024) - In coordination with

local historical groups, non-profits, County staff, and Save the Graves.

G. Regular staff updates to the Board to monitor and support progress (Annual/Ongoing).

Staff are not requesting additional resources to carry out the above enumerated recommendations. Staff noted that the CAC, particularly because the committee is subject to Brown Act requirements, consumes a considerable amount of staff time with little positive results because the committee has been struggling to find appropriate goals within the confines of the committee structure. The newly proposed set of items should provide staff sufficient time to work on these new and ongoing tasks, and to provide support to the various volunteer and non-profit efforts that are underway and forthcoming.

During discussions with the CAC on December 19th, the general sentiment from committee members was mixed. On the one hand, members agreed that the list of items for the CAC to tackle was slim, but they were generally concerned about losing access to staff and the Board to discuss issues surrounding cemeteries. Ad Hoc Committee members and County staff assured committee members that the proposed structure would allow for continual participation and engagement on cemetery policy and maintenance, while allowing for additional bandwidth for volunteer activities and events related to Save the Graves. Continuing staff involvement as voting members of the Board of Save the Graves, as well as providing County staff support to Save the Graves for events and activities provides direct contact for feedback from volunteers who spend considerable numbers of hours on projects in County cemeteries. Ultimately, the committee members neither rejected nor supported the recommendations of the Ad Hoc as a collective body.

Additional items discussed by the Ad Hoc Committee and shared with the CAC included: promotion of the Adopt-a-Cemetery-Project Program to continue to recruit volunteers outside of Save the Graves; one-time funding from the County General Fund, suggested by the Board in Spring of 2023 (and reiterated by the Ad Hoc Committee) of \$218,000, to be spread across the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 and 2025-26 budgets that would enhance maintenance and increase services to County residents, which would complete the majority of the tasks related to those items on the Work Plan; transitioning all cemetery maintenance tasks to Cemetery Administration as opposed to the current split responsibilities between Cemetery Administration and Facilities; and a possible grant from the Board to support Save the Graves, focusing on projects to improve County cemeteries. Though these items were not specific action items for discussion at the joint Ad Hoc Committee/CAC meeting, staff is in support of these items and recommend the Board discuss these additional items to consider adding them to the updated Work Plan with items A - G listed above.

ALTERNATIVES

The Board could choose to implement any, all, or none of the ideas discussed by the Ad Hoc Committee.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION

The Board provided direction to staff and to the CAC Ad Hoc Committee at its regular meeting on November 14, 2023 (Legistar 23-2025, Item 28).

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

None

CAO RECOMMENDATION / COMMENTS

It is recommended that the Board provide direction on items A - G and direct staff to return to the Board with an updated Cemeteries Work Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The changes proposed in items A - G will not result in any additional costs to the Cemeteries Division, but may result in additional funding opportunities to support County cemeteries. The only additional item that would require additional funding by the Board is the one-time supplemental budget request of \$218,000 spread across the FY 24/25 and 25/26 budgets that would enhance maintenance and increase services to County residents. The original request for the one-time infusion was suggested by the Board in spring of 2023, and reiterated through the Ad Hoc Committee.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Good Governance

CONTACT

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