



## Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries Meeting

State law established the seven-member Commission to maintain a listing of all historic cemeteries and gravesites in Oregon; promote public education on the significance of historic cemeteries; and help obtain financial and technical assistance for restoring, improving and maintaining their appearances.

### **Commission Members:**

Milo Reed (Chair); Sarah Silbernagel (Vice Chair); Sarah Baylinson; Charlotte Lehan; Lisa Sears; Shawn Steinmetz  
OPRD Staff: Kuri Gill, Koren Tippett, Kellie Mingus

**Monday May 23, 2022  
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Zoom Meeting**

### **NOTES**

#### **1. Commission Business**

- a. Welcome and Introductions
  - i. All members were present and introduced themselves briefly.
  - ii. Kuri welcomed public guests listening in and advised we would have official notes posted rather than them selecting any link posted in the chat that might be a phishing attempt.
- b. Approval of May 23, 2022 Agenda
  - i. Kuri requested to add one item to the agenda regarding review of the cemetery permit program.
  - ii. Shawn moved to accept agenda with the proposed changed.
  - iii. Charlotte seconded the motion. The agenda was approved unanimously.
- c. Approval of February 4, 2022 Minutes
  - i. Shawn moved to approve as written. Charlotte seconded the motion.
  - ii. The minutes were approved unanimously.

#### **2. Public Comment**

- a. The Chair read the charge for the commission and welcomed the public to provide general comment.
- b. He indicated they should virtually “raise their hand” if they wish to make a comment.
- c. After no public comments were requested, the Chair closed the opportunity and moved on to the next agenda item.

#### **3. OPRD & Staff Update**

- a. Heritage Update

- i. The Heritage section has filled a position to provide technical resources to the Main Street Network, the Mentor Corp and Heritage Bulletins among some duties. Rachel Thomas, currently an archivist at George Fox University, will join us in June.
  - ii. The Oregon Heritage Conference – Virtual – Feedback Received
    - 1. Staff felt the event was successful and had great registration, participation and feedback.
    - 2. Kuri encouraged everyone to watch the Keynotes recordings. This year’s presenters had different perspectives and concepts helpful for our programs.
    - 3. Attendees reported the event was engaging and the tours and ability to move into sessions was different and appreciated.
    - 4. It was well-organized and had interesting keynote speakers.
    - 5. OPRD plans for 2024 to be an in-person event. Location still to be determined.
    - 6. The Excellence Awards will move to be every-other-year at the in-person event, but we will continue to create and use the videos.
  - iii. The Oregon Main Street Conference will be in-person in October in Klamath Falls.
  - iv. The Oregon Heritage Summit 2023 (the off year) will be virtual. This type of format really can support higher participation and networking and removes obstacles like travel, financial costs, lodging, etc.
- b. Land Acknowledgment Update
- i. We typically invite a tribal elder or elected official at the beginning of our conferences.
  - ii. Oregon Parks & Recreation Department Administration is collaborating with LCIS to determine what would be most appropriate to be meaningful.

#### 4. Commission Positions & Roles

- a. The Southern Oregon position recruitment failed
- b. We did some direct outreach efforts to LCIS and Southern Oregon tribes and advocacy commissions, counties, etc.
- c. We received a couple of questions of interest, but no applications. We continue to hope to have it filled by October if not July.

#### 5. Project Updates

- a. Cemetery Stories
  - i. These were the most visited blogs this year!
  - ii. Themes between now and the next meeting include:
    - 1. Pride Month - Joe Monahan is ready to go for June.
  - iii. Lisa is continuing with her effort on coastal cemeteries.
  - iv. There is a lovely story on Findagrave regarding unmarked graves for women in Tillamook. Lisa will connect with that author to try to obtain for Cemetery Stories.
- b. Remote Sensing Project – Sarah will update with comments and suggestion. Hopes to have a draft by next meeting.
- c. Invasive Species Project – Sarah will continue working on this.
- d. Heritage Bulletin Updates - no specific updates
- e. Report on Cemetery Care Permit Program
  - i. Program passed by the Legislature about 3 years ago so citizens may request to care for property when an owner is not accessible.
    - 1. They must connect with the County to check records and show a good faith effort to find owners or descendants.
    - 2. The first application is a bit more tedious, but the renewal is easier.

- ii. We have one request for German Hill Cemetery.
  1. Jim Moriarty, a volunteer, requests to be approved for another year.
  2. Jim is mostly clearing vegetation.
  3. These volunteers received some media coverage when they initially received the permit.

## 6. Grant Approval process

- a. The Grant Review Committee met with participation from Pete Burns, JC Opry and some of our commission members.
- b. There were 32 applications which is the highest of all grant programs this year except for the Main Street Grant.
- c. One grant awarded last year was cancelled, so we recycled the amount into this year's available funds to be \$195,000.
- d. We recommended 19 applicants for funding for projects like tree removal, marker restoration, interpretative features, kiosk, records and general cleanup.
- e. Awards spanned the state from Willamette Valley to the Central Oregon and the Northeast, Northwest, Southeast and Southwest areas of the state.
- f. Of the seven first-time applicants, five were awarded grants.
- g. Two rankings tied right at the funding break point. After discussing the projects again, the committee voted to split the remaining funds between the two applications.
- h. There were no recusals for any of the reviews.
- i. Shawn motioned to approve the rankings and fund the grants as presented. Charlotte seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## 7. Items for Future Meetings

- a. July 2022 Meeting
  - i. We were planning a Thursday evening event and a Friday morning tour.
  - ii. Due to the Track and Field Championship, the group agreed to hold the meeting virtually again.
- b. October meeting still planning for in-person in Wilsonville.

## 8. Reports: Commissioner Action and Issues

- a. July 21, 2022 – Virtual meeting
- b. October, 2022 – Wilsonville, tentatively. Possible meeting and training with the other commissions and committees. Kellie will work with committee members to arrange accommodations, etc.
- c. February 3, 2022 – Teleconference

Meeting adjourned **3:10 p.m.**