

CR 21-2016

Matthew Smithson - Cemetery Preservation Advisory Board

Lee, David K.

Sent: Friday, March 04, 2016 1:42 PM

To: CouncilMail

Cc: Feldmark, Jessica; Sager, Jennifer; Lazdins, Valdis; Burgess, Beth; fdorsey1130@verizon.net; Wilson, B Diane; Schrader, Sandy; Robbins, Lonnie

Attachments: Religious Rep Board 03221~1.docx (18 KB)

Councilmembers,

I am providing the following explanation in response to the testimony provided by Mr. Fred Dorsey regarding Mr. Smithson's qualifications for the Cemetery Preservation Advisory Board (CPAB).

Since the CPAB was reconstituted in 2013, Beth Burgess has made significant efforts to find a representative from the religious community and has been unsuccessful in soliciting any interest. Attached is an information sheet that Beth had revised in 2013 and distributed to the religious community as part of her efforts. Beth went through the CPAB's inventory of more than 200 cemeteries in the County, but there are not many active places of worship on that list.

Elizabeth Larney was appointed and confirmed in July 2015 to serve on the CPAB. She is willing to represent the church and is a member of a church and has pastoral experience. While she is not a pastor or clergy member, she has provided evidence of significant volunteer service for the St. Paul Roman Catholic Church in Ellicott City. Specifically, she is currently the Cemetery Restoration Committee Chair, actively served on the Pastoral Counsel for six years, and was a Religious Education instructor for four years. At the time of Ms. Larney's appointment, Beth Burgess and I agreed that given her extensive community involvement and Beth's struggles in trying to find a clergy member to serve, that Ms. Larney did represent the religious community, and she was willing to serve in that capacity.

The County Code requires two members of the general public to serve, the other qualifications required by the Code have been filled, and Mr. Smithson is being appointed as a member of the general public. Mr. Dorsey indicated in his testimony that he would support Mr. Smithson's appointment to the CPAB as a member of the general public. I spoke with Mr. Dorsey, discussed Beth's efforts to find a religious community representative and Ms. Larney's designation as the religious community representative, and confirmed his support for Mr. Smithson's appointment as a general public member.

Please let me know if I can provide additional clarification on this issue.

Thank you,

David K. Lee

Director of Constituent Services and Community Partnerships

Office of Howard County Executive Allan Kittleman

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Howard County Cemetery Preservation Advisory Board Roles and Responsibilities

We are seeking to complete our Cemetery Preservation Advisory Board (CPAB) for Howard County and are in need to fill the Religious Community Representative category for a Board Member. Each Board member should fulfill one of the following qualifications of expertise or representation:

- 5 members shall be residents of Howard County; the remaining can be from other counties
- 1 member shall represent the development / building industry
- 1 member shall represent the religious community
- 1 member shall represent the funeral-cemetery business
- 2 remaining shall have knowledge or training with preservation, genealogy, history, architecture etc who have knowledge and demonstrate and interest in the preservation of burial grounds
- 2 members shall represent the general public

We currently have 4 board members and have fulfilled all representation except for the religious community. If you have any interest in serving on this board then the following is the time commitment for each year.

- 4-5 board meetings a year typically on Tuesday mornings, typical 90 minute meetings (attendance of the majority of meetings are required)
- 1-3 Council sessions a year for the first few years as we update laws and regulations (not required but presence, support and testimony appreciated)
- 1-3 annual events to help with cemetery restoration or education within Howard- site visits, additional meeting/seminars (not required as board but presence is welcomed)
- 2-5 hours each month reading materials, communicating with board and making progress on goals (required to in order to be an active and effective member)
- As boards go, this is not a taxing commitment. There are no nightly or weekly tasks that will consume your schedule.

For the specific representation of the religious community, it would be beneficial but not required if:

- The member was a pastor, priest, rabbi or in an official ordained religious role to a congregation, synagogue or active religious body; a person retired from this role is acceptable.
- The member was familiar with historic cemeteries, for example: if their congregation owned a historic cemetery or a historic cemetery was adjacent to their facility, or the member has a connection or interest to historic burial grounds.
- The member was not over-tasked in other areas of his/her life where they don't have the time or focus to spend on the CPAB.

This Board shall have oversight of:

- The Howard Counties Historic Cemetery Inventory Map which currently has more than 200 sites inventoried
- The preservation of historic burial grounds through various means of education, projects, and initiatives
- The creation of laws, regulations and procedures that would be consider by County Council and the County Executive for implementation
- Ideas and opportunities to share with our citizens for the preservation of historic cemeteries

For any questions of these roles or this description, please contact Beth Burgess at bburgess@howardcountymd.gov or 410-313-4341

If interested in submitting your name for this Board, please send a letter of interest along with your bio/resume to the County Executive office attn: David Lee at DKLee@howardcountymd.gov or 410-313-3395