

MEETING SUMMARY – CEMETERY COMMITTEE

MONDAY JANUARY 23, 2012 1:00PM COMMUNITY CENTER BLDG

ATTENDANCE:

Chet Brooks...John Sumpter...Dee Ketchum...Titus Frenchman...Jenifer Pechonick...Curtis Zunigha

This was the first meeting of the committee. The purpose was to identify issues and make a plan to develop policies, procedures, and guidelines on the use of tribal cemeteries for burials of tribal members. The cemeteries being discussed are: Delaware, Busby, and Silverlake.

Discussion items included:

1. Who has title to each burial ground? Liability? (State and local law requirements)
2. These are restricted grounds. Who may be buried at these three grounds?
3. What tribal official/staff will be the contact person for burials?
4. Who shall maintain each burial ground?
5. What is the procedure to having the ground x-rayed?
6. Is there a diagram of where each grave is located and who is buried there?
7. Is there knowledge of how many lots are available at each burial ground?
8. Will there be a designated area for cremation remains with markers at each ground?
9. What are the Delaware Elder Committee concerns?
10. Do we prepare a list of individuals/companies who open and close graves for non-traditional interment? (This is a suggestion to help a family, however, the family is responsible for contacting the providers and paying them).
11. Are any of the grounds locked to vehicle traffic?

During discussion there were additional cemeteries identified for consideration: (a) Jackson-Falleaf (on Cotton Creek), (b) Lenno (west of Copan), (c) Whiteturkey, and (d) Beck (plot behind ball field in Bartlesville).

There is a need to obtain a topographic map of Washington County and in particular the area west of Copan.

The committee has been advised by Wayne Stull that the Washington County Commissioners would be willing to deed the Jackson-Falleaf and Silverlake cemeteries to the tribe but the tribe should set up a LLC (Limited Liability Corporation) to receive the deeds.

There are approximately twenty spaces remaining at the Delaware cemetery. John Sumpter stated that tribal elders should be given a priority in being allowed burial in the cemetery. He also stated the fences need repair and we should look at purchasing additional adjacent land to enlarge the cemetery.

There was a question as to who is the contact point if the need arises to bury someone at the tribal cemeteries. The response was the tribal enrollment office to confirm if the deceased is a tribal member.

The cemetery committee should develop and institute guidelines for contacting and setting up burials at tribal cemeteries. The tribal staff will then manage the burials according to the guidelines. This includes hiring contractors to open the grave and close it after the funeral.

Regarding the x-ray of tribal cemeteries, there has been a previous action to use ground-penetrating radar to plat out the Delaware cemetery but the file can't be found. Titus Frenchman said he knows a person at Cherokee Nation who can provide this service for us. He will contact them and make the request.

Suggestions were to also check with Brice Obermeyer of the Historic Preservation Office for assistance and resources. Titus Frenchman stated he would like to expand the committee to include people from the Nowata and Chelsea areas. Two names suggested were Edna Havens of Nowata and Martin Thomas of White Oak.

The next meeting was set for March 1 at 2:00pm.
