

Minutes: Friends of Geer Cemetery Meeting 4-10-2015 @ 2:30

Attendees:

Durham City Councilman, Eddie Davis
Durham County Commissioner, Fred Foster
Kevin Lilly
Tania Dautlick
Erin Victor
Dorothy Farrington
Bill Anderson
Ron Bartholomew
David Eustice
Jessie Eustice

REPORT FROM GENERAL SERVICES:

Report from Kevin Lilly on trees cut, equipment used, trees down

Gotten down without damage to stone.

There are no plans to work on the landscaping around the Geer Monument on Camden and Colonial.

Regarding the felled trees that have been cut into sections: some wood is useful and It will be gone

Eddie Davis: Salute to Kevin Lilly and crew.

April 20th will be ready to bring in volunteers.

REPORT FROM KEEP DURHAM BEAUTIFUL:

Tania Dautlick & Erin Victor: Renowned and Crossfit plan to use their bodies to work in Cemetery on clean up projects. Date [was] scheduled tentatively for April 25

On the dates to work in the Cemetery: gloves, trash bags litter grabbers available from Keep Durham Beautiful.

Erin Victor: asked about the property.

Kevin Lilly described it:

- 3 1/2 acres, still vey woody
- 2-3 solid weekends for initial clean up, probably 2, 3 more weekends after that.
- asked Tania about a sign up sheet for 2-3 clean ups

Tasks to accomplish on this clean-up day:

- Trash Picked up bagged

- KDB will provide water
- Leave bagged trash on the side of the road
- Kevin will see that it gets picked up--Urban forestry will help to remove the trash bags

Publicity needs to be done with before and after pictures. Volunteer groups might become interested if this publicity is out there about where the Cemetery is coming from and where it's going.

FUTURE VOLUNTEERS

Other organizations that might be contacted to help:

- Jr. League of Durham and Orange County.
- Preservation Durham--Wendy Hillis
- On Saturday April 25 White Rock Baptist Church group led by John Lucas might be interested
- Friendly rivalry between churches such as White Rock and St Joseph's may spur competitive Cemetery clean ups, for example.
- Bill Anderson suggests crafting an easy-to-digest statement to attract volunteers from the 900 hundred neighbors in The Duke Park Neighborhood, or even to INC.—He also suggested that Jessie Eustice send a new, updated article about Geer for the Duke Park Newsletter.

Jessie is to set up the Earlie E Thorpe Series for May 4th.

OWNERSHIP

It was observed, regarding ownership of the Cemetery, that abandoned Cemeteries belongs to the state, state delegates to county, county to city. City cannot take care of it, it remains unowned.

Bill Anderson talked about his conversation with Esquire Gene Tatum, after a call from the man who is known to try to complete quick claims on unclaimed land.

Commissioner Fred Foster says ultimately we want the city to take this on as a Cemetery Managed by the Department of Cemeteries, and that we should have a photographic history of the reclamation of Geer Cemetery through Kevin Lilly's work, General Services, and Keep Durham Beautiful.

WEBSITE

David Eustice presented information from Allen Dew, who said that the Facebook Group Page is very good since people around the country are on Facebook.

Allen Dew gave the information that the domain name costs \$15.00 per year and web hosting costs \$150.00 per year for a stand-alone website. He suggested that the newly reunited FOGC could set up a yahoo email list if needed.

Would Allen Dew be willing to maintain the Friends of Geer Website if the web page was linked to the Duke Park Neighborhood Association, and vice versa? Yes.

CONNECTION TO STAGVILLE

Eddie Davis mentioned a discussion he had with Stephanie Hardy of Stagville State Historic Site, who said she may be interested in making a cross-referenced list of people from Online Geer Cemetery Database with people who worked at Stagville.

It was pointed out that the Old Oberlin Cemetery in Raleigh, NC, is where in where Dr. James Shepard is buried, and that a connection should be made between Geer Cemetery, and Old Oberlin Cemetery. It was stated that there is Black United Methodist church across the street.

EDUCATIONAL & CELEBRATION EVENTS:

It was asked, when would we want to have a display at the library about the three legged Stool of Geer, Stagville, and Durham History with a series of talks on books: leading up and culminating in the Dec. 4 celebration of the ratification of the 13th Amendment outlawing slavery in the U.S. (This Amendment was ratified by North Carolina on Dec. 4, 1865. It was subsequently ratified by the whole U.S. on 18 December, 1865.) There should be a Library display case November to December. There should be something at the DC Library, Stagville, and at the Geer Cemetery site, like Lecture Series, a weekend event. We could seek a donation to help support this event. A new slogan for North Carolina was suggested: "First In Diversity."

There should be a DCVB advertisement

Eddie Davis said it could be promoted Promote it through Frank_____?

ADJOURNMENT:

Next Meeting will be held 15th of May at 2:30. Jessie will schedule the meeting.

Jessie Eustice presented her historical piece.

Motion to dismiss at 3:30

SURVEY:

After the Meeting was over Ron Bartholomew spoke up and pointed out that the FOGC, in its last incarnation seemed to feel that a Survey, and an Archeological Survey of the Cemetery was very important. For one thing, there is a storage shed on the property.

Ron Bartholomew: Durham Marble works will be able to get in there and repair stones after the cemetery has been surveyed.

Once it is done the graves can be filled and it can be a safe place to walk around and stones can be reassembled.

One Contact for such a survey would be John Clauser of A or Of Grave Concerns, Incorporated. The cost for an Archeological Cemetery Survey was about \$7000.00 in 2008.