

02-19-20 Town Council Meeting Responses to Council Questions #1

ITEM #1: Petition – Steve Moore Request Regarding Cemetery Needs

Council Question:

Where are we, to date, with the filling of the “Cemetery Champion” position?

Staff Response:

The “Cemetery Champion” seat has not been filled. The Parks, Greenways, and Recreation Commission has twice tried to fill the vacant “Cemetery Champion” seat. In both cases the available applicants declined to attend a Commission meeting when invited. The Council did appoint someone to fill the vacant seat in late FY 2019, however that person resigned prior to attending a meeting.

There is a pending petition from the Parks, Greenways, and Recreation Commission related to this matter. On September 17, 2019, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to forward to the Council a request that the designated “Cemetery Champion” seat be changed to a “regular” seat on the board. The petition was received by the Town Council on October 2. In the petition that was submitted, the Commission indicated that they understand the spirit and intention of this seat as representing the interests of families with loved ones interred in Chapel Hill’s cemeteries, as well as citizens who value these lands for their aesthetic and historic value. They expressed that there are community members who are ready to serve on the Commission but not as a “Cemetery Champion”. During this time period of attempting to fill the “Cemetery Champion” seat the Town has been without a full Commission. The Commission expressed that they feel that they are capable of fulfilling the goal of representing cemetery interests without a designated seat and that the community and Town Council will benefit from a full Commission.

A tour of the Town’s cemeteries has been provided to Commissioners who had an interest in attending. Additionally, Parks and Recreation staff have scheduled a meeting with Mr. Moore on Feb. 25 in order to further discuss his concerns.