



AFRICAN BURYING GROUND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Monday, November 18, 2019

11:00 a.m.

Portsmouth City Hall Complex,

Conference Room A

A Quorum of the Committee not being present, no meeting of the Committee was held. No actions of the Committee were taken. The assembled members, invited guests, and City Staff did however take the opportunity to update each other and establish next steps within the confines of the Committee's votes at the October 2, 2019 meeting.

Members Present: Vernis Jackson, Dr. Jan Nisbet

Members Excused

/Absent: Councilor Chris Dwyer, Towny Manfull, Valerie Cunningham

Staff Present:

Suzanne M. Woodland, Deputy City Attorney
Nancy Carmer, Economic Development Program Manager

Invited Guests:

Dr. Meghan Howey, Dr. Amy Michael, Dr. Kathleen Wheeler, Dr. Ellen Marlatt, NH State Archeologist Mark Doperalski

1. *Maintenance update by Department of Public Works (DPW)*

Parks and Greeneries Foreman Corin Hallowell described the recent work undertaken at the Memorial Park and the plan for future maintenance as follows:

- Under the oversight of Piscataqua Landscaping and with the assistance of the original artist Jerome Meadows, the Sankofa figure tiles were removed and sent to the studio of Mr. Meadows to be rebuilt. They were returned and recently re-installed in the Park.
- The engraved letters on the Court St. granite wall were cleaned and repainted.
- Sika-Flex sealant, a product effective in the harsh New England climate has been applied to all granite work joints

- The Park signs mounted on houses abutting the Park have been completely restored and remounted by Department of Public Works (“DPW”).
- Quotes have been solicited for sandblasting, restoration of the patina and protective coating of the two bronze sculptures. The requested quote includes training of DPW staff for future in-house maintenance.
- Electronic files of the student tile artwork has been received from Mr. Meadows and the School Department has been contacted with regard to crediting the student artists.

2. *Research opportunities and long-term curation*

Review and update by City staff

As a follow-up to the following actions of last meeting to:

1) proceed with the performance of dental metrics and dental calculus on the remaining eight (8) teeth; and,

2) to analyze for viability of genome sequencing one set of the pulverized remains by a forensic genealogy firm,

Deputy City Attorney Woodland advised that she had received concurrence from the City Manager to spend trust funds for the analyses and also from the City’s Purchasing Department to use a sole source solicitation method for procurement of professional services.

Update from invited guests

Dr. Michael reported that she visited the office of Independent Archeological Research and scraped the dental plaque from 7 of the 8 tooth remains for calculus analysis. Vials of the material were sent to Idaho State University labs where they will do the analysis pro bono.

Dr. Michaels will be attending training on UNH’s new Micro –CT machine and afterward should be able to provide a quote for microstructure examination for descendant health information.

Committee members discussed how to select the remains for analysis. Recommendation, it is best to use remains from an older woman with child bearing history if possible.

Dr. Marlatt will share contacts from the late Dr. Jackson’s lab to seek potential additional ancestry information that may not have been provided to the City.

Mr. Doperalski, State Archeologist, advised the State of NH would have no objection to the additional research to be undertaken provided that the descendant community as represented by the Committee members concurred.

3. *Status of pledges and trust balance* - Following the recent park maintenance work, the amount remaining in the trust for analysis is approximately \$20,000 to \$25,000.

4. Next Steps/Next Meeting Date

- Dr. Michael will provide contact information to Attorney Woodland to further explore and obtain pricing for the DNA sequencing.
- Dr. Michael will provide an update of micro-CT scanning work.
- Drs. Marlatt and Wheeler will look at the data for samples stored in their lab and categorize them for selection by the descendent community for further analysis.
- Attorney Woodland will contact Dr. Owsley to inform him of the direction in which the Committee is proceeding.

Next meeting to be held on Monday, November 25th at 1:30 PM in Conference Room A of the City Hall Complex.

Prepared by Nancy Carmer