

1 River Heights City Planning Commission
2 Minutes of the Meeting
3 January 21, 2014
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5 Present: Commission members: Rex Davidsavor, Chairman
6 Danny Petersen
7 Jim Royle
8 Patti Seeholzer
9 Lorin Zollinger

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11 Recorder Sheila Lind

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13 Excused Council Member Blake Wright

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15 Others Present: Mayor James Brackner, Council members Wilson,
16 Smith, Okelberry and Clausen, Cathy Wood. See
17 attached roll for others.
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19 Motion #1

20 Commissioner Petersen moved to “approve the minutes of the January 7, 2014
21 Commission meeting.” Commissioner Royle seconded the motion, which carried.
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24 Proceedings of the Meeting
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26 The River Heights City Planning Commission met at 7:00 p.m. in the Ervin R. Crosbie
27 Council Chambers on January 21, 2014. Commissioner Davidsavor welcomed the public in
28 attendance and reminded they will not be making a decision tonight, but looked forward to
29 hearing their ideas.

30 Adoption of Prior Minutes: Minutes for the January 7, 2014 Planning Commission
31 Meeting were reviewed.

32 **Commissioner Petersen moved to “approve the minutes of the January 7, 2014
33 Commission meeting.” Commissioner Royle seconded the motion, which carried.**

34 Public Hearing to Gather Input Regarding Use of the City’s Property, Located North of
35 the Providence Cemetery: Commissioner Davidsavor introduced Cathy Wood, a cemetery
36 consultant from Brigham City.

37 Mr. Davidsavor reviewed the following results of a recent online survey: 20% of those
38 surveyed think River Heights already has their own cemetery. 27% haven’t thought about

39 where to bury their loved ones. 44% would like to see the property developed into a park, 28%
40 want a cemetery, 25% want a combination and 3% would like it left as weeds.

41 Commissioner Royle reported that he and Councilmember Wright met with the
42 Providence sexton and city manager. He reminded that Providence charges River Heights
43 residents \$800 for a plot. Providence residents pay \$300.

44 Commissioner Davidsavor asked Cathy Wood to explain how the Brigham City cemetery
45 works in conjunction with parks. She said they have parks until more space is needed for the
46 cemetery, at which time they open a section at a time. They have soccer fields. She explained
47 how the soccer players learn respect for funerals and cemeteries by stopping their game and
48 showing reverence during graveside services. The feel this has cut down on vandalism.

49 Gladys Ann Atwood informed that she and her husband have had their lots in the
50 Providence Cemetery for 10 years. They recently decided to purchase a headstone so their
51 children wouldn't need to worry about it later. They chose one similar to what they'd already
52 seen in the cemetery. She personalized it and paid \$5,000 for it. The day before it was to be
53 delivered to the cemetery they were told this type of stone no longer fits within their
54 regulations. Ms. Atwood said Providence has been very hard to work with. She asked them if
55 they would split the difference with them and were told, 'no' (six weeks later). Brown
56 Monument never received notification of Providence's new rules.

57 Mayor Brackner asked Commissioner Royle what the demand is in the Providence
58 Cemetery. Mr. Royle said they average one burial per week. They figure they have about 10-15
59 years left on the space that's been developed. Their undeveloped area will take them to 20-25
60 years.

61 Jed Hansen asked how many plots a River Heights cemetery could hold. Commissioner
62 Davidsavor said it depends on how they develop it.

63 Noel Cooley said in 2003 he was on a cemetery committee. At that time they asked Dee
64 Barnes to develop a preliminary design which estimated about 2,200 plots. During this time,
65 they were working with Providence on the idea. He asked if there was currently anyone from
66 River Heights working with them on joining connections to roads, water, etc. Commissioner
67 Royle said they brought up the idea of a cooperative effort when they met yesterday.
68 Providence wasn't too sure that would be a good idea. Mr. Cooley suggested they work with a
69 council member from Providence. Ten years ago they were willing to discuss it. Mr. Royle said
70 the sexton eluded that Providence would like to buy the property from River Heights. Mr.
71 Cooley said the sexton's mind could be changed. He asked about expenses. The Commission
72 said they have no figures yet.

73 Carrie Sorensen grew up around the cemetery and had a good experience. She
74 wondered if the two Stewart Hill Drives would connect. She asked about parking and additional
75 traffic, if there's a park. She likes the cemetery idea more than park since River Heights already
76 has a good park at Ryan's Place.

77 Francine Davis said three years ago Councilmember Rob Gines looked into giving
78 Providence the land in exchange for the same rates for River Heights residents. At that time,
79 Providence said 'No;' it would cost them too much, even if the land was donated. She feels the
80 city should sell the property and use the money for other things in the city. If River Heights
81 turns it into a cemetery/park, does the city have the financial backing to pay for upkeep? She
82 doesn't feel they do.

83 Mark Innocenti backs a park. He feels another one is needed for the residents in this
84 area. It would be a long term investment. They need to realize that not all religions focus on
85 burial. A park is for everyone.

86 Commissioner Davidsavor asked Cathy Wood to explain how Brigham City pays for their
87 cemetery. Ms. Wood explained they set up a cemetery improvement fund, in which 25% of the
88 money from plots goes into the roads. The remaining 75% goes into a perpetual care fund,
89 which cannot be touched until the last of the plots are sold. This money will be used for
90 maintenance. She informed that cremation is up 30% over the last few years, even in Utah.
91 Burial isn't religious, its tradition. Cemeteries aren't for the dead, they are for the living. It is
92 the center of a town. They like walkers and others to visit. She suggested grassy areas for kids
93 to play. Brigham has a nitch wall for cremations, in a beautiful garden area. Ms. Wood
94 cautioned about joining with Providence. They may want to call the shots since they're a bigger
95 community. There are things that could be shared, such as a backhoe and maybe a water line.

96 Noel Cooley asked about a cemetery district. Ms. Wood answered that cities that have
97 districts have a commission, which makes joint decisions on upkeep. They hire local farmers
98 and others to dig graves and do upkeep. They may not have a sexton.

99 Paul Tullis said he was the chairman of a cemetery committee about 10 years ago. It
100 became obvious, after they did some research, that a cemetery was beyond the capabilities of
101 our town to take on because of the size of River Heights. It didn't seem wise and the idea of a
102 park seems even worse. He feels selling the property makes the best sense.

103 Councilmember Okelberry said he agrees it's difficult to work with other entities, but
104 River Heights does it all the time, with fire protection, school districts, etc. He feels River
105 Heights has a bit of muscle to use with Providence since we own the ground. He'd like to see
106 River Heights sit down with them and figure something out. It would be a duplicate of services
107 if River Heights didn't join with Providence in some ways. He discussed that parks are
108 capitalized which raises property values. If River Heights is seriously going to consider a
109 cemetery, they need to consider where else to put a park.

110 Steve Coppieters has lived here and looked at this property for three years. He has
111 done an analysis and feels a cemetery isn't sustainable. A four acre park is much more
112 expensive to run than a one acre park. He has suggested the city keep one acre for park and
113 sell the rest for building lots. River Heights should take the opportunity to sell, which would
114 offset the park expense.

115 Diane Peterson does not think River Heights needs a cemetery or park. She supports
116 selling it.

117 Janet Bowles lives next to Ryan's Place Park. She was raised in this home and has
118 observed that before there was a playground, kids didn't play there much. Most people that go
119 to Ryan's Place are little kids going to the playground. She feels that residents in the cemetery
120 area are older, without little kids, and doesn't think an isolated park is needed in this area.

121 Councilmember Okelberry said he lives in that area and observes that the demographics
122 are changing with younger families moving in.

123 Richard Inoye appreciates the cemetery idea but would like to see a park developed
124 there. He supports open space. Parks provide opportunities for kids, etc., depending on how
125 its developed. It can be educational for future generations. He doesn't think it's a good idea to
126 lose the park to a cemetery over time. There are few opportunities left for open space in River
127 Heights.

128 Bob Atwood said there is a legal issue that hasn't been addressed. This land was
129 originally owned by the LDS Church so they could build a church. He understands they sold it
130 with restrictive covenants on the deed. The city attorney needs to take a look at this. Gladys
131 Ann Atwood said part of it came out of her budget, which was planning and zoning.

132 Mayor Brackner clarified that 25% of it came from park impact fees so it needs to have a
133 park incorporated.

134 Steve Coppieters informed that impact fees can be refunded back to the city. It
135 happens all the time in other cities. Although, he feels part of it should be a park.

136 Lisa Ellis said when they moved to this area, they were told this property would be a
137 park someday. They spend a lot of time with their grandkids in the cemetery. She worries
138 about the expense of a park and cemetery. She leans towards a cemetery because it can also
139 be like a park. Either way, she would be against Stewart Hill going through. When Saddlerock
140 went in, it was a perfect time for the city to require this subdivision to install a park for all the
141 children who will live within the development. She'd like to sell the property to Providence in
142 exchange for a good deal for River Heights residents on burial plots.

143 Carrie Sorensen doesn't support the road going through.

144 Councilmember Okelberry pointed out, if River Heights does install a cemetery, people
145 need to realize that the rates may not be less than what Providence charges. There is no
146 guarantee because they haven't done a financial study yet.

147 Dennis Rhoton feels it is too small of an area for the city to develop their own cemetery.
148 He said he and his wife have plots in Providence. They've been told they could get a refund if
149 they change their minds. If River Heights put in a cemetery and a lot of people switched their
150 plots over, that wouldn't be a good working relationship with Providence.

151 Mark Innocenti said once a cemetery is in, that's it. A park can be more flexible.

152 Donny Davis asked if the city gets any sales tax. He'd like to see commercial in the area.

153 Commissioner Davidsavor said the city doesn't plan to do something soon, but they do
154 want to get a plan in place. Their desire is to do what's best for the community, not necessarily
155 what costs the least. He asked for a show of hands how many want cemetery, park or a mix. It
156 seemed the vote was even for all three options.

157 Ken Sorensen feels possible restrictions need to be looked into.

158 The public took leave of the meeting.

159 Commissioner Zollinger suggested there were more in favor of a cemetery than for the
160 park. Commissioner Davidsavor said the survey was more for a park. Mr. Zollinger suggested
161 the next step is to look into costs and any restrictions that were set at the time the property
162 was purchased.

163 Cathy Wood informed there are park grants that can be looked into; a cemetery is
164 considered a park.

165 Update on the Process to Change the General Plan: Commissioner Davidsavor asked if
166 anyone looked at the process. No one did so the discussion was tabled. He asked that they
167 check into it before the next meeting.

168 The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

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Sheila Lind, Recorder

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Rex Davidsavor, Chairman