

A QUICK REPORT

DATE: March 18, 2004
TO: W. Calvin Horton, Town Manager
FROM: Curtis Brooks, Landscape Architect/Urban Forester
SUBJECT: Old Chapel Hill Cemetery Task Force
March 18, 2004

Attending: Council Member Dorothy Verkerk (chair), Jill Coleman, Rebecca Clarke, Catherine Frank, Paul Kapp, Steven Moore, Kirk Pelland, Faison Sessoms, Absent: Bruce Runberg, John Sanders, Bland Simpson, Catherine Williams.

Staff Attending: Curtis Brooks.

On Thursday, March 18, 2004 the Old Chapel Hill Cemetery Task Force met at the Horace Williams House. Council Member Verkerk convened the meeting with a review of the status of the Old Chapel Hill Cemetery directory and measures that could be taken to preserve it and widen its availability. Curtis Brooks then updated the Task Force on research the Town staff is doing into issues of Cemetery plot ownership and the rights and limitations of Town initiated improvements on individual plots. Other issues that were discussed included:

- The possibility of establishing a discretionary fund permitting the Task Force to initiate modest maintenance improvements, such as mulching the eroded bank along the Cemetery's south wall, utilizing available CIP funds.
- The possibility of finding student service groups to assist with some incremental maintenance projects and other volunteers or interns to assist with Cemetery research projects.
- The interest some University students have expressed in erecting a memorial marker or sign to acknowledge the significance of the historically black sections of the Cemetery with their numerous unmarked graves.

Paul Kapp, University Historic Preservation Manager, and Jill Coleman, University Landscape Architect, then provided a presentation of the University's plans for the Cobb Chiller Plant and Deck, to be located directly north of the Cemetery, and the Memorial Scatter Garden, proposed for the wooded triangle of land located directly to the east of the Cemetery. Issues that were discussed included new opportunities for landscaping along the Cemetery's north and west edges, possible access between the Cemetery and the proposed Memorial Scatter Garden and traffic concerns and handicapped parking opportunities associated with the proposed improvements. Several members also discussed the possibility that the Task Force may want to consider recommending strategic landscaping and lighting improvements to help direct pedestrian movement through the Cemetery in response to the anticipated adjacent improvements.

The Task Force's next meeting was not specifically set but is expected to be scheduled for the first week of April. For further information, I can be contacted at 968- 2800 ext. 122.