

December 12, 2018

TO: Oak Lawn and Sand Hill Cemeteries Lot Owners and Families of Lot Owners  
FROM: City of Decatur Cemetery Board of Directors – Ann Logue, President; Wayne Stone, Vice-President; Joyce Horton, Secretary; and Board Members: Gene Blagg, Cynthia DesRoches, Frank Perrin, Angela Smith, Jerry Watson, LaDonna Wren, Ann Williams

### ENDOWMENT INCOME

Interest earned from the endowment fund is one of two main sources of income for both cemeteries. Although the endowment fund had \$435,477.65 in it at the beginning of the past fiscal year, because of the low interest rates now being paid, only \$3,236.76 endowment interest was earned this past fiscal year. Because of this decrease in endowment interest income, please consider making a contribution to one of the categories specified on the donation form enclosed. If you have already endowed your family lot and would like to make an additional donation to increase the endowment fund, mark category 1 on the donation form enclosed. Your name will be listed with other donors in the 2019 report. \$1,925.00 was donated in 2018 to the endowment fund, and their names are listed on the “Donors” page in this report.

### SPECIAL PROJECTS

Special contributions not designated for endowments are earmarked as “Special Project” donations and will be used for capital improvements or special projects decided on by the Cemetery Board. Because cemetery expenses have been exceeding its income, Special Project donations allow the Board to do projects it could not do otherwise. \$16,405.00 was received this past fiscal year from special donations. A special thank you to those who made donations to the Cemetery in 2018 and whose names are listed on the “Donors” page in this report.

One special project now underway is the repair of monuments in block 5 in Oak Lawn. Additional monument repairs are planned in Oak Lawn next year. If you wish to help with the cost of these repairs, a \$50.00 donation will cover the cost of one monument. The City crews have cleared the remaining sections on the north end of Oak Lawn. These sections need to be surveyed and roads need to be built before they will be opened for sale.

Projects paid out of the Special Projects Fund in 2018 include \$4,000.00 to the tree-trimming company hired to remove several large, dead trees in Oak Lawn, \$3,850.00 for monument repairs, and \$10,750.00 to have foundation repair done at the house belonging to the Cemetery Board.

### CEMETERY INFORMATION

The pavilion on the east side of Oak Lawn, which has fourteen benches for seating, is available to be used for grave side ceremonies. The Board encourages you to use this pavilion, believing it will be safer to use than holding services at the actual grave site. Having ceremonies at the actual grave site involves people having to walk over curbs and uneven ground, with these obstacles increasing the chances of someone falling.

With the increased trend toward cremations, the Board is discussing if there is a need to build a columbarium in Oak Lawn for the placement of urns containing cremated remains. Another option discussed is the designation of an area in the cemetery reserved exclusively for the burial of urns in small, individual plots. Current rules pertaining to the burial of cremains state that (1) only two sets of cremains will be allowed to be buried in one grave space, and (2) only one set of cremains can be buried in the same grave space with one other burial.

### FINANCIAL REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 10/1/17 - 9/30/18

#### ENDOWMENT FUND BALANCE:

Endowment Funds (includes \$11,275.00 new endowment deposits/donations) \$448,461.56

#### INCOME/EXPENSE STATEMENT:

Total Income Deposited into General Fund (includes \$1,527.85 endowment interest transferred from Endowment Fund into General Fund) \$ 60,909.85

Total Interest Income Earned on Endowment Funds \$ 3,236.76

Total Disbursements out of General Fund (operating expenses) (75,959.97)

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Total Income Special Projects Fund (donations + interest) \$ 17,998.88

Total Disbursements out of Special Projects Fund (\$18,600.00)

# DECATUR CEMETERY BOARD 2018 SUMMARY REPORT

Both Oak Lawn Cemetery and Sand Hill Cemetery are part of a single municipal cemetery system operated by the City of Decatur. The Board is appointed annually by the Decatur City Council and is under City supervision. Its financial operations are managed by the City. The Board meets bimonthly, in the odd-numbered months, on the second Monday, at the City Hall at 10:00 a.m. Meetings are open to all lot owners.

**SALE OF GRAVE SPACES** - The current price of \$600.00 for each grave space is the same for both cemeteries, which includes a perpetual care fee to provide upkeep of the space. Lots can be purchased from Joyce Horton or Chet Niblett. The phone number for Decatur Cemetery Board is 940-627-3980.

**MAINTENANCE/UPKEEP FEES** - Because of the decrease in income from endowment interest, it is very important that each family who has a lot purchased prior to 1984 in Oak Lawn or Sand Hill makes sure their family lot is being taken care of by either paying yearly dues or by paying the required amount to provide perpetual care for the lot.

(1) For all lot owners who purchased lots prior to 1984 and who have not endowed their lot, annual dues are required for upkeep of lots. The \$10.00 minimum, payable in January of each year, will provide upkeep for up to five grave spaces with \$2.00 added for each additional space.

(2) Lot owners who purchased lots prior to 1984 may choose to endow their lots instead of paying annual upkeep dues. The \$125.00 minimum will provide upkeep for up to five grave spaces with \$25.00 added for each additional space. The money is placed in a perpetual care fund, known as the endowment fund. Only the interest earned from the endowment fund can be used for general operating expenses. Endowments deposited into the endowment fund cannot be used.

Since 1984 a perpetual care fee is included in the purchase price. If you purchased a lot after 1984 you DO NOT owe anything for upkeep. Donations to increase the endowment fund or to Special Projects are appreciated, though.

**MEMORIAL FUND** - A memorial fund was established by the Board for those wishing to contribute to the memory of a friend or loved one. A card will be sent to the family informing them of the memorial gift. The names of those who made memorial donations in 2018 are listed with other donors in this report.

**2018 CEMETERY OPERATION** – Both Oak Lawn and Sand Hill Cemeteries are maintained by private mowing firms. In the fiscal year ending September 30, 2018, Oak Lawn was mowed and trimmed numerous times at a total cost of \$54,260.74 and Sand Hill was mowed five times at a total cost of \$1,875.00. We appreciate the assistance provided by the City's crews who worked at Oak Lawn throughout the year providing routine services including trimming trees and shrubs, removing trash, repairing roads and water leaks, and adding dirt to graves needing maintenance.

Other cemetery expenses include insurance and taxes on cemetery property, purchase of dirt to fill in graves (\$925.00 for five loads), rental of portable restrooms at Oak Lawn (\$98.66 per 28-day rental), electricity for the flagpole light at Oak Lawn, water at Oak Lawn for those needing to water flowers/trees, telephone and other office expenses, and upkeep on the secretary's house/office owned by the Cemetery Board.

**NEW REGULATIONS** - To show respect for those buried in the cemetery and their loved ones who visit, we ask that a quiet and respectful conduct be observed in the cemetery. To help assure this, the City passed an Ordinance in 2017 stating the open consumption of alcoholic beverages is not allowed in the cemeteries. Also, action taken in 2017 stating that no one is allowed in the cemeteries between the hours of 8 p.m. and 7 a.m. will show respect and also help prevent vandalism and accidental damage to lots. Gates are locked from dusk to dawn each night.

**To help us maintain current contact information**, please send us the names and addresses of your adult children or other family members who are not on our mailing list. If you or any family members prefer to receive future yearly reports delivered to your e-mail, send your e-mail address on the enclosed Donation/Comment form and return in the enclosed envelope.

## Rules and Regulations

Because of the challenges presented in keeping a cemetery the size of Oak Lawn maintained, special Rules and Regulations were adopted in 2010 to improve the efficiency in maintaining both cemeteries. In order to assist the mowing crew, and to prevent items which could be a potential safety hazard for the mowing crew and visitors to the cemetery, we ask that you comply with all the Rules and Regulations and remove prohibited items. All deeds state that ownership of a lot is subject to all rules in place at the time of purchase and also subject to all rules which the Board puts into place at a later date.

Below is only a partial list of the rules. A list of all rules in both English and Spanish can be viewed on the "decaturtx.org" website by typing "Cemetery" in the search box or by contacting the cemetery office. Signs in both English and Spanish listing some of the main rules are placed at cemetery entrances at both cemeteries.

1. No permanent planting of trees, hedges, shrubs, or flowers are allowed in any part of the cemetery.
2. No white rock, gravel, decorative rock, cement slabs, or any other type of covering shall be placed on any grave or lot.
3. The placement of any decorative items such as benches, seats, lights, chimes, toys, glass/ceramic items, carpets, or fencing is prohibited. Benches placed before October, 2010 are allowed to remain. All such property shall not be replaced. Grounds keepers may remove any items that are considered a safety hazard.
4. In order to assist in mowing season, we ask that only one flower arrangement be used on each grave.
5. Permission is required before any herbicide (weed killer) is used.
6. Prior to setting markers or monuments or installing curbs or corner markers, approval must be secured from either the Board Secretary or the Grounds Chairman. Call the cemetery office to seek approval and to obtain a set of curbing guidelines.
7. Curbs are not allowed in sections north of 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Oak Lawn. Curbs in sections south of 9<sup>th</sup> Street must comply with curbing guidelines. No new curbs are allowed in Sand Hill. Only corner lot markers are allowed in the sections where curbs are prohibited.
8. Headstones, footstones, and corner lot markers in all sections of both cemeteries must be made of granite, marble, or bronze metal. Corner lot markers must be set at ground level.

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### COMMENT/DONATION FORM

TO: City of Decatur Cemetery Board

FROM:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

(A) If a donation is enclosed, please use it for (check one or more):

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Endowment Fund
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Special Projects
3. \_\_\_\_\_ To be used as needed

Memorial - If your gift is intended to honor or memorialize someone, please give that person's name: \_\_\_\_\_

and name and address of the person to be notified of your memorial: \_\_\_\_\_

(B) Comments - Please include any suggestions for improvement.

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