

Minutes of Neighborhood Meeting
Public Library, Edgewood Ave. N.
Community Room
Jacksonville, FL
Monday, November 26, 2007, 7 PM

Blue Ribbon Commission Members present: Jerry Spinks, Jon Ferguson. Citizen guests: Orzola Burgess, Gadson Burgess, Thomas Hudson, Jr., Walter B. Randolph, Sr. and John Pittman.

The meeting began shortly after 7 PM when practicing carolers finished their session. They were invited to stay for our meeting, but declined. Due to the small number present, no taping or video set up was considered necessary. The large maps for Districts eight and ten were displayed on the table.

Everyone attending either lived in the neighborhood or had relatives buried in one of the nearby cemeteries. They were familiar with the cemeteries clustered near Edgewood and Moncrief. Mrs. Burgess stated that Raines Avenue offered an entry into Pinehurst Cemetery

Mr. Randolph expressed concern over the lack of supervision at Memorial. He reported that flowers and flags, etc. left on graves by family members are removed by unknown persons.

It was the consensus of those citizens present that family members would be more interested in maintaining the graves of their family if the "heavy cleanup" could be done. Also they sought a source to help identify the unmarked burial places of relatives. They were referred to the funeral directors and then possibly to the list prepared by the State during the recent survey. (Copies re held by the downtown library, Joel McEachin's office and the library of the Southern Genealogist's Exchange Society).

Mrs. Burgess explained that no nearby church sponsored any cemetery, partially due to the fact that the members did not live locally, but drove several miles to attend worship services. It was suggested that some of the senior members could encourage the formation of a youth group (Scouts or otherwise) to "adopt" a portion of one of the large cemeteries and keep it maintained.

Mr. Burgess planned to contact the funeral home that handled the burial of one of his relatives and try to determine the burial location. He is interested in possibly placing a marker. He may need help. It was stated that folks in the 1930's could not afford markers.

Mr. Randolph proposed asking his Pastor for permission to plead with the church members to form a "friends of cemeteries" group.

A major concern is the lack of trash and garbage pickup for the cemeteries. Perhaps some action can be taken by the city to include these in their route, or be responsive to a notification by via telephone call.

It was felt that a joint effort by Council members in Districts 8 and 10 would be required. Further, the actual ownership of the land should be determined. If some of the property is held privately, the owners should be held responsible for maintenance or be required to pay for professional cleanup, etc.

Above all, it was stressed that prior training is required before work is begin in a cemetery. Much irreparable damage can be done if the work is done improperly.

Jon R. Ferguson,
For the Commission

Note: It would be wise to maintain a mailing list of those citizens attending these meetings so that future contact can be made easily. They may be a nucleus of a group.