

**OFFICE OF CEMETERY OVERSIGHT
ADVISORY COUNCIL ON CEMETERY OPERATIONS
MINUTES**

DATE: December 3, 2015
TIME: 10:45 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.
PLACE: Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, 500 N. Calvert Street,
3rd Floor Conference Room, Baltimore, Maryland 21202

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Porter called the meeting to order at 10:45 A. M.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Frank Porter, Acting Chair
Susan Cohen
Yvonne Fisher
Erich March
Walter Tegeler
David Zinner

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Andrew Linthicum

STAFF PRESENT:

Marilyn Harris-Davis - Director, Office of Cemetery Oversight (OCO)
Deborah Rappazzo - Investigator
Olusegun (Victor) Sokoya - Financials, for Office of Cemetery Oversight (OCO)
Leila Whitley - Administrative Aide
Paulette Wirsching - Assistant Attorney General

VISTORS:

Timothy Bowman – Global Burial Identification LLC
Rob Tillett – Global Burial Identification LLC
Kaija Dallessandro - Baltimore Crematory at Loudon Park

HOUSEKEEPING:

Minutes:

The minutes from October 22, 2015 were approved.

Announcements:

Director Harris-Davis introduced a returning guest, Timothy Bowman, with Global Burial ID, along with one of his colleagues, Rob Tillett. Global Burial ID is a company that positively identifies burial remains with an underground electronic marker system.

Director Harris-Davis announced this is Susan Cohen's last meeting. She is resigning from the Advisory Council.

Director Harris-Davis reminded the council about the Ethics Form required by all Advisory Council members that is due in April 2016.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Harris-Davis had some concerns regarding the Cemeterian Seminar being held in January 2016 in regards to inclement weather. Also, there were concerns with a venue that would be large enough to hold the anticipated number of people that would attend. Director Harris-Davis stated she would try contacting colleges and/or universities in regards to a venue. There is also another issue in regards to a weekday or weekend seminar. There were some concerns about the seminar being held on a weekday. The concern was that if sales counselors wanted to attend they would need to leave work and, consequently, not be there for the consumers. Additionally, if the seminar was held on a weekend, the same issue can typically be a problem. To reiterate, the purpose of having a cemeterian seminar is to review current practices, recent changes in the law, and to review the perpetual care and preneed trust report submission requirements.

GUEST SPEAKER

Timothy Bowman and Rob Tillett gave a brief description of what their company provides for businesses and consumers. Global Burial ID's technology reduces the risk of misplaced burial plots and grave mix ups. Their company has been helpful to both cemeteries and families. The markers are located through GPS, they are cost effective to cemeteries, and are accurate in extreme cold or hot weather without the ground being disturbed. There was a brief demonstration that took place on how to get information that is stored on the marker, which houses information such as, name, date of death and lot number, needed to positively identify the vault. An instrument referred to as a "reader" reads that information. In the future, their company is looking to have an app that family members can download on their cell phone to read the information that is on the reader.

INVESTIGATOR'S REPORT

Investigator Rappazzo asked the question, what does everyone think about using mausoleums as funeral establishments? There was some discussion regarding this issue. Most Advisory Council members found it totally inappropriate to expose consumers visiting their loved ones, in a mausoleum, to another family's private viewing of a body with an open casket. There is a difference between a funeral establishment and a mausoleum. Some members and guests thought it was not proper to use a mausoleum as a funeral establishment. When visiting a loved one there is an expectation of privacy. Then there were others who thought as long as the mausoleum had the word "chapel" along with the word mausoleum, there should not be an issue. The issue has yet to be resolved. OCO has an active consumer complaint about this practice.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Mr. Zinner reported there are still a few cemeteries and more than a few monument dealers that have still not responded to the requirement to submit disclosure forms and general price lists to the Office. He and Ms. Whitley are still working to acquire that information.

NEW BUSINESS

The next Advisory Council meeting is scheduled for January 28, 2016 at 10:30 A.M. The meetings for 2016 will continue to be the 4th Thursday of every month. There are no meetings scheduled in 2016 for May, July, August or November.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 1:30 P.M.