



Script Notes from June 24, 2021, Meeting with Roanoke City Manager

June 24, 2021

Good afternoon:

We appreciate the opportunity to visit with you and share information on a local business serving the City of Roanoke for the past 130 years. As mentioned in our phone conversation, I serve as Chairman of the Fair View Foundation the owner and operator of both Fair View Cemetery and Cedar Lawn Memorial Park.

Myrteen Heslep, my sister, is the President and General Manager of the Foundation. We are here today representing the Board of Directors of the Fair View Foundation to share our collective concerns regarding the future of Historic Fair View and Cedar Lawn.

Myrteen will share a few slides highlighting the past and present of both Fair View and Cedar Lawn.

SLIDE PRESENTATION

Thank You Myrteen

Review **Milestones** in the creation and operation of Fair View and Cedar Lawn.

Historic Fair View Cemetery

1876 - The City Cemetery located at 501 Tazewell Avenue SE was established under the leadership of 2 Mayors of Big Lick Samuel Griggs & T.T. Fishburn to serve the Town of Big Lick and the City of Roanoke. Not long after, the 3-acre cemetery was running out of space.

1890 - a group of community leaders by the names Griggs, Trout, Fishburn, Kimball, Terry and others who envisioned a need for a new and more beautiful cemetery met and pooled their resources to acquire a large tract of land just west of the city limits for the purpose of developing Fair View Cemetery to serve their rapidly growing community.

Fair View Cemetery Company, Inc., was chartered on February 15, 1890,

1916 – A long time employee, Bruce Griggs the son of the former Mayor, Samuel Griggs was named President of Fair View.

1918 - The Code of Virginia required cemeteries who were not owned by municipalities or a church to fund Perpetual Care Funds from the sale of burial spaces.

The Trustee is Truist Financial Bank, and as of April 30, 2021, the perpetual care funds had a balance of \$3.4 million.

1952 - Bruce Griggs who had acquired 90% of the stock in Fair View, passed-away and gifted 100% of his stock to The Fair View Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund.

1952 - Clarence Griggs elected President

1965 - Concluded 75 Years of service by the Griggs family.

1965 – J. Russel Cronk (our father) was named President after 20 years of service as Assistant Manager.

1965 – In 1965, Fair View Cemetery Company, Inc., in an effort to provide additional financial support expanded to include Cedar Lawn Memorial Park only 2.5 miles from Fair View Cemetery. This investment proved to be an excellent business decision as it provided the additional financial support for Fair View.

1969 – Dennis Cronk - named Vice President.

1983 - Fair View Cemetery Company, Inc. had operated continuously under its original corporate charter for 93 years. Recognizing the need to identify additional resources to enable Fair View to continue serving the community, The Board of Directors agreed changes had to be made.

On **April 30, 1983**, after receiving approvals from the Internal Revenue Service and the State Corporation Commission, the Board of Directors dissolved Fair View Cemetery Company, Inc. by converting to The Fair View Foundation a Non-Stock Not-for-Profit Charitable Foundation under the Internal Revenue Code 501 (c)(13).

This conversion provided the additional resources necessary for Historic Fair View Cemetery to reduce operating expenses and develop a campaign to generate donations for the maintenance and beautification of the cemetery.

1986 – J. Russell Cronk Passed Away and Dennis Cronk was elected President

1994 – Myrteen Heslep became a full-time employee and Vice President

2011 - Myrteen Heslep was elected President

For over 130 Years, the primary objective of management is to preserve this historic landmark for future generations and serve the community and the families who have identified Fair View and Cedar Lawn as their final resting place.

Historic Fair View Cemetery represents approx. 57 acres and Cedar Lawn Memorial Park encompasses 14 Acres.

- 26,000 individuals
- thousands of veterans
- 10 mayors of Big Lick and the City of Roanoke
- Members of the Virginia State Legislature
- United States Federal Judiciary,
- United States Congress.
- Numerous individuals who died as a result of the 1918 Flu Pandemic and Covid 19
- Over the past 130 years eight family cemeteries were relocated to Fair View Cemetery to make way for the growth and expansion of the City of Roanoke

Both Fair View and Cedar Lawn have a large selection of both Developed and Undeveloped land to serve the community for years to come.

In service to the community Fair View Cemetery continues to work with funeral directors and families when there is little or no funds available for an interment by providing free burial spaces.

Also, in appreciation to all veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice, Fair View developed “Veterans Plaza” for all veterans and their families with the veteran receiving a Free Burial Space.

The cemetery industry has experienced significant changes. These changes have greater impact on older more traditional cemeteries with limited resources placing them at risk of closing or abandonment.

In an effort to avoid that possibility, we have explored a number of options over the past decade to ensure the future stewardship of Historic Fair View and Cedar Lawn to no avail.

The Board of Directors has concluded the time has come, just as it has for similar cemeteries throughout the history of the Commonwealth of Virginia. To assure the preservation of both cemeteries they are prepared to dissolve the Foundation and transfer all assets held by or for the benefit of the Fair View Foundation to the City of Roanoke.

Timing is critical and may very well be best served while senior management is available to assist in a smooth and orderly transition.

We thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns on the future of Fair View Cemetery and Cedar Lawn Memorial Park. We hope that our recommendation will be received as it is intended to address the preservation of a valuable community asset.

Thank You

