

CONFEDERATE REST AT FOREST HILL CEMETERY REPORT

Date: January 19, 2018

Prepared for: Mayor Paul Soglin
Board of Parks Commissioners
Landmarks Commission
Equal Opportunities Commission

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Re: Establishing a Plan for the Confederate Rest Monuments in Forest Hill Cemetery


INTRODUCTION

Forest Hill Cemetery's Confederate Rest is the northernmost cemetery for Confederate soldiers. Confederate Rest, owned and maintained by the City of Madison, is located in the northeastern portion of the cemetery just south of the mausoleum. Within the granite walls of Confederate Rest are 140 individual markers containing the names of the soldiers, the grave and marker of Alice Waterman (long-time caretaker of Confederate Rest), and one large monument. A smaller monument was located just outside of the walls until it was removed in August, 2017. The picture below shows the walls, headstones, larger monument and the smaller monument prior to its removal.



OVERVIEW

General Timeline of Historical Information

- 1857 City opens and begins operating Forest Hill Cemetery
- 1862 Battle of Island 10
Infantrymen, mostly from Louisiana, Alabama and Tennessee, taken as Prisoners of War and held at Camp Randall. Many died from battle injuries and illness.
- 1862 Confederate soldiers buried in a portion of Forest Hill Cemetery known as Confederate Rest.
- 1868 Alice Waterman arrives
Ms. Waterman was from Louisiana and arrived in Madison in 1868. She tended to the maintenance and beautification of Confederate Rest until her death. Her work involved many tasks including planting hedges, erecting headstones, and having numerous perimeter enclosures constructed.
- 1870 Headboards replaced
Newspaper article describes that the old headboards would be replaced with new.
- 1897 Alice Waterman dies
Ms. Waterman buried in a corner of Confederate Rest.
- 1906 Large monument placed
Newspaper article describes the program held at the cemetery when the monument was placed. Newspaper article describes the United Daughters of the Confederacy fundraising effort for the monument. The large monument is inscribed with names of the Confederate soldiers buried at Confederate Rest and the message “Erected in loving memory by United Daughters of the Confederacy to Mrs. Alice Waterman and ‘her boys’.”
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- 1909 Headstones to be replaced
Newspaper article described that the War Department will place 39 x 12 x 4 marble headstones for each soldier at Confederate Rest.
- 1930 - 2000 Memorial Day decorations placed
- 1980 Consecration Ceremony
United Daughters of the Confederacy held consecration ceremony which was conducted by Reverend Denson of the Emanuel Episcopal Church in Rockford, IL.

- 1981 Small monument placed
Newspaper article describing that a bronze plaque on a granite base will be unveiled at Confederate Rest



- 2001 Confederate Flag Guidelines policy introduced
- 2005 Forest Hill Cemetery Rules and Regulations and Grave Decoration Clarification adopted
- 2016 Confederate Flag Policy at Forest Hill Cemetery adopted
Board of Park Commission voted to remove Confederate Rest flagpole
- 2017 Revised Forest Hill Cemetery Rules and Regulations adopted
Monuments vandalized August 15, 2017
Small monument removed August 16, 2017

Current Management Plan:

The Parks Division maintains the Confederate Rest according to the same standards as the rest of the Cemetery. Parks staff conduct routine mowing and string trimming operations in Confederate Rest throughout the mowing season. Parks staff also remove leaves and tend to perennial plantings as a part of fall and spring clean-up operations. Decorations are removed according to the Forest Hill Cemetery Rules and Regulation policies. Individual markers are adjusted as needed. Given the sensitivity of this area and the attention it has gained, it is patrolled regularly for vandalism and extra monitoring is required over Memorial Day weekend.

Confederate Flags:

In 2016, when national conversation surrounding the Confederate flag and monuments began to grow, the Parks Division worked with Mayor Soglin, Alders, the City Attorney and interested parties to develop policies that are more appropriate for the cemetery and its visitors. The City Attorney issued Formal Opinion 2016-002, regarding Confederate Flag Policy at Forest Hill Cemetery. Prior to the start of this work, a flagpole stood within the Confederate Rest and, since 2001, service organizations could fly an Official Flag of the Confederacy or Bonnie Blue on Memorial and Veterans Day. In addition, service

organizations were allowed to put these flags on individual graves. The flagpole, which had fallen into disrepair and been inappropriately used over recent years, was removed on October 10, 2016, effectively closing the forum for displaying the larger flag. The Forest Hill Cemetery Rules and Regulation Policy that was adopted by Board of Park Commissioners on May 10, 2017, allows only the display of the following flags: United States of America (current); United States Armed Forces, Wisconsin State; City of Madison and/or recognized flags of current United Nations members. In addition, the policy restricts the size of flags at individual graves and clarifies parameters around acceptable decorations. This work sought to protect the original rural cemetery design and feel of the cemetery and bring policies in line with national trends, while still providing an opportunity to honor the dead throughout the Cemetery

Confederate Monuments:

In August 2017, the two (2) monuments within Confederate Rest became the focus of much attention as other communities across the nation began removing monuments and statues commemorating leaders of the Confederacy and their cause. On August 15, 2017, the monuments were vandalized with graffiti, which was reported to Parks staff by an early-morning park user. Parks staff expeditiously removed the graffiti. On August 16, 2017, Mayor Soglin ordered the removal of both monuments. Forest Hill staff was able quickly remove the smaller of the two and placed it in a secure storage facility. Staff was unable to remove the larger monument



due lack of proper equipment to move an object of that size. Mayor Soglin and Parks Superintendent Eric Knepp determined it was not prudent to remove the larger monument without a more complete plan. In the weeks following, the Parks Division received a number of comments regarding the removal of the monuments.

OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Mayor Soglin directed the Parks Division to work with Board of Park Commissioners, Landmarks Commission and Equal Opportunities to determine the proper course of action for both monuments. Options to consider are as follows:

1. Whether to take down and permanently remove the two Lost Cause monuments.
2. Whether to leave the monuments in place but alter the messages contained therein.
3. Whether to leave one or both of the Lost Cause monuments in the Cemetery but erect a new monument providing detail of the false narrative of the Lost Cause and the role these monuments play in that effort.