

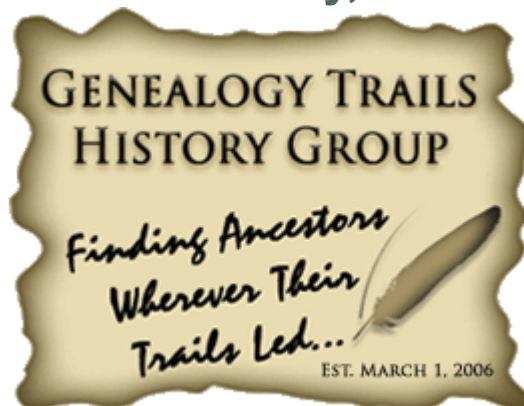


**AGENDA
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 25, 2021
5:00 PM
CITY HALL COMMISSION CHAMBERS
204 ASH STREET
FERNANDINA BEACH, FL 32034**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. ROLL CALL**
- 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 4. COLUMBARIUM RECOMMENDATIONS**
 - 4.1 Possible Design Guide
 - 4.2 Alternate Design
 - 4.3 Draft Minutes from Sub-Committee with Motions
- 5. ADJOURNMENT**

All members of the public are invited to be present and be heard. Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations in order to participate in this program or activity should contact the City Clerk at 904-310-3115 or TTY/TDD 711 (for the hearing or speech impaired).

Nassau County, Florida



Volunteers Dedicated to Free Genealogy



est. 1798

Source: Bosque Bello Cemetery Master Plan, City of Fernandino Beach, FL; 2015

Originally called "Old Town Cemetery"

Bosque Bello is located on the northern end of Amelia Island within the City of Fernandina Beach limits, in Nassau County

Bosque Bello is one of only a few public cemeteries in Nassau County. While other cemeteries and columbaria exist, they are generally affiliated either with a religious institution, or are privately maintained for family members only.

The cemetery is approximately 29 acres in size. It is comprised of two sections, the Old or "Ancient" section, and the New section. Magnolia Street (formerly 12th Street) divides the old and new sections. At one time, colored and white sections were specified in the cemetery during the years of segregation. There are technically five separate entrances into the cemetery, including one from N. 8th Street that was closed for what is now Rock Tenn, and one that was at Towngate Road.

The cemetery's origins date to c.1798, when the land was originally granted as a public burial ground by a private landowner. At this time, Fernandina was under Spanish control. This is why the cemetery retains a Spanish name, Bosque Bello or "Beautiful Woods." For many years during Spanish rule, the cemetery was utilized by those who lived in Old Town. After Florida became a part of the United States, the land ownership began to change. In 1847, the Senate of the United States officially granted to the city of Fernandina the plot of land originally appropriated by the Spanish government as a public burial ground.

Bosque Bello is the resting place of numerous veterans of various conflicts.

Burial records were kept by the superintendents of the cemetery and stored at City Hall. Burial reports for the year 1896 to 1916 were discovered during this master planning process. Death certificates were also discovered among the monthly burial reports. These death certificates contain valuable data about the citizens of Fernandina and are included in the Florida Memory Project (<http://www.floridamemory.com>). Information is indexed by surname, date, and cause of death.

Peter Bouissou de Nicar

1813-Peter Bouissou de Nicar (1747-1813) has the oldest gravestone found in the cemetery. He was a black mercenary, a Mason and a Captain in the army. He apparently died in Old Town.

Father Patrick Halligan

1963-Father Halligan was a respected priest at St. Michael's Catholic Church from 1935 to 1952. He requested burial next to Peter Bouissou.

Sisters of St. Joseph

1877-1934-The Sisters of St. Joseph were an order of Catholic nuns from France. They founded a school in Fernandina to teach freed slaves following the Civil War. They tended the victims of the Yellow Fever epidemic of 1877. Two young nuns who died of yellow fever were originally buried in the church yard. Many years later, they were moved to Bosque Bello where 11 of the Sisters are buried.

Civil War Veterans

Civil War veterans include 37 Federal (Union) troops (33 of these were African-American) and 11 Confederate troops. This group includes Major Thomas Leddy, who later owned the Florida House Inn. He died in 1873. There are 11 Confederate troops buried, including Christian Peterson, the only Civil War soldier to die in Fernandina; he died of disease in 1861. Henry and Mary Muller are both buried in Bosque Bello; Henry was a private with the 47th Georgia Confederate troops, and Mary was a nurse in Confederate service. Lt. Edward J. Johnston died in 1863 in Fort Warren, a prison in Boston Harbor. He served as Engineer in Confederate Navy. Part of his remains were brought to Bosque Bello and reburied in 2002. His grave is at the foot of that of his wife, Virginia (1830-1916) who outlived him by many years.

Spanish American War veterans

1898-At least fifteen veterans of the Spanish-American War are buried at Bosque Bello and it is documented that 28 died from disease, primarily typhoid fever.

Acosta Family

1838-1916-At least 11 members of the Acosta family are buried there. They include Jane Alberti Acosta who died of yellow fever in 1838 (at age 50); she was the wife of Domingo Acosta and mother of seven children born in Nassau County between 1815 and 1834. Several of the Acostas were postmasters.

Antonio Diaz

1841-Antonio Diaz was witness to the Patriot War of 1812 and a resident of Old Town. He was born in Palma (Canary Islands).

Amos Latham/Thomas John O'Hagan

1761-1842-Amos Latham was one of two Revolutionary War soldiers buried on Amelia Island. He served as first on Cumberland Island. When the lighthouse was brought to Amelia Island in 1838, he became the first lighthouse keeper on Amelia Island. His wife and other Lathams are buried in his plot. Patrick O'Hagan became light keeper in 1905. His son, Thomas John

O'Hagan was the last civilian light keeper on Amelia Island. His wife, Helen Morse, was the great-great-granddaughter of Amos Latham.

Seton Family

1856-The Seton family plot includes remains of Charles (died 1856) and his wife Matilda (died 1856), who were early settlers of Old Town and owned at least 16,000 acres in the county. Charles Seton was once mayor of Old Town.

John Henry McDermott and Samuel Sidney Sauls

1873-An unusual dual monument was erected to John Henry McDermott and Samuel Sidney Sauls. These two men were killed together in a saw mill explosion in St. Mary's on 23 October 1873.

A. A. Cushman

1904-The only zinc marker in the cemetery is on the grave of Mrs. A. A. Cushman (died 1904). The marker was probably cast up north. There is a similar marker in St. Peter's Episcopal cemetery.

Andrew Higginbotham

1909-Andrew Higginbotham served as the city's sheriff from 1900-1906. Other family members share his plot.

Steil Family

1891-1906-The grave markers of the Steil family were vandalized in the late 1980s. The elaborate stone carvings were too expensive to repair. The oldest graves in the plot are those of Arthur (1854-1906) and Emma (1866-1954). Arthur Steil was a saloon owner in Fernandina. The family of his wife, Emma Theide, came to Fernandina shortly after the Civil War.

Delany Family

1874-1897-Thomas and Sarah came to Amelia Island from Georgia as freed slaves at the end of the Civil War. They had eleven children all of whom were educated and learned a trade. One son, Henry Beard Delany, became the first African-American Episcopal bishop in the United States.

Suhrer Family

1884-1949-Ferdinand Charles Suhrer served in the Civil War as a Union soldier. After the War, he brought his wife, Eva Rosa Plotts, to Fernandina. He served as postmaster and later became manager of the Mansion House. He was murdered by Thomas Jefferson Eppes in 1884. Eppes was found not guilty after evidence that Suhrer had insulted his wife was presented.

Sollecito Salvador

1869-1924-Sollecito Salvador was a Sicilian immigrant who became known as the "Father of the Shrimping Industry".

Ferreira Family

1850-1937-The Ferreira family worked for the Florida Railroad Company, which was founded by David Levy Yulee in 1853. John Apolonia Ferreira was an ancestor of Juan Ferreira, who came to St. Augustine from Portugal in 1800. He worked as a railroad engineer on the train that ran from Fernandina to Cedar Key.

Dr. D. Granville Humphreys

1873-1956-Dr. D. Granville Humphreys was a well-respected physician in Fernandina. The former Hospital on 14th Street was named after him.

Kelly Family

1826-1967-Several members of the Kelly family are buried at Bosque Bello. Colonel Patrick Kelly (1826-1908), a native of County Sligo, Ireland, came to Fernandina in 1855. He became the assistant supervisor of the old Florida Railroad and was elected to the state legislature in 1859, serving until the opening of the Civil War. William R. Kelly (1865-1896), was the first president of the Fernandina Western Railroad and head of the large wholesale and retail firm of Kelly & Bros. T. Howard Kelly (1895-1967) was a renowned author and screenwriter, as well as business executive.

Demetrios Nicholas Deonas

1909-1969-Demetrios Nicholas "Jimmy" Deonas was born in Santorini, Greece and immigrated to Fernandina Beach. Influenced by the Greek art of shipbuilding, he designed the "Super trawler" boat, which is commonly used today in the shrimping industries.

Traeye Family

1839-1979-An African American Family that lived in Old Town as free, property-owning citizens prior to the Civil War. Their descendants are still prominent in Fernandina Beach today.

Romeo Joseph Roberts

1919-1983-Romeo Joseph Roberts was the cook on board the Jim Guess, a pogy boat owned by the Nassau Fertilizer and Oil Company. Pogy fishing was once an important employer of many residents of Old Town. Pogy, also called Menhaden, was processed at the Pogy Plant producing fertilizer and oil.

Helen Gordon Litrico

1927-2008-Helen Gordon Litrico was a pioneer in television and print advertising, and served as one of the first employees at Amelia Island Plantation as the Public Relations Director. As an avid lover of local history, she was instrumental in the creation of the historic district in downtown Fernandina Beach and founded "Amelia Now," a quarterly guide to Amelia Island.

Lasserre Family

(1855-2010) The Lasserre Family has several prominent members buried at Bosque Bello. Thomas Burke Lasserre was an early harbor pilot and was a resident of Old Town. His son, Thomas N. Lasserre fought in World War I. Elmer Eugene "Gene" Lasserre served during WWII and became president of the Lasserre Motor Company. He also served as Commissioner of the Ocean Highway and Port Authority and was instrumental in the development of the Port of Fernandina, which opened in 1986.

Tringali Family

(1883-2012) Originally from Sicily, Salvatore and Francesca Tringali immigrated to Fernandina and became pioneers of the shrimping industry. Two of their sons, Joe Tringali and Angelo Tringali served in WWII and came back to Fernandina to become co-owners of the Tringali Brothers Seafood Company; this company became one of the most well-known and successful operations on the east coast. Joseph A. Tringali captained the Dixie Queen and won the first three annual races of the Fernandina Shrimp Festival. His brother, Angelo, was captain of the Amelia.

[BACK](#) -- [HOME](#)

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CONTEXT

The question is, should a columbarium stand out as distinctly different or blend in and be similar in character to its surroundings, especially in a place where tradition, dignity, history and respect are important and where the existing context is very uniform? In my view, it should not stand out, just as a new, modern, glass faced, 5-storey office building would stand out and be unacceptable on Centre St. Context matters. It underlies zoning and land development codes that prohibit the building of, say, a skyscraper (even one containing residences) in the middle of a residential neighborhood.

There are other design characteristics besides brick that are also important in evaluating whether the Columbarium design is, or is not, contextual:

ORIENTATION

The Bosque Bello's most prominent visual elements - the headstone monuments and vaults that mark graves - are oriented north / south (headstones are perpendicular to the graves which are oriented east / west. That east / west orientation has, according to Scott Mikelson, religious significance). The north / south headstone orientation is only present in the Marquis plan's three smallest elements (Garden Niches East 1, 2, and 3). The remaining, larger, more prominent elements (oval Private Niches and Garden Niches South and North) aren't oriented north / south. They are contrary to the prevailing visual pattern and underlying grid of the cemetery, and therefore not contextual.

SCALE

Bosque Bello's Ancient section, Division section, and Blocks 1-17 and 18-32 each have underlying grids. The grids establish scale. In the Division section, where the columbarium would be located, the scale is compact, with 20' and 40' blocks separated by 10' access lanes. The scale created by that grid is readily apparent. Adjacent to where the columbarium would be, across Nassau St., are Blocks 18-32. The grid there is similar in width to the Division section and reflects the compact scale. The scale in the Ancient section is even more compact than the other sections. The Marquis plan doesn't fit this compact scale at all. It is spread out, with some major elements over 200' apart. Why is this more open scale necessary or even desirable? What purpose does that serve?

HEIGHTS

The headstone monuments throughout the Cemetery typically don't exceed 3 1/2' in height and the few vaults that exist don't exceed 5' in height. A few graves include taller sculptural elements such as statues and crosses, but for the most part the heights are relatively low. The few walls that exist, which are in the Ancient section, don't exceed 3' in height and there are no walls in the other sections. The proposed design of the oval Privacy Niches, a major element in the Marquis plan, has walls that are 8' in height, contrary to the lower height context.

FORM

The predominant form of the existing structures and the cemetery layout is rectilinear. The headstones, fences, vaults, ground plaques, benches, burial plots, and access lanes are all rectilinear, with minor, small scale, decorative variations within individual plots. The oval shaped Privacy Niches element has tall, curved walls that form a semi-enclosure. An element with this form is non-contextual - there are no elements or design cues anywhere in Bosque Bello that would suggest such a structure.

MATERIALS

The predominant materials in Bosque Bello are stone - primarily as polished granite. Some marble is also used and a few plots have metal fencing. No plots in the surrounding Division section or Blocks 1-17 or 18-32 have brick. A few plots in the Ancient section have brick walls that surround plots or are embellishments to plots. In nearly all those cases, the brick and mortar have deteriorated, in some cases to the point where the brick is nearly unrecognizable as brick. Brick is sometimes used in cemeteries, but it's often for columns at the cemetery's entrance or for walls, often combined with metal fencing, that define the cemetery's perimeter. Given the very long time frame associated with cemeteries (100 - 200 years) more durable stone materials seem to be the preferred choice in most cemeteries.

In addition, a FB city ordinance does not include brick as an acceptable material for structures within Bosque Bello and the FL Building Code does not include brick for use in cemeteries.

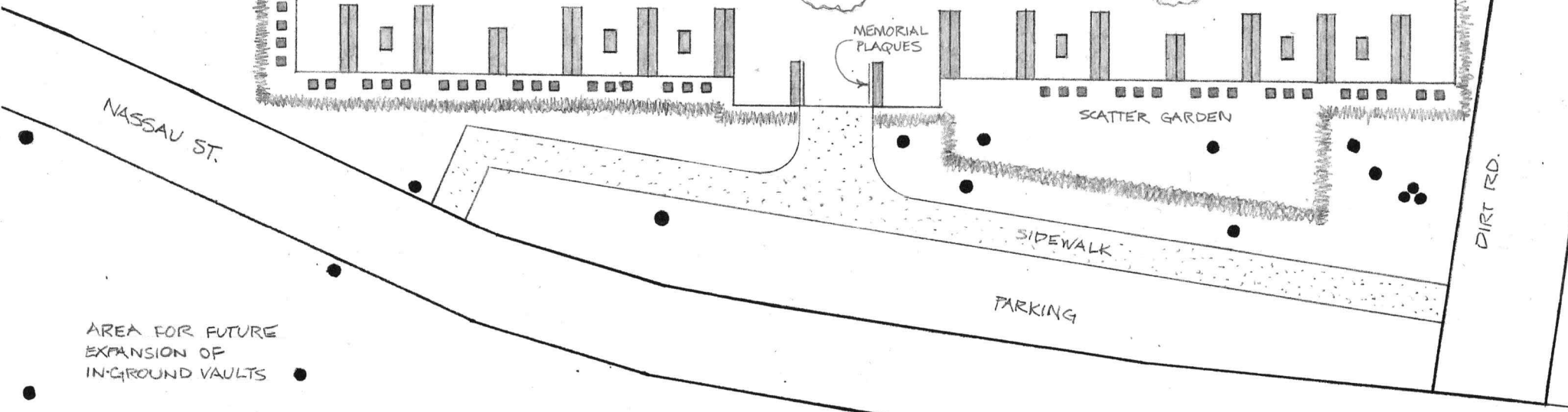
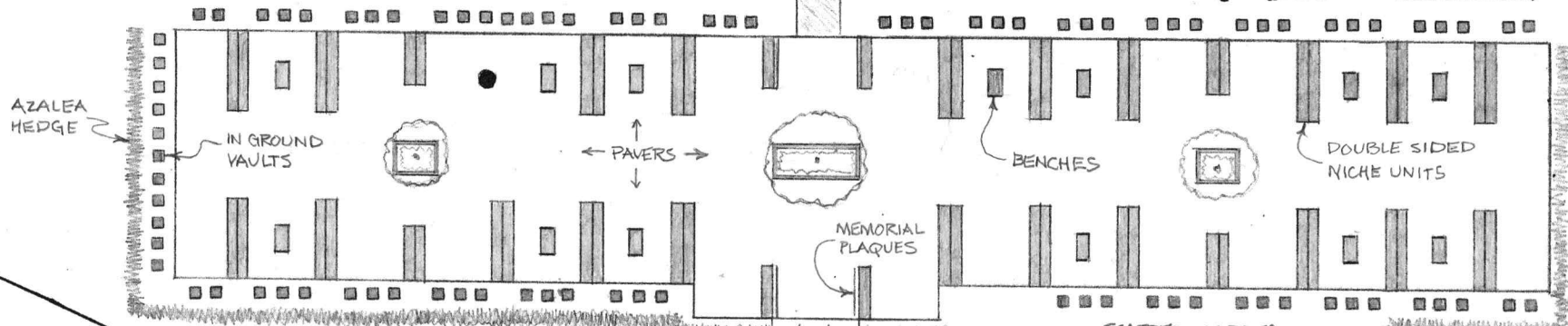
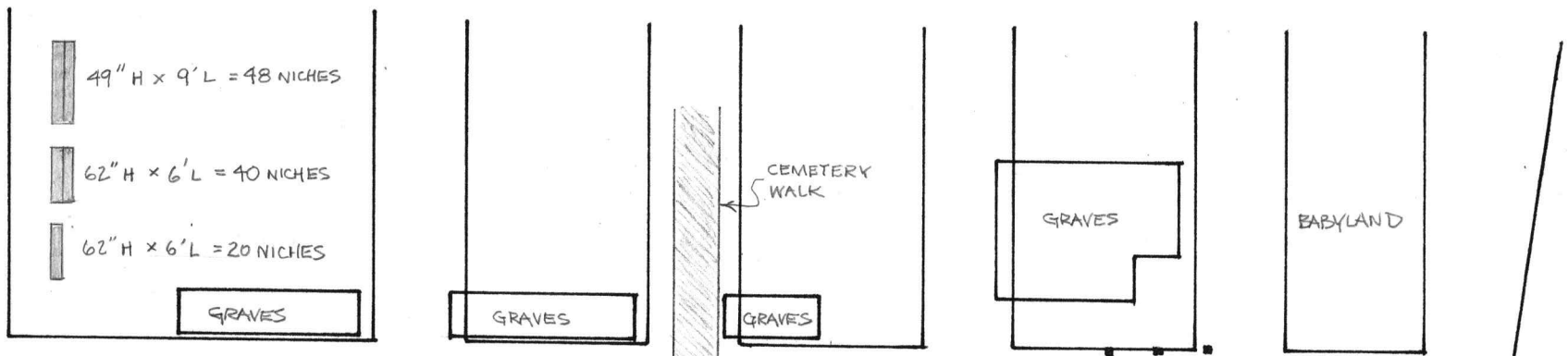
The above five design characteristics suggest the Marquis plan isn't contextual. One can argue, I suppose, that the columbarium doesn't have to be contextual. But what are the compelling reasons for it not to be? Given the non-contextual characteristics of its design, wouldn't the columbarium have an outsized impact on the historic visual character of the cemetery?

BRANDING

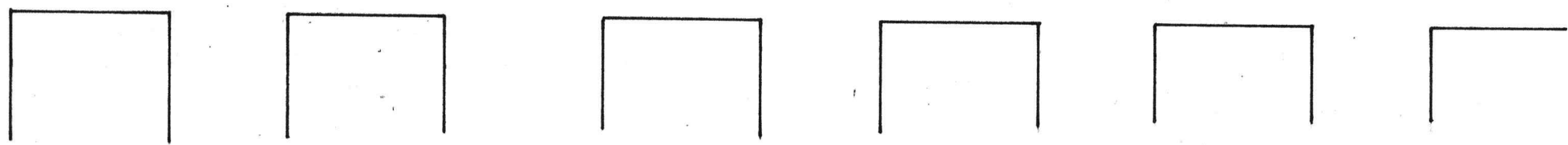
The notion that a brick columbarium is an extension of the Centre St. / Ft. Clinch brick "brand" is a stretch. That's Marquis cherry picking imagery to suit a romantic ideal of an old, historic, southern cemetery, complete with gnarly live oaks dripping with Spanish Moss. Fernandina has many brands, like most municipalities. Centre St. is a sub-brand of the City but so is the Beach. So is the Marina & River. So are the Mills. And the Centre St. brand is more than just brick - it's also compact scale (unlike the Marquis columbarium plan), buildings that front the sidewalk, narrow streets, live oaks, crowded sidewalks, lighted storefronts. There are also significant buildings on Centre St. that aren't brick (Post Office) and a granite columbarium faces Centre St., next to a prominent brick building (Methodist Church). Presumably, that granite columbarium was approved by the HDC, contrary to downtown's "brickness". Old Town has also been mentioned as part of the brick columbarium branding, but there is no brick in Old Town. A granite columbarium would not diminish the character of Bosque Bello. Nor would it diminish the FB brand or the downtown and Centre St. brand. Centre St.'s brand does not depend upon the cemetery, nor does the cemetery's brand depend upon Centre St. They are just separate, unconnected entities within the larger community.

COST

Based on an estimate for granite niche units, an attractive, compact, contextual, and expandable columbarium, with flexible phasing and a 1,248 niche build-out on less than half the acreage, could be built for about \$300 per repository (niches, vaults, cremation benches), versus \$740 in the Marquis plan. That would result in a better ROI.



EXISTING TREES



TOTAL: 1,248 NICHES
89 VAULTS
17 BENCHES
4 MEMORIAL
PLAQUES

192 NICHES
21 VAULTS
4 BENCHES

224 NICHES
19 VAULTS
2 BENCHES

272 NICHES
15 VAULTS
3 BENCHES

272 NICHES
18 VAULTS
2 BENCHES

288 NICHES
16 VAULTS
6 BENCHES

MEMORIAL
PLAQUES

SCATTER GARDEN

SIDEWALK

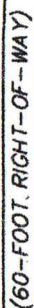
PARKING

PARKING

NASSAU ST.

DIRT RD.

AREA FOR FUTURE
EXPANSION OF
IN-GROUND VAULTS



AT BOOK
25 1. 725

9

2004

2

20

LIMITS OF PLAT BOOK 7, PAGES 325 & 326

2

30

24

50

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22

2.4

27

LIMITS OF PLAT
BOOK 5, PAGE 33

LIMITS OF FLAT BOOK 7, PAGES 325 & 326

MARQUIS PLAN

ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

CONTEXTUAL?	NO - Stands Out	YES - Blends In
ORIENTATION	Only 3 Small Units North / South	All Units North / South
SCALE	Spread Out, Multiple Units, 200' apart	Compact Footprint
HEIGHT	Oval Unit 8' high, Others at 4' high	20 Units 4' high, 9 Units 5' high
FORM	Oval, U-shaped	Rectilinear
MATERIAL	Brick	Granite
COLOR	Red	Gray
SURFACE	Gravel with Brick Walkways	Only Pavers
IMPACT	Up To 15 Trees Removed New Road	No Trees Removed No Change to Road

COST	\$740 per unit	\$300 per unit
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The Parks and Recreation Advisory Sub-committee of the City of Fernandina Beach Florida, met on Wednesday, February 17, 2021 at 11:00am. Present were Member Bartelt, Chair Ross, Vice-Chair Pugh, Member Norris, Member LaJoux.

1. Call to Order: Faith Ross called the meeting to order at 11:00am
2. Roll Call
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Bosque Bello Cemetery Columbarium Discussion
Chair Ross asked the committee to address some of the questions that have been posed about the proposed columbarium and made it clear that the committee is not opposed to the installation of a columbarium in the City's Cemetery. There was concern expressed that the proposed plan is going to be on the March 2, 2021 city commission meeting. Mr. Koffman from the Historic Restoration Foundation explained that the item on the agenda would authorize the city manager to move forward with the proposed plan but that this plan would be phased over some years based on the funds received from the purchasers of the niches in the structure. There was some discussion about the different phases of the plan and why they were recently changed. Mr. Mikelson, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director explained that the change was due to costs. There was more discussion about the existing design proposal. Mr. Koffman made it clear that with this plan that the City will not front the money for this project. Collected funds will go to the restoration foundation which is a 501C3. Once enough money is collected, phase I will begin. Member Bartelt brought up the fact that brick is not an acceptable material to be used in the Cemetery.

The Sub-committee stated that they are in favor of a columbarium but not in favor of the current design. The Sub-committee supports a columbarium that is self-funding mechanism for the Cemetery.

Recommendations are as follows:

1. A smaller footprint that was identified in the original designated area which was discussed in early design planning meetings prior to the Cemetery Master Plan and that any future expansion of the columbarium must remain within this designated footprint.
2. Future phases should be contiguous to the existing structures and be consistent with the established design and material.
3. It is recommended that the material used for this structure comply with the existing cemetery code in chapter 30.
4. The installation of any phase shall not require the removal of any healthy trees nor alter any roadways.

A special Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee Meeting will be held on Thursday, February 25 at 5pm to review the above four proposed items.

5. Adjournment 1:00pm

DRAFT

MINUTES
Parks and Recreation Advisory
Sub-committee
February 17, 2021
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Meeting adjourned by Chair Ross at 1:00 pm