

Amy Johnson

From: Gina Johnnie <gina@shermmlaw.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 26, 2020 1:55 PM
To: CityRecorder
Cc: Elisabeth Potter
Subject: Pioneer Cemetery

My name is Gina Anne Johnnie and I am a resident of the Fairmount neighborhood. I am also a decedent of a family buried in the Pioneer Cemetery. In addition to distant relatives (including Salem's first dentist), my grandmother, Pauline L. McMahon, is buried in the Pioneer Cemetery. The Pioneer Cemetery means a great deal to my family, as it does to all families with relatives buried there. I understand that people with no relatives buried in the Pioneer Cemetery will not have the same emotional response to using it like a park, that my family does. With that said, I would hope that they would consider the need for historic preservation and would be willing to show respect for the families who have people buried in the Pioneer Cemetery. Irreparable damage has been done to my families' plot – two headstones are missing and others are broken – as well as other parts of the Cemetery.

While I understand the desire to have neighborhood access from one neighborhood to another neighborhood, I strongly disagree with any attempt to use the Pioneer Cemetery for that access. Until it was donated to the City of Salem, the Pioneer Cemetery was owned and managed by a service type organization. When the Cemetery fell into disrepair, the service organization asked the City to take possession, with the understanding that the City would protect it. The Pioneer Cemetery houses so much of this City's history that preservation and protection should be a priority. The Cemetery was not been well cared for until the Friends of Pioneer Cemetery became its guardian angel. The Pioneer Cemetery is not a public park and it is not property that the City of Salem purchased. It has seen its share of damage, including during a time recently when the "public" sought to use it as an unauthorized off lease dog park and did not pick up dog poop. Now dogs are not welcome. We already know that people do not respect the Cemetery and are happy to use it like a park. In fact, when talking with us publicly, Vanessa Nordyke called it a public park before correcting herself. Putting a path through the Pioneer Cemetery will invite more damage, not less – the solutions proposed by Ms. Nordyke are not feasible. If the City is not interested in protecting a historical treasure, then find a non-profit that will ensure that it is protected and preserved.

If the City seeks connectivity, then it should improve the current connection between the two neighborhoods and not seek a new connection. Others will know much more about this issue than me, but my understanding is that because the Pioneer Cemetery is on the National Historic Register, studies are required to make any change. Additionally, because there may be unmarked burials in the location where it looks like a path is proposed, other studies would also be required. As far as I am aware, none of that has been considered or been done. With other more important issues, like homelessness, why would the City use resources on this issue? And if it did seek to use resources, why not use them to improve the current path between neighborhoods?

Regardless of those issues, I would hope that the City would decide to protect the Pioneer Cemetery.

Gina Anne Johnnie



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April 27, 2020

To: City Recorder

City of Salem, Oregon

RE: Trail through Pioneer Cemetery

For: Mayor and City Councilors

From: Pat Norman

Enclosed: Letter and Petition - 4 pages

cc

April 26, 2020

Re: Trail through Pioneer Cemetery

Mr. Mayor and City Councilors:

I see why some people are asking for the convenience of passing through Pioneer Cemetery to get to the other side. I am asking you, please, to look inside Pioneer rather than just to the other side. Pioneer Cemetery is an outdoor history museum, full of people whom all have stories. The cemetery's website contains much information about those (8000 +) buried on the grounds. Olive Stanton was the first woman to graduate from Willamette Law School, and was a Suffragette who helped gain the vote for women in Oregon. Hiram "Hi" Gorman was born into slavery, and freed by President Lincoln's emancipation proclamation.

My position is the city should look outside Pioneer for the trail. There are concerns that Commercial is dangerous. Since there are crowds of South Salem High Schoolers who regularly travel from the school to Rural and Hoyt then south to the food vendors, I suggest safety measures be established for the students and general public along Commercial. There also may be need for upgrades of the Fairmount Trail, which runs from the park to lower Crestview, parallel to River Road. The other issue is Candalaria's lack of parks. In speaking with Eunice Kim, Salem Vision, there has been discussion of pocket parks – on lots rather than acreage. Candalaria needs a pocket park.

For transparency's sake, I am involved with other agencies that intersect with Pioneer: board member with Salem Parks Foundation; and a founding member of Just Walk Salem Keizer (JWSK). JWSK has hosted many walks and events in Pioneer Cemetery, which is open to the public. In this letter, I am speaking on my own behalf and in reference to my work at Pioneer Cemetery.

I am a member of Friends of Pioneer Cemetery (FOPC) and have been working the grounds for over 9 years. I moved into the neighborhood about 1988 and live within 2 blocks of Pioneer. The fence saved the cemetery from vandalism when installed in 1986, and continues to protect it. Even the one entrance and exit is protective as it is very public at Hoyt and Skopil, rather than a gate on the north side that is out of sight from Hoyt. The grounds were very open to people when I first arrived in the neighborhood. It eventually evolved into a "leash required" area and is now "no dogs allowed" (Over 3 years now) because of that percentage of irresponsible dog owners. I was not in agreement with the "no dogs" designation at the time, but have come to appreciate it since the grounds are much cleaner and without the damage resulting from loose dogs. Unfortunately, places such as Pioneer Cemetery need protection from that low percentage of people who don't care or are determined to do damage to properties. I am a full time walker and fair weather bicyclist and love trails. But I cannot support a trail in Pioneer Cemetery, a fragile place where we do ongoing repair and restoration of aging headstones and monuments. FOPC also prunes the roses (there are many heritage roses), removes invasive plant species, trims bushes and trees, picks up debris, removes moss from cement and headstones/monuments, and cleans headstones with water, soft brushes and wood. When we have new volunteers, we warn them of the safety hazards: the property is uneven and the ground squirrels (invasive) dig holes and make tunnels, causing stones to lean and sometimes fall, so take care in moving throughout the property; there are headstones not securely attached to their base so could fall if leaned on; and watch for the periodic poison oak.

Pioneer Cemetery is designated Historic by the City of Salem and is on the National Register of Historic Places. There is also a Salem historic archaeological site on the grounds, established approximately 3 years ago. If the motion to have city staff study trail options in Pioneer is pursued, eventually, the Historic Landmarks Commission will make the final decision. Since Pioneer is designated a Goal 5 Resource, as an historic site, an extensive study would need to be obtained, which includes economic, social, environmental, and energy analysis.

There are a number of people who have talked about the inconvenience of walking from Fairmount to Commercial to get to Life Source and other shopping. Sure, a path/trail would be convenient. But do we want to put our historic outdoor museum at risk by adding traffic when there are options outside the cemetery? I encourage a visit to Pioneer if you have not done so. I would be happy to walk with you to assist with your experience in this significant and special area.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Pat Norman



Candalaria Resident

normanboo@comcast.net

Attached is a petition I started just before the "stay home" restrictions. There are others interested in signing when we get to safer circumstances. One of those is a veteran who was planning on making comments at City Council, first on February 24 and then again on March 23, and both meetings were postponed. He has been unavailable this week. I BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE COUNCIL TO HEAR A VETERAN'S CONCERNS. There are nearly 300 veterans buried in Pioneer Cemetery, several having served in the War of 1812 and many more from the Civil War.

Petition to protect Salem's Pioneer Cemetery, Salem Oregon

Petition summary and background	Pioneer Cemetery is on the National Register of Historic Places and has an archaeological site on the grounds. Adding a gate and/or trail to the grounds will put it at risk for damage and misuse.
Action petitioned for	Do not add a gate and/or path/trail to Salem's Pioneer Cemetery

Printed Name	Signature	Address	Comment	Date
Sue Apodaca	<i>[Signature]</i>	2855 Fillmore Ave NW 97304		3/7
DALE PALMQUIST	<i>[Signature]</i>	1672 Sumner Cir NW 97304		
Harold Otis	<i>[Signature]</i>	4092 Fir 17e 11 Dr. S.E.		3/7
KEN ALBIN	<i>[Signature]</i>	4490 Silverton Rd NE 97305		3/7
PAT NORMAN	<i>[Signature]</i>	2495 McVee Dr S 97302	preserve & protect cemetery	3/7
Zach Norman	<i>[Signature]</i>	3245 Bonham St. 97302		3/7
FRED KLATZ	<i>[Signature]</i>	810 VISTA AVE SE 97302		3/9
Claudine Shaw	<i>[Signature]</i>	3040 Loucks Ct NE Salem 97301		3/10
Judy Norman	<i>[Signature]</i>	4253 Heavens Way So.		3/10
Dixie Hall	<i>[Signature]</i>	4293 Heavens Way So	Preserve!	3/10
Richard Hiltz	<i>[Signature]</i>	380 Hoyt St. S.		3/11
James T.	<i>[Signature]</i>	350 Hart St		3/11

[illegible]