

A photograph of Springdale Cemetery in Peoria, Illinois, during autumn. The scene is filled with trees showing vibrant red, orange, and yellow foliage against a clear blue sky. In the foreground, several white and grey granite headstones are scattered across a green lawn. A large white rectangular box with a thin black border is centered over the image, containing the title text.

SPRINGDALE CEMETERY 2022 Proposed Agreement

City of Peoria • Peoria County • Peoria Park District



OVERVIEW

- Founded in 1854 and designed as both a cemetery and public park
- 227 acres, accessible from Prospect Road just south of Peoria Heights and just north of Glen Oak Park
- Holds the remains of more than 70,000 people, with room for many more on still undeveloped acres
- In addition to burial plots, Springdale has a large public mausoleum, 15 private mausoleums, a garden for scattering ashes, and a special pet burial area
- Listed on the National Register of Historic Places





RURAL CEMETERY MOVEMENT

Springdale was part of the Rural Cemetery Movement, which offered residents a burial option other than one associated with a church by creating non-denominational, architecturally designed burial places.

Springdale was intended to be a place for the living. Attractive parks with scenic vistas, water features, and forest area were included. It is a restive place for all people to enjoy refined outdoor recreation amidst art and sculpture previously accessible only to those of great wealth.

HISTORICAL FIGURES



The cemetery is an important, culturally significant site to our community. It is the finale resting place of many notable residents, among them:

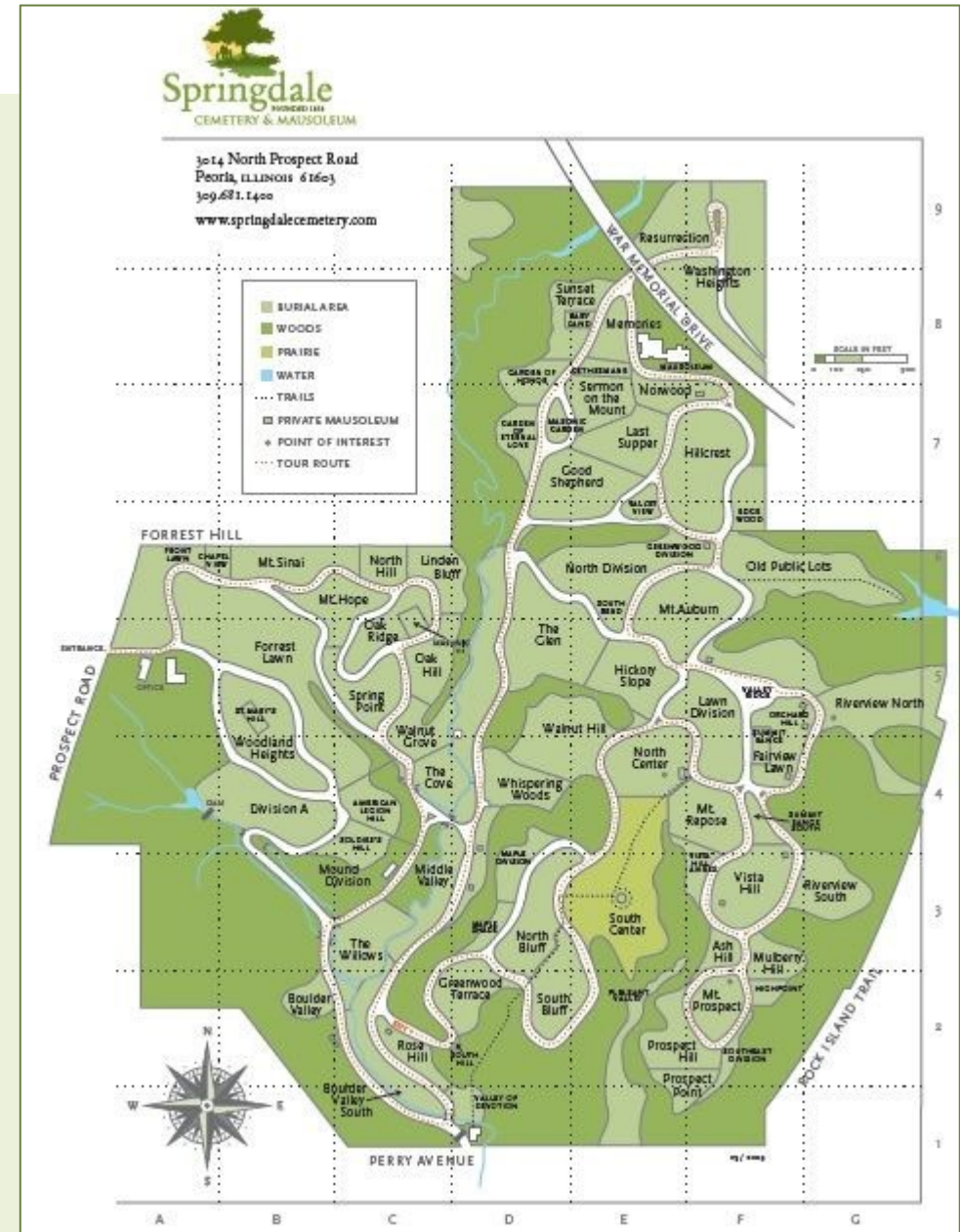
- William Hale, first Mayor of Peoria
- General Isaiah Sillman, Black Hawk War General
- Moses Pettengill, merchant and abolitionist
- Fred J. Soldan, first Head Librarian of Peoria Public Library
- Almiran S. Cole, operated Peoria's first distillery
- John Dickinson McClure, Civil War Colonel
- Captain Henry Detweiller, steamboat captain and Civil War Veteran
- John Cleveland Proctor, found of Proctor Hospital and Proctor Home
- Lydia Moss Bradley, founder of Bradley University
- Hedley Waycott, international artist
- Johnathan Boyce Taylor, baseball pitcher, coach, and manager
- John Henry Gwynn, Jr., Peoria NAACP chapter president
- Chip Chan, Peorian killed in 9/11 attacks

SAVANNA AREA

The area known as the “savanna” in Springdale Cemetery is 14 acres of tall grass oak savanna that was reestablished after once dominating the Illinois River Bluffs.

Three-hundred-year-old trees provide a shady habitat in between large open areas of these tall grasses, broad-leaved plants, and shrubs. It is a natural community that developed with the recession of glaciers 10,000 years ago. Similar conditions later greeted early French traders and explorers who came to Peoria in the 18th century.

The Springdale savanna shelters many diverse and uncommon species. Thanks to hundreds of volunteer hours over the past 19 years, the Savanna has recovered some of its former glory. Further restoration of the native biological diversity continues.



PREVIOUS OWNER HISTORY



1997-1999

Former owners Larry and Cynthia Leach mismanaged funds, grossly neglected maintenance, and failed to keep adequate records.

- More than \$200,000 diverted from cemetery funds to private accounts, in addition to corporate checks issued to pay personal bills and debts
- Less than \$40,000 of the approximately annual \$220,000 revenue was applied to maintenance, resulting in the blatant disrepair of grasslands, buildings, and markers

SEPTEMBER 1999

Illinois Comptroller Daniel Hynes revoked Leach's operating license and fined him \$10,000 for violating the state's Cemetery Care Act.

Cemetery put into receivership with Richard Eagleton as the caretaker.

Eagleton found the cemetery accounts drained and made pleas to the public to help them recover lost records.

TRANSITION TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIP

1999-2002

Over the next three years the Springdale Historic Preservation Foundation searched for a new owner to invest in the cemetery.

However, pending litigation, liens on the property, a depleted care fund, the now \$3.5 million estimated for repairs and maintenance needed, and oversight regulations put in place by the Comptroller's office made it apparent that private ownership would not be a viable option.

The Foundation began to engage with the Peoria Park District, City of Peoria, and Peoria County to come to a solution to ensure the cemetery could continue to operate.





Expiring 2002 Intergovernmental Agreement

City of Peoria holds ownership of Springdale Cemetery.

Springdale Cemetery Management Authority created to oversee operations. Current board makeup:

- Three appointees by the City of Peoria, one shall be Chairperson
- Two appointees by the Peoria Park District
- Two appointees by Peoria County
- Two appointees by the Springdale Historic Preservation Foundation, provided the Foundation provides at least \$25,000 in cash or in-kind services annually

The cemetery had been largely maintained by volunteers. The agreement provided it could contract with the park district to maintain the cemetery at the park district's cost.

Expiring 2002 Intergovernmental Agreement

20-year agreement

Operating deficits not covered by the Foundation shall be divided as follows:

- The first \$80,000 in any calendar year shall be divided evenly between the County and the Park District.
- The next \$20,000 shall be covered by the County.
- Any and all deficits in excess of \$100,000 after deficit coverage by the Foundation shall be the responsibility of the City.
- Since 2002, the City has provided approximately \$230,000 annually.



2022 Proposed Intergovernmental Agreement

Representatives from each governing body have met and agreed that Springdale Cemetery is still in need of government oversight, and it is in the public's interest to restore and maintain these grounds to the condition that befits a cemetery so important to the Peoria area's culture and history.

The representatives recommend particular attention be given to preserving the savanna, as well as continuing the great strides in maintenance and restoration that have been made since taking over cemetery operations.

With stable, predictable ownership, proper maintenance, and fundraising, the cemetery can be operated in a manner to eventually pay for itself.



2022 Proposed Intergovernmental Agreement

- City of Peoria retains ownership of Springdale Cemetery.
- City will subdivide and sell the savanna to the Park District for \$1, to put this area into permanent environmental stewardship.
- Springdale Cemetery Management Authority board makeup:
 - Five appointees by the City of Peoria, one shall be Chairperson
 - Two appointees by Peoria County
 - One appointee by the Peoria Park District
 - One appointee by the Springdale Historic Preservation Foundation, provided the Foundation provides at least \$25,000 in cash or in-kind services annually



2022 Proposed Intergovernmental Agreement

- The agreement provides it could contract with the Park District to maintain the cemetery at the Park District's cost.
- 10-year agreement, option to extend an additional 10 years
- Any of the Parties may terminate that Party's obligations under this Agreement by providing one year's notice and by paying the sum of \$150,000, plus any accrued obligations owed





2022 Proposed Intergovernmental Agreement

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS – PEORIA PARK DISTRICT

- The Park District's maximum annual cash contribution shall be \$40,000. It shall be an equally prorated share of the first \$80,000 of operating deficit from the prior year with the County.
- It is acknowledged that the Park District's annual expense to maintain the savanna has an inherent value more than the Park District's annual cash contribution.



2022 Proposed Intergovernmental Agreement

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS – PEORIA AND PEORIA COUNTY

- The County's maximum annual cash contribution shall be \$102,000. It shall be an equally prorated share of the first \$80,000 of operating deficit from the prior year with the Park District plus the next \$62,000 of operating deficit in year one of this Agreement.
- The County agrees to increase "its next \$62,000" by \$2,000 per year such that its maximum annual cash contribution will be \$120,000 in the tenth year of this Agreement.
- The City's maximum annual contribution shall be all operating deficits not covered by the Park District or County.

TIMELINE



MARCH 1, 2022

Peoria County Board
Executive Committee
Discussion.

If approved, will go to a
vote before the entire
Peoria County Board.

MARCH 8, 2022

Peoria City Council
Meeting

MARCH 9, 2022

Peoria Park District Board
of Trustees Meeting

MARCH 10, 2022

Peoria County Board Meeting

