

CEMETERY OVERSIGHT TASK FORCE MEETING

AUGUST 6, 2009

5:30 P.M.

Held at: PERCY L. JULIAN HIGH SCHOOL

10330 South Elizabeth

Chicago, Illinois

1 CEMETERY TASK FORCE COMMITTEE:
2
3 HONORABLE PATRICIA BROWN HOLMES,
4 Chairperson
5 MR. LESTER CONEY,
6 Mesirow Financial
7 MR. MICHAEL KOTZIN,
8 Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of
9 Metropolitan Chicago
10 DR. BYRON BRAZIER,
11 Pastor, Apostolic Church of God
12 DR. DAMON ARNOLD,
13 Director of Illinois Department of Public
14 Health
15 SECRETARY BRENT E. ADAMS,
16 Department of Financial and Professional
17 Regulation
18 MR. WILLIAM McNARY,
19 Citizen Action/Illinois
20 MR. DALITSO SULAMOYO,
21 Illinois Association of Community Action
22 Agencies
23 MR. WILLIE E. CARTER,
24 Restvale Cemetery, Inc.
MR. H. AUGUSTUS CAGE,
Cage Memorial Chapels
REPRESENTATIVE MONIQUE D. DAVIS
27th House District
REPRESENTATIVE DAN BRADY,
88th House District
SENATOR EMIL JONES, III,
14th Senate District

1 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Good afternoon, ladies
00:14:42 2 and gentlemen. Welcome to the second meeting of the
00:14:44 3 Cemetery Oversight Task Force. We apologize for the
00:14:48 4 late start. Traffic has gotten everyone. However,
00:14:52 5 we would like to begin. We will try to accommodate
00:14:56 6 as many individuals as we possibly can.

00:14:59 7 My name is Patricia Brown Holmes. I am
00:15:02 8 honored to have been appointed by the Governor to
00:15:06 9 chair this task force. I am a partner of the law
00:15:10 10 firm Schiff Hardin, and I was previously a state
00:15:12 11 court judge and a federal and state prosecutor in the
00:15:16 12 Circuit Court of Cook County.

00:15:18 13 I would like to introduce to you members of
00:15:21 14 the task force. I will not introduce them in the
00:15:25 15 order that they're seated, however, you can see the
00:15:28 16 name tags, and I will give you a little bit about who
00:15:31 17 they are. Some of them have not arrived yet, and as
00:15:35 18 they arrive, they will take their seats, and you will
00:15:38 19 have an opportunity to see and know who they are.

00:15:40 20 One of our task force members is Ms. Andrea
00:15:45 21 Zopp, who since 2008 has been the vice president and
00:15:49 22 general counsel for Exelon Corporation. She is also
00:15:53 23 a former state and federal prosecutor;

00:15:57 24 One of our members at the task force -- and

00:16:00 1 maybe they can raise their hand for you -- William
00:16:03 2 McNary, who is the co-director of Citizen
00:16:08 3 Action/Illinois, and he has been the co-director
00:16:10 4 since 2000 and president of the USAction since 1999;
00:16:15 5 Task force member Dr. Byron Brazier many of
00:16:21 6 you may know is the pastor of the Apostolic Church of
00:16:26 7 God;
00:16:26 8 Task force member Dalitso Sulamoyo, who has
00:16:31 9 been the president and CEO of the Illinois Community
00:16:33 10 Action Association since 2001;
00:16:36 11 Task force member Lester Coney, who since
00:16:40 12 2006 has been the executive vice president of Mesirow
00:16:46 13 Financial;
00:16:46 14 Task force member Secretary Brent Adams, who
00:16:51 15 is the leader of our State's Department of Financial
00:16:56 16 and Professional Regulation;
00:16:58 17 Task force member Dr. Damon Arnold, who is
00:17:02 18 the Director of the State's Department of Public
00:17:05 19 Health;
00:17:05 20 Task force member Michael Kotzin, who is the
00:17:09 21 executive vice president of the Jewish United Fund
00:17:13 22 and of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago;
00:17:17 23 Task force member Willie Carter, who is the
00:17:22 24 owner of Restvale Cemetery in Alsip, Illinois;

00:17:26 1 Task force member Augustus Cage, who is the
00:17:30 2 president and director of Cage Memorial Chapels;
00:17:35 3 We also have with us legislative
00:17:38 4 ombudsperson to the task force appointed by the
00:17:42 5 President of the Senate, Emil Jones. Emil -- Senator
00:17:47 6 Jones represents the 14th Senate District of
00:17:50 7 Illinois.
00:17:51 8 Further, we have legislative ombudsperson to
00:17:54 9 the task force, appointed by Senate Minority Leader,
00:17:58 10 Senator Randy Hultgren. Senator Hultgren represents
00:18:03 11 the 48th Senate District of Illinois;
00:18:06 12 Legislative ombudsperson to the task force
00:18:10 13 appointed by the House Minority Leader is
00:18:13 14 Representative Dan Brady, who represents the 88th
00:18:17 15 House District of Illinois;
00:18:20 16 And last but not least joining us on our
00:18:23 17 panel from this district, Representative Monique
00:18:27 18 Davis of the 27th House District of Illinois and
00:18:32 19 Representative Ken Dunkin, who represents the 5th
00:18:35 20 House District of Illinois.
00:18:37 21 By way of background, on July 16th Governor
00:18:42 22 Quinn signed Executive Order 16, which formed this
00:18:47 23 Cemetery Oversight Task Force. This task force was
00:18:51 24 formed in the wake of the recent tragic events at

00:18:54 1 Burr Oak Cemetery, which have highlighted a
00:18:58 2 deficiency in our current mechanisms for regulating
00:19:01 3 and overseeing the operation and management of
00:19:04 4 cemeteries.

00:19:05 5 The people of our state demand proper care
00:19:08 6 and handling of the disposition of human remains, and
00:19:11 7 the goal of this task force is to contribute to
00:19:15 8 establishing an effective system to protect the
00:19:19 9 people of our state.

00:19:21 10 The task force's specific mission is as
00:19:24 11 follows:

00:19:25 12 First, by September 15th we must conduct a
00:19:29 13 comprehensive review of the Illinois -- of Illinois'
00:19:33 14 present structural arrangement for regulating
00:19:35 15 cemeteries, funeral directors, and embalmers compared
00:19:40 16 to the manner in which other states arrange their
00:19:43 17 regulatory framework.

00:19:45 18 Next, the substance of Illinois' laws and
00:19:47 19 regulations governing these cemeteries, funeral
00:19:52 20 directors, and embalmers compared to other states
00:19:54 21 with a view to recommend for implementation in
00:19:57 22 Illinois several best practices.

00:19:59 23 Next, we must review the circumstances
00:20:03 24 surrounding the recent tragic events at Burr Oak

00:20:07 1 Cemetery, and finally, to the extent to which these
00:20:10 2 similar tragedies have occurred or could occur
00:20:12 3 elsewhere we are investigating.

00:20:16 4 The task force's second responsibility is by
00:20:19 5 September 15th to submit a report of findings to the
00:20:23 6 Governor and to the Secretary of the Department of
00:20:26 7 Financial and Professional Regulation.

00:20:28 8 The report will provide detailed
00:20:31 9 recommendations on what policies, laws, rules, and
00:20:34 10 regulations should be implemented to ensure that the
00:20:37 11 manner in which care for the deceased is humane and
00:20:41 12 respectful, including how and by what government
00:20:45 13 entity the finances of cemeteries and the conduct of
00:20:48 14 cemetery personnel should be regulated and whether
00:20:53 15 regulations governing funeral directors, embalmers,
00:20:56 16 and crematoria can and should be strengthened.

00:21:00 17 We will now call witnesses to testify, and
00:21:04 18 just so everyone understands the protocol, witnesses
00:21:07 19 will be invited to testify today. There has been a
00:21:10 20 notice that was published on our website, which is
00:21:14 21 CEMETERYTASKFORCE.ILLINOIS.GOV. You can go to this
00:21:19 22 website at any time to find updated information on
00:21:22 23 the task force.

00:21:24 24 The witnesses will be called in a specific

00:21:28 1 order. Following those witnesses who have given
00:21:31 2 previous notice that they would desire to testify, we
00:21:34 3 will have a microphone, and we will invite members of
00:21:37 4 the public to testify as well.

00:21:39 5 Depending on the number of witnesses who are
00:21:42 6 indicating they would like to testify, we may have to
00:21:46 7 shorten some of your questions. Please do not be
00:21:50 8 offended if we attempt to get as many people as we
00:21:53 9 possibly can to the microphones to testify.

00:21:58 10 We would like you, toward that vein, to try
00:22:01 11 and limit your remarks to ten minutes. We may take
00:22:05 12 questions from the commission -- from the task force
00:22:09 13 and move to the next witnesses.

00:22:12 14 The first witness that we would like to call
00:22:16 15 to testify today is our Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart.
00:22:21 16 Mr. Dart.

00:22:22 17 SHERIFF TOM DART: Thank you very much. Thank
00:22:24 18 you for inviting me to come and speak in front of the
00:22:27 19 panel, and I'm looking forward to assisting the panel
00:22:30 20 in any way I can.

00:22:33 21 I really want to first and foremost express
00:22:36 22 our office's sympathy to the many individuals and
00:22:39 23 family members who have been impacted by this
00:22:40 24 tragedy. Myself and the other folks in my office

00:22:44 1 have spent the last five weeks out there. We've
00:22:48 2 interacted with a lot of families, and the stories
00:22:50 3 are heartbreaking, and there are stories that are
00:22:54 4 many, diverse, and there are stories that in the end
00:22:56 5 we wish we were able to give more answers to people,
00:22:59 6 but we have not been able to do so. Our hope is that
00:23:03 7 through the work of this committee and this
00:23:04 8 commission is there can be some degree of closure for
00:23:07 9 a lot of these people who, frankly, deserve it.

00:23:10 10 At the outset, I really can't begin to talk
00:23:13 11 about this without thanking some of the other folks
00:23:16 12 who have been involved with this case. The Cook
00:23:18 13 County State's Attorney office, the FBI, and numerous
00:23:22 14 county departments, like the highway department,
00:23:25 15 facilities department, and the forestry department.
00:23:27 16 They have been so instrumental in helping on a level
00:23:30 17 that I, frankly, was shocked.

00:23:32 18 We were -- when we first got this task given
00:23:36 19 to us, we were overwhelmed with the magnitude of it,
00:23:40 20 and without the help of those offices and the
00:23:42 21 partnerships with them we could not have brought some
00:23:45 22 of the conclusions we have brought.

00:23:46 23 I want to give you just a brief overview of
00:23:49 24 how we got to where we're at. There was --

00:23:55 1 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Excuse me. Could you speak a
00:23:56 2 little louder?
00:23:58 3 SHERIFF TOM DART: Yes, I will try to do my best.
00:23:59 4 Sure thing.
00:23:59 5 As everyone's aware, there's four suspects
00:24:03 6 that have been arrested for their involvement in the
00:24:05 7 alleged criminal conduct at Burr Oak Cemetery. In
00:24:09 8 short, they've been charged with illegally unearthing
00:24:11 9 existing graves, reselling the plots to unsuspecting
00:24:15 10 individuals who came to Burr Oak to bury their family
00:24:18 11 members.
00:24:19 12 There are counts of theft, counts of removal
00:24:21 13 of gravestone or marker, desecration of human
00:24:25 14 remains, removal of remains of multiple deceased
00:24:28 15 human beings from a burial ground, and conspiracy to
00:24:30 16 dismember multiple human bodies.
00:24:32 17 The investigation was started by our
00:24:34 18 office's financial crimes unit after the Alsip Police
00:24:38 19 Department was contacted by Perpetua, which was the
00:24:42 20 owners of the cemetery. Alsip called us up and asked
00:24:46 21 us to handle the case, which we did.
00:24:48 22 As I said, we came in under the
00:24:50 23 understanding originally it was a financial crime.
00:24:52 24 We quickly understood that that was not the case.

00:24:55 1 We believe this criminal scheme has been in
00:24:57 2 place for at least four or five years, and the
00:25:00 3 information we have gathered indicates that those
00:25:02 4 responsible for the criminal conduct have netted
00:25:05 5 anywhere between 100 and \$500,000.

00:25:10 6 We may truly never know exactly how many
00:25:13 7 graves were illegally disturbed. That is something
00:25:17 8 that we may never get complete closure on.

00:25:20 9 For the past five weeks our office and the
00:25:22 10 other agencies I've talked about have been at the
00:25:23 11 cemetery basically 24 hours a day collecting
00:25:26 12 evidence, securing the crime scene. We presently
00:25:28 13 have approximately 1200 pieces of evidence. Most of
00:25:31 14 that evidence are human remains.

00:25:35 15 Because there's a pending criminal
00:25:37 16 investigation, I'm limited in the amount of details I
00:25:40 17 can provide this panel, but I can report that the
00:25:42 18 evidence gathering process is nearing completion
00:25:44 19 right now, and we're confident the evidence we've
00:25:46 20 recovered will help lead to the convictions of the --
00:25:49 21 in the criminal case.

00:25:50 22 On the human side, we had attempted to the
00:25:53 23 best as possible to maintain the operations of the
00:25:56 24 cemetery while we were there. It was next to

00:25:59 1 impossible to do that because of the condition of the
00:26:04 2 cemetery in a lot of respects, both with the record
00:26:07 3 keeping and the actual condition of it.

00:26:08 4 We, nonetheless, after the closure of the
00:26:11 5 cemetery, which we had to do because of the expanding
00:26:16 6 crime scenes, we, nonetheless, began to go about
00:26:20 7 making the cemetery a better place. Our office
00:26:26 8 cleaned virtually every headstone at the cemetery,
00:26:31 9 some that had been buried for years, if not decades.
00:26:35 10 We began to make it more presentable so that it can
00:26:39 11 be opened up soon.

00:26:40 12 We have photographed every headstone in the
00:26:41 13 cemetery, and within the next five days the complete
00:26:44 14 list -- right now there's approximately 10,000
00:26:47 15 headstones that are on the website. In the next
00:26:49 16 fives days we believe the rest of them, which is
00:26:51 17 approximately 42,000 headstones, will be on the
00:26:55 18 website so individuals can attempt to look up their
00:26:57 19 loved ones. It has been incredibly time consuming to
00:27:01 20 do that.

00:27:02 21 We've also begun to put together a database
00:27:03 22 that we hope to have completed within the next two
00:27:05 23 weeks, of all of the records that are there. I'm not
00:27:08 24 attesting to the quality or the veracity of all the

00:27:11 1 records that are there, but of the records we have,
00:27:14 2 we are compiling a database, which we're going to use
00:27:17 3 for criminal purposes, but I also intend on sharing
00:27:21 4 those with the receiver so that the receiver can more
00:27:24 5 expeditiously re-open the cemetery, or without this
00:27:28 6 database I could not imagine how the receiver could
00:27:31 7 open the cemetery. The people -- there would be a
00:27:33 8 mass of people like what we experienced unable to
00:27:36 9 find any information, and it would not be a -- a good
00:27:40 10 way to treat individuals who have loved ones there.

00:27:45 11 We have been very aware of a lot of the
00:27:50 12 issues in respect to this cemetery, but in the course
00:27:55 13 of our investigation it has not been lost upon us
00:27:59 14 that there is a tremendous need for legislative
00:28:03 15 changes in the area of cemeteries.

00:28:05 16 We have been stymied at different times in
00:28:08 17 trying to pursue some of the criminal aspects of the
00:28:11 18 case because there is virtually, virtually no
00:28:14 19 regulation of cemeteries in the state. There is
00:28:17 20 people that -- who contest that, but I would suggest
00:28:20 21 to you that anybody who is being honest and truthful
00:28:24 22 would say clearly there is no regulations here.

00:28:27 23 For a starter, when we attempted to get our
00:28:31 24 arms around the size of the cemetery itself, there

00:28:34 1 was no state repository that we could go to and say
00:28:39 2 could you give us the blue print, the plat for the
00:28:42 3 cemetery? There is no such place. So that limited
00:28:44 4 us a great deal in attempting to get our arms around
00:28:47 5 the size of what we're dealing with. We were unable
00:28:50 6 to go to a location and say, listen, State, can you
00:28:53 7 tell us how many people are supposed to be buried in
00:28:55 8 this cemetery? There is no such record. When we
00:28:58 9 attempted to ask questions about do you have records
00:29:01 10 of who may be buried at different locations? There
00:29:03 11 are no such records.

00:29:04 12 There is no conceivable reason why a state
00:29:07 13 agency cannot do those type of basic, basic things.
00:29:11 14 Unfortunately for us, some of the records that we
00:29:13 15 were relying on that we found to be some of the most
00:29:16 16 reliable records were records that we found in the
00:29:20 17 rafters of a dilapidated building that was condemned
00:29:23 18 on the grounds. That's not the way you should be
00:29:27 19 doing -- dealing with this. You should not be
00:29:29 20 dealing with loved ones like this.

00:29:31 21 The condition of the cemetery, beyond the
00:29:34 22 criminal side of it, was horrific. I cannot begin to
00:29:39 23 explain to you -- we've given you a DVD of some of
00:29:43 24 the scenes that we saw when we walked in. These were

00:29:46 1 not scenes that were created by a crime scene. This
00:29:49 2 is how the condition was, and the condition were
00:29:53 3 gravestones covered by grass for decades; other ones
00:29:57 4 that had been tipped over; other ones that are
00:29:59 5 missing; tremendous holes in the ground, in some
00:30:04 6 cases looking inside of vaults where you could look
00:30:07 7 down and see the remains of individuals that had been
00:30:10 8 there for quite some time.

00:30:11 9 It is not, in my opinion, too much to ask of
00:30:14 10 the State to have a regulatory body that does a bare
00:30:18 11 minimum examination, whether it's on an annual basis
00:30:22 12 or more often, of the cemeteries that are out there,
00:30:25 13 just to make sure that basic things are being done.

00:30:28 14 Many things broke our heart throughout this
00:30:31 15 investigation, but one of the many was to me the
00:30:33 16 many, many people that came up to me who have said
00:30:36 17 they have been complaining for years about this
00:30:39 18 cemetery and other cemeteries, and they were
00:30:41 19 basically pushed off as kooks or people who are
00:30:46 20 constant complainers, and they were shunned and made
00:30:49 21 to feel as if they were the true criminals here, and
00:30:52 22 it was horribly heartbreaking to look them in the eye
00:30:56 23 and say, listen, you know what, you were right all
00:30:59 24 along. We're sorry you've gone through all this.

00:31:01 1 So there is many, many things the State
00:31:03 2 should do. I'm sure your panel is going to come up
00:31:06 3 with suggestions that I couldn't even dream of, but
00:31:08 4 there are basic things that would allow for people to
00:31:11 5 have a much higher comfort level about the -- their
00:31:14 6 loved ones and when they put them in their final
00:31:17 7 resting place to have the comfort that it is this
00:31:19 8 final resting place, and those are some suggestions
00:31:22 9 that we feel comfortable are basic ones to start
00:31:26 10 with. I have a feeling you can come up with quite a
00:31:27 11 few more.

00:31:28 12 The big question that we have had, other
00:31:31 13 people have had since the outset of this was closure
00:31:34 14 and the need for the victims and the family members
00:31:38 15 to closure here. Because of some of the acts and the
00:31:41 16 way they were committed it does not allow for the
00:31:43 17 complete closure that a lot of people may wish for.
00:31:48 18 So from the outset our office has tried to think of
00:31:51 19 ways that a proper closure could be brought here.

00:31:55 20 Everybody in this room is aware of the
00:31:58 21 landmark status of Burr Oak and the story that it
00:32:00 22 tells for so many people. When you look at the list
00:32:03 23 of people that have been buried there, this is the
00:32:06 24 hall of fame, and it deserves to be treated that way.

00:32:10 1 And so when we talk about that, to say you
00:32:12 2 have the list of so many icons, but I can't tell you
00:32:16 3 how many headstones that I cleaned off, that I walked
00:32:19 4 by myself where you were looking at veterans of World
00:32:23 5 War I, World War II, people that had given their
00:32:26 6 lives, firefighters, husbands, grandfathers,
00:32:29 7 brothers, sisters, the people that have made our city
00:32:31 8 what it is and made our country what it is, because
00:32:33 9 we've gotten calls from all around the world about
00:32:37 10 this of people having loved ones there. They deserve
00:32:39 11 more, and we started working with some individuals in
00:32:44 12 an attempt to try to bring this to some appropriate
00:32:46 13 closure.

00:32:47 14 We reached out to some leaders in the
00:32:50 15 African American community, we participated in a
00:32:53 16 meeting at the DuSable Museum of African American
00:32:55 17 History where we began to discuss closure and how it
00:32:57 18 can be brought. That meeting lead to the formation
00:33:00 19 of the Chicago Burr Oak Cemetery Historical
00:33:04 20 Preservation Society. It's a charitable organization
00:33:06 21 is made up of African American historians,
00:33:09 22 genealogists, and museum presidents, all who have
00:33:13 23 family members buried at Burr Oak. My office is
00:33:16 24 committed to working with the Preservation Society as

00:33:17 1 they seek to find the best way to memorialize the
00:33:20 2 lives of the people who are buried at Burr Oak.

00:33:22 3 It is horribly unfortunate that the
00:33:25 4 questions that are basic that a lot of people have a
00:33:27 5 lot of reason to feel they should have answered are
00:33:30 6 not going to get those answered, but I do think that
00:33:32 7 a well thought out plan and a plan that does not have
00:33:36 8 a ten-year window on it but has a short window on it
00:33:40 9 can be a fitting memorial to what has occurred there
00:33:43 10 and to the very people that have been buried out
00:33:45 11 there, and I think the families deserve that, and
00:33:49 12 they deserve that type of closure.

00:33:50 13 I would be happy to answer any questions
00:33:52 14 that you have.

00:33:53 15 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: I'll ask that any
00:33:54 16 questions by the task force that are forthcoming,
00:33:57 17 please state your name first, because we have a court
00:34:00 18 reporter who cannot see your name and does not know
00:34:04 19 whose voice she hears. So before asking a question,
00:34:07 20 and I will call individually each person, that you
00:34:11 21 state your name.

00:34:12 22 I'll take our back row first, and I'll just
00:34:18 23 start, Representative Brady?

00:34:22 24 REPRESENTATIVE BRADY: Thank you, Madam Chair.

00:34:26 1 And Sheriff, thank you very much for your
00:34:27 2 testimony, and you and I have had numerous
00:34:31 3 conversations about the situation with my background
00:34:33 4 as a funeral director, embalmer, and former county
00:34:39 5 corner, and I've tried to give you some ideas and
00:34:41 6 assistance.

00:34:42 7 One of the things that you testified to was
00:34:46 8 that people had come up to you, your office had heard
00:34:51 9 from people complaining for years about Burr Oak or
00:34:54 10 other cemeteries. Do you know complaining to who?

00:34:59 11 SHERIFF TOM DART: It really ran the gamut. Some
00:35:04 12 to the cemetery itself, some to police agencies, some
00:35:10 13 to state agencies. It really ran the gamut, and the
00:35:17 14 common thread was in most all of the cases there was
00:35:20 15 not any resolution that was given to them at all.

00:35:26 16 REPRESENTATIVE BRADY: So wherever their
00:35:28 17 complaints were, they didn't find any resolution to
00:35:31 18 it?

00:35:31 19 SHERIFF TOM DART: No.

00:35:32 20 REPRESENTATIVE BRADY: You also made mention that
00:35:34 21 there's -- some of the ideas and the lack of
00:35:39 22 oversight in this particular area as far as the State
00:35:41 23 goes, but we do have the Illinois Cemetery Care Act,
00:35:46 24 which has been enacted since 1948 and has been added

00:35:50 1 to over the years. It falls under the direction of
00:35:51 2 the comptroller's office, which is an act in relation
00:35:55 3 to care of funds of cemeteries, overseeing of lots,
00:36:01 4 graves, crypts, niches, private mausoleums,
00:36:02 5 memorials, markers, monuments, and cemeteries.

00:36:05 6 That is an agency that is directed by the
00:36:08 7 State, that is charged with the duty by statute to
00:36:11 8 investigate trust funds, cemeteries, et cetera, and
00:36:16 9 you made mention that there's four people that are
00:36:18 10 brought up on charges at this point in time, correct?

00:36:22 11 SHERIFF TOM DART: Correct.

00:36:24 12 REPRESENTATIVE BRADY: Some of the charges that
00:36:25 13 you alluded to, where did you go for those charges?
00:36:29 14 In other words, there has to be existing statutes
00:36:32 15 somewhere that has dismemberment, that has the other
00:36:35 16 things that people could be charged with, is there
00:36:37 17 not?

00:36:37 18 SHERIFF TOM DART: Correct, correct. These were
00:36:39 19 charges in the statutes that the Cook County State's
00:36:41 20 Attorney's office examined and were able to charge
00:36:44 21 people with as a result of that.

00:36:46 22 REPRESENTATIVE BRADY: So we do have existing
00:36:48 23 statutes to --

00:36:48 24 SHERIFF TOM DART: Correct.

00:36:49 1 REPRESENTATIVE BRADY: -- to deal with something
00:36:51 2 like this, the horrific part of the prosecution side
00:36:54 3 the charges?

00:36:55 4 SHERIFF TOM DART: Correct.

00:36:57 5 REPRESENTATIVE BRADY: As far as bringing things
00:37:01 6 and filings of plots, deeds, and all those type of
00:37:02 7 things that's a little bit different than what's
00:37:05 8 presently on the books, and I want to make sure I
00:37:08 9 clearly understand what you're --

00:37:10 10 SHERIFF TOM DART: Yeah, there -- the criminal
00:37:11 11 charges that have been brought are serious offenses.
00:37:18 12 I mean, these are Class X offenses against all four
00:37:21 13 of the individuals running down to Class 4 as well.
00:37:24 14 So there are some serious penalties there.

00:37:27 15 But for the actual -- the condition of the
00:37:32 16 cemetery that we saw was atrocious, and beyond the
00:37:38 17 criminal side of it, how anybody could suggest that
00:37:44 18 that had been monitored or watched is a fabrication.
00:37:48 19 They couldn't have. I mean, these -- anybody who
00:37:51 20 would get out of your car and walk, you would be in
00:37:54 21 danger of falling in holes, and unfortunately, a lot
00:37:57 22 of these holes lead down into vaults, and in some of
00:37:59 23 the vaults, there weren't necessarily caskets, so you
00:38:02 24 might be able to see human remains.

00:38:04 1 So there are -- there's no hesitation in
00:38:07 2 saying that the oversight did not exist. Whether or
00:38:11 3 not there's something on the books that allows for
00:38:14 4 it, that I'm not clear of. All I know is that there
00:38:17 5 was no question there was no oversight of what was
00:38:20 6 going on as far as the conditions out there.

00:38:22 7 REPRESENTATIVE BRADY: Had some of the existing
00:38:24 8 laws that -- and the requirements been followed, the
00:38:26 9 Department of Vital Records where burial permits are
00:38:31 10 filed for all over the state, death certificates are
00:38:34 11 filed eventually all over the state, as the clearing
00:38:38 12 house of the filing of those particular documents,
00:38:40 13 whether those documents were -- were forwarded on
00:38:44 14 effectively and correctly from the cemetery is in
00:38:49 15 question here, and I understand that, but a hearing
00:38:54 16 on July 30th at the Thompson Center that I was at
00:38:57 17 from the Consumer Protection Committee, and I know
00:38:58 18 Representative Davis was with us that day as well,
00:39:02 19 the assistant comptroller, Ms. Peg Roth, testified
00:39:06 20 that the last time that the comptroller's office was
00:39:09 21 there investigating Burr Oak Cemetery was May 22nd of
00:39:13 22 this year.

00:39:14 23 If someone was in the cemetery on May 22nd,
00:39:19 24 how long was it after that that your office

00:39:22 1 officially became involved, and what was it that you
00:39:26 2 could see or other lay people could see that had been
00:39:30 3 missed over the years of complaints in apparently
00:39:33 4 some form of review of the cemetery?

00:39:36 5 SHERIFF TOM DART: I can't get into all of the
00:39:38 6 details of the evidentiary side of it, but we came in
00:39:44 7 in the first few days of July, physically came in and
00:39:50 8 became a presence and at some point took over the
00:39:53 9 cemetery itself in the first few days of July, and
00:39:57 10 it's abundantly clear, there's no question that the
00:40:02 11 conditions that we saw had existed for a long time, a
00:40:06 12 very, very long time.

00:40:08 13 So that combined with other issues that have
00:40:14 14 since come to light as far as what -- we believe it
00:40:19 15 has been well publicized about Com Ed workers coming
00:40:23 16 across different remains and things like that. There
00:40:26 17 was not any -- I mean, anybody who was looking for
00:40:31 18 obvious things would find it out there. You just
00:40:34 19 basically have to get out of your car. In some
00:40:36 20 instances you didn't have to get out of your car.

00:40:39 21 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you, Sheriff. The
00:40:41 22 Chair will recognize Representative Davis. You
00:40:43 23 looked like you had a question.

00:40:44 24 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Thank you, Madam Chair,

00:40:46 1 and I certainly thank you, Sheriff Dart, for gracing
00:40:50 2 us with your witnessing today and giving us
00:40:53 3 information that you obtained over these past six
00:40:56 4 weeks.

00:40:57 5 You may not know the answer to this, and if
00:40:59 6 you don't, I'll bet Tim Black does. When was the
00:41:04 7 first year, if you know, that African Americans were
00:41:06 8 allowed to be buried in a regular cemetery? You
00:41:10 9 know, for years it was prohibited for African
00:41:14 10 Americans to be buried in a known cemetery.

00:41:19 11 SHERIFF TOM DART: As far as Burr Oak goes, it
00:41:21 12 was the 1920s. It was in the 1920s when Burr Oak
00:41:24 13 started its burials. It was a very difficult event
00:41:30 14 for even -- for Burr Oak, let alone any other
00:41:33 15 cemeteries, but just speaking for Burr Oak, it was a
00:41:37 16 very difficult thing for them to do in the first
00:41:40 17 place back in the 20s.

00:41:41 18 As far as the other cemeteries' operations,
00:41:44 19 there's some other ones that are predominantly if not
00:41:48 20 exclusively African American that are old. I can't
00:41:51 21 tell you the precise date on when they started, but I
00:41:53 22 do know that there was nothing easy about it.

00:41:56 23 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Well, I know there was
00:41:57 24 protests and so forth because they didn't want

00:42:00 1 African Americans buried in that cemetery, but I also
00:42:04 2 know that based upon who was there, veterans, famous
00:42:08 3 entertainers, they were the first group to be buried
00:42:11 4 there.

00:42:12 5 So my question is what made the owner come
00:42:17 6 to you? Why did he come to you at this time?

00:42:20 7 SHERIFF TOM DART: The ownership -- the ownership
00:42:26 8 came to us in regards to a concern in regards to
00:42:30 9 financial criminal matters that they believed were
00:42:34 10 going on there at the time, and that's why we went
00:42:38 11 out there.

00:42:40 12 The ownership contacted Alsip because the
00:42:44 13 cemetery is in the town of Alsip, and they knew we
00:42:49 14 had the financial crimes unit, so they called us and
00:42:51 15 asked us if we would handle it. We went in there
00:42:55 16 because they had concerns regarding some financial
00:42:57 17 crimes.

00:42:58 18 Upon us getting there, though, once again,
00:43:00 19 it was very obvious that there was much more than
00:43:05 20 just that going on.

00:43:06 21 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Just the financial part
00:43:07 22 going on.

00:43:08 23 So I think the owner should have some
00:43:11 24 responsibility. You know, this was his place of

00:43:14 1 business, and he was reaping, you know, an income
00:43:18 2 from this, and I just think he bears some of that
00:43:21 3 responsibility. I'm not sure that he, too, should
00:43:23 4 not be arrested, you know?

00:43:25 5 SHERIFF TOM DART: There is no closure here.
00:43:35 6 From the standpoint of the investigation we've made
00:43:38 7 clear from the beginning is an ongoing investigation
00:43:41 8 while we continue to follow many, many leads. Just
00:43:44 9 from individuals that we met at the cemetery during
00:43:49 10 those two days when we had it open we received
00:43:51 11 hundreds of real legitimate leads. So we are still
00:43:56 12 poring through all those, and we will go wherever the
00:43:59 13 evidence takes us.

00:44:01 14 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Let me ask this question:
00:44:02 15 Funeral directors, who many are my friends, they are
00:44:06 16 out there almost more than once a day many of them.
00:44:09 17 Would they have not noticed something?

00:44:14 18 SHERIFF TOM DART: You know, I can't speak for
00:44:17 19 them.

00:44:18 20 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: You don't know?

00:44:19 21 SHERIFF TOM DART: I really don't know.

00:44:20 22 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: It wasn't that obvious? I
00:44:22 23 mean, did you and your guys have to really dig to see
00:44:25 24 this, or you just walked through there? You did a

00:44:28 1 little digging, but walking through, you saw things
00:44:31 2 that were not as they should be?

00:44:33 3 SHERIFF TOM DART: There were visual indications
00:44:36 4 on the surface that required no digging, and some
00:44:42 5 funeral directors have been very helpful, some other
00:44:45 6 ones have not been as helpful. It runs the gamut.

00:44:49 7 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: And did you ever locate
00:44:51 8 Babyland, or is it gone the way the rumor has it?

00:44:56 9 SHERIFF TOM DART: We're still exploring a lot of
00:44:58 10 concerns that we have out there as regards to areas
00:45:01 11 of the cemetery that were designated for certain
00:45:04 12 types of burials that do not represent that at this
00:45:07 13 point, but as we've made clear before, that the level
00:45:13 14 of mismanagement on some levels, some levels, made a
00:45:19 15 lot of things very difficult out there, but there are
00:45:22 16 still -- we're still actively investigating the scene
00:45:25 17 for certain issues. That is one of them.

00:45:27 18 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Thank you. You know our
00:45:29 19 charge here as members of the committee or ombudsman,
00:45:33 20 legislatures, is to develop legislation. That would
00:45:36 21 be our final -- our goal. Do you know of anything
00:45:41 22 that could have been in place that would have perhaps
00:45:46 23 prevented this or gave early recognition to it?

00:45:51 24 Let me just give you an idea. If you buy a

00:45:54 1 plot of land, there's only so many houses you can put
00:45:58 2 on that land, and if you buy a burial plot or if you
00:46:02 3 own the funeral (sic), there's only so many bodies
00:46:05 4 you can put there, because nobody's leaving. So how
00:46:10 5 do you keep burying and burying and burying if you
00:46:14 6 don't get any new land, you know, unless there's a
00:46:17 7 lot we just don't know?

00:46:20 8 SHERIFF TOM DART: There is -- I'll tell you
00:46:22 9 what, there is definitely a lot we don't know, and
00:46:24 10 we're still exploring a lot of different leads and a
00:46:27 11 lot of different avenues here, but what you're
00:46:30 12 hinting at is real, it is something that would be
00:46:35 13 tremendously helpful to us.

00:46:36 14 If we had had the ability right from the
00:46:38 15 outset to go to a central location and say, listen,
00:46:40 16 can we have the plat of survey that lists all the
00:46:44 17 different plots there, and can we then get a list of
00:46:46 18 all the individuals that are -- have those plots, who
00:46:50 19 are buried there, this would have been very easy to
00:46:53 20 probably prevent from happening because it would be
00:46:56 21 very difficult.

00:46:57 22 People can forge things all they want, but
00:47:00 23 if you have some cross referencing where you have a
00:47:03 24 requirement that a cemetery provides the State with a

00:47:07 1 plot -- or a plat, a survey of it listing all the
00:47:11 2 plots and then required them to give you the names of
00:47:13 3 all the people that are either presently in there or
00:47:15 4 bought them, and then if you have things such as
00:47:17 5 death certificates that are required to be cross
00:47:19 6 referenced there, it would be very tricky for
00:47:21 7 somebody, then, to operate in darkness and on their
00:47:25 8 own to be altering documents, to be destroying
00:47:29 9 documents, but I cannot tell you -- this area was new
00:47:32 10 to me when we got into this. This was clearly not
00:47:35 11 something I envisioned when I became sheriff.

12 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Sure.

00:47:39 13 SHERIFF TOM DART: And when we started initially
00:47:41 14 right off at the beginning I was convinced there
00:47:43 15 would be a place where we could go to that right off
00:47:45 16 the bat that would give me all that information, and
00:47:48 17 it is not there.

00:47:49 18 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Like we thought who would
00:47:51 19 have ever thought this could ever occur?

00:47:53 20 SHERIFF TOM DART: Yes.

00:47:54 21 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: But thank you, Sheriff
00:47:56 22 Dart. I really appreciate your kind remarks and your
00:47:59 23 answers so candidly. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

00:48:04 24 SHERIFF TOM DART: Thank you.

00:48:04 1 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Now we'll take questions
00:48:06 2 from the task force.

00:48:08 3 MR. KOTZIN: Michael Kotzin.

00:48:10 4 Hi, Sheriff Dart. I also appreciate your
00:48:11 5 being here. I think the work you've done in this
00:48:14 6 case and are doing here, your department is very
00:48:17 7 important clearly, and I think there's value, great
00:48:20 8 value to you being with us this evening.

00:48:23 9 I would like to pursue further what the last
00:48:25 10 question was actually, because it seems to me you're
00:48:28 11 in a position to offer firsthand thoughts that could
00:48:33 12 be helpful in framing of the kind of recommendation
00:48:36 13 that we are asked to bring to the governor.

00:48:39 14 You have given a couple of specific
00:48:42 15 examples, blueprints, kind of plats that you just
00:48:46 16 mentioned, a record of who's buried where, blueprints
00:48:49 17 of the cemeteries, annual review. Could you add to
00:48:52 18 that? Any other specifics based especially on your
00:48:55 19 experience which you've seen that does not exist that
00:48:57 20 you think could be a fruitful direction to go in
00:49:00 21 framing recommendations?

00:49:03 22 SHERIFF TOM DART: I think those topics I talked
00:49:08 23 about are just the obvious ones because they were so
00:49:11 24 painfully missing that would have made it much easier

00:49:16 1 to tie things together.

00:49:18 2 The fact that there is virtually no
00:49:21 3 regulation allows individuals to operate in cloak of
00:49:27 4 darkness and to do things that make all of our heads
00:49:32 5 spin. In a certain sense you sit there and say,
00:49:36 6 well, we would never need to legislate this because
00:49:38 7 who would ever do certain things. Well, you know,
00:49:40 8 now you find certain areas.

00:49:42 9 Both the plat of survey, the plots would be
00:49:45 10 huge because one of the allegations that we have been
00:49:48 11 pursuing is individuals not just being disinterred
00:49:53 12 and other individuals being placed in there, but also
00:49:56 13 double burials that were not subscribed to. It
00:50:00 14 wasn't a husband and wife who signed a contract
00:50:04 15 saying that that's how we wished to be buried, and if
00:50:06 16 we had any of this information, this would be so --
00:50:09 17 A, you would prevent it because someone would get
00:50:12 18 caught so quickly that when a death certificate came
00:50:15 19 in and all of a sudden you're starting to cross
00:50:17 20 reference what the records are showing there with
00:50:20 21 what the cemetery is submitting, they wouldn't match,
00:50:23 22 but there is no such thing. So that if you have an
00:50:26 23 individual who has some management control, they are
00:50:30 24 the sole repository of everything.

00:50:32 1 So if an individual wished to disinter
00:50:37 2 somebody who, say, was buried in the 30s, and there
00:50:40 3 has been no apparent family members coming to visit,
00:50:43 4 and there was never a headstone purchased -- in my
00:50:47 5 view, our analysis shows that there's approximately
00:50:49 6 42,000 headstones out there, and we still, once
00:50:54 7 again, because we don't have any state repository, we
00:50:59 8 don't know how many people are supposed to be buried
00:51:01 9 out there. So it's fair to say that at least half of
00:51:05 10 the individuals buried there do not have headstones.
00:51:09 11 So that if you have a system where a person does not.
00:51:13 12 Have a headstone, they were buried back in
00:51:16 13 the 30s or 40s, there's no appearance that anybody
00:51:19 14 has come and visited, what better than to go and find
00:51:22 15 some free land all of a sudden because you can
00:51:25 16 disinter somebody and no one would know anything
00:51:27 17 about it, but once again, if you have something in a
00:51:30 18 repository that had that plot attached to an
00:51:33 19 individual, it would be very difficult to do it. It
00:51:36 20 would make it difficult on the front end but
00:51:38 21 certainly on the back end. We wouldn't be having to
00:51:42 22 go through what we're doing trying to piece things
00:51:45 23 together. So I think those basic type of things on
00:51:47 24 the front end would be tremendous for us.

00:51:51 1 We talked about things with the Victim
00:51:55 2 Compensation Act, to expand it to individuals who
00:51:58 3 have been victimized by this tragedy, that they
00:51:58 4 should be brought in as the true victims, and they
00:52:00 5 are victims, but anything that gives transparency.

00:52:05 6 The other thing, too, that we all have
00:52:07 7 talked about is under the Consumer Protection Act, I
00:52:11 8 am really at a loss to think of a more vulnerable
00:52:16 9 victim than an individual who has just lost a loved
00:52:19 10 one sitting across the table from an individual who
00:52:21 11 might have a monetary interest in trying to push not
00:52:26 12 the \$3,000 headstone but the \$6,000 one, and there's
00:52:30 13 no rules or regulations as far as you can charge
00:52:33 14 this, that, or another thing. It is so freewheeling,
00:52:37 15 and yet you're dealing with probably the most
00:52:39 16 vulnerable person on the planet. They just lost a
00:52:43 17 loved one hours ago, and now they're looking to put
00:52:45 18 them in an appropriate place for eternity, and yet
00:52:49 19 there's nothing that says, well, you have to have
00:52:51 20 this background as a salesperson. You can't exceed
00:52:54 21 this amount of money for this type of activity or
00:52:57 22 service.

00:52:57 23 And I'm not trying to undercut the free
00:53:00 24 market or capitalism, but we have found during the

00:53:02 1 course of our investigation that there was numerous
00:53:06 2 abilities for people to move scales up and down
00:53:09 3 depending on how vulnerable an individual who walked
00:53:13 4 in the door was. So -- basic consumer protections
00:53:16 5 that we give to people who purchase used cars I think
00:53:20 6 would go a long way here as well.

00:53:22 7 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you.

00:53:27 8 SENATOR JONES: Good evening and thank you. My
00:53:29 9 name is Emil Jones III.

00:53:31 10 Sheriff, I had the opportunity to talk with
00:53:32 11 you at the cemetery, and I commended you for being
00:53:35 12 one of the first responders to take up this -- this
00:53:38 13 tragedy that has happened in our community. Just a
00:53:44 14 few questions.

00:53:45 15 Perpetua, they own another cemetery in my
00:53:50 16 district, Cedar Park, which is located on 127th
00:53:53 17 Street. Now, my office has been getting complaints
00:53:56 18 recently within the last few weeks of issues going on
00:54:00 19 at that cemetery as well. Has your office been out
00:54:04 20 to that cemetery to do any type of investigations?

00:54:08 21 SHERIFF TOM DART: Our office and I have been out
00:54:10 22 there myself, and we have talked with people out
00:54:16 23 there, we have examined records. It appears as if
00:54:21 24 there is a distinction between it, even though it's

00:54:25 1 owned by the same company, but we are not leaving
00:54:28 2 anything left for guessing, so we are still looking.
00:54:32 3 I have -- since this has occurred, I have
00:54:35 4 received a lot of information about a lot of
00:54:37 5 cemeteries, and with each case we are attempting as
00:54:43 6 best we can with the resources we have, because
00:54:45 7 obviously as I think everybody understands, I have a
00:54:48 8 lot of other duties to do as far as police work and
00:54:52 9 other issues that go on, but with what we have, we're
00:54:56 10 pursuing every lead we get for every individual that
00:54:59 11 comes forward to us.

00:55:01 12 A lot of the cemeteries -- I just had to
00:55:06 13 look this up. There are approximately 600 cemeteries
00:55:11 14 listed in Cook County alone of which 30 -- I think 32
00:55:17 15 or 33 are my primary responsibility. For the ones of
00:55:21 16 my primary responsibility, we have a real strict
00:55:24 17 standard of what we're doing there. For the other
00:55:26 18 ones, we have been encouraging law enforcement in
00:55:29 19 those areas to do due diligence.

00:55:30 20 That being said, if we get leads on anything
00:55:33 21 we're pursuing it. Anything involving this case,
00:55:38 22 whether it's Perpetua, Cedar Park, we're looking at
00:55:44 23 everything, and I don't want that to be interpreted
00:55:47 24 as bad or good, just that our eyes are wide open and

00:55:51 1 we're following everything that comes in, and we have
00:55:54 2 received complaints, but we've received complaints
00:55:57 3 from a lot of places. We're pursuing all of them.

00:56:00 4 SENATOR JONES: And last, I have to agree with my
00:56:04 5 colleagues Representative Davis and Representative
00:56:06 6 Brady. From the last hearing we were at, we found
00:56:08 7 out a lot of information about Burr Oak in terms of
00:56:14 8 they're not paying into their trust fund the year
00:56:17 9 '07, and to me that rings a bell that something is
00:56:20 10 going on in that cemetery. They're required every
00:56:25 11 30 days to make a deposit into this -- this fund. If
00:56:31 12 they did not do it one time in '07, that shows that
00:56:35 13 their records haven't been kept up, they're trying to
00:56:38 14 hide something.

00:56:39 15 Just based on your own testimony that the
00:56:42 16 only thing you had to do was get out of the car and
00:56:44 17 walk and you can find disarray in the cemetery, our
00:56:49 18 state, our comptroller's office was out there like
00:56:53 19 Representative Brady said on the 22nd of May,
00:56:57 20 supposedly, if their job is to go and do an audit on
00:57:04 21 their books, then someone should have saw this. So
00:57:08 22 it seems to me that somebody dropped the ball on
00:57:12 23 this.

00:57:13 24 Complaints were made to Alsip Police

00:57:16 1 Department, and I'm quite sure complaints were made
00:57:19 2 to our comptroller's office about the conditions over
00:57:22 3 there at Burr Oak. So, again, I would like to thank
00:57:25 4 you and commend you for, you know, taking the step
00:57:28 5 and being the first -- one of the first responders
00:57:31 6 and getting this taken care of.

00:57:33 7 SHERIFF TOM DART: Senator, we really appreciate
00:57:35 8 you coming out, I think it was the first day or the
00:57:37 9 second day, I can't remember, it was all such a blur,
00:57:41 10 but it was very helpful, because we realized right
00:57:43 11 from the beginning this was going to be a large
00:57:46 12 effort, and to know that we had individuals that
00:57:50 13 concerned that they were physically out at that, it
00:57:55 14 helped because we knew that we weren't going to be
00:57:58 15 out trying to put this all together without any
00:58:00 16 assistance. People were concerned and very
00:58:02 17 interested. So it was very helpful that you and some
00:58:05 18 of the other legislative leaders, you know, members
00:58:08 19 came out there. It was very helpful.

00:58:09 20 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you.

00:58:14 21 MR. McNARY: Sheriff Dart, my name is William
00:58:17 22 McNary, and I'm the co-director of Citizen
00:58:19 23 Action/Illinois, and thank you for being here.

00:58:20 24 Let me just say that from all the accounts

00:58:23 1 that I've seen and read and followed of this tragic
00:58:27 2 occurrence at Burr Oak, your professionalism that you
00:58:30 3 have exhibited not only in the criminal aspects but
00:58:33 4 in showing the empathy that's needed for the -- for
00:58:36 5 the grieving families have been exemplary, and I have
00:58:40 6 known you for a while, and I want you to put on a
00:58:42 7 former hat you used to wear, which is you used to be
00:58:45 8 a legislature as well.

00:58:48 9 THE WITNESS: I'll never put that one on.

00:58:51 10 (Dr. Damon Arnold enters.)

00:58:51 11 MR. McNARY: And I want you to answer three
00:58:53 12 questions using your former legislative hat. These
00:58:56 13 are the same questions, by the way, that I asked of
00:58:58 14 the cemetery lobbyist when he came, so I'm going to
00:59:01 15 be consistent.

00:59:03 16 The first is how did this happen?

00:59:06 17 The second is how can we make sure that it
00:59:09 18 never happens again?

00:59:09 19 And the third is what are your
00:59:12 20 recommendations to make sure that we restore Burr
00:59:17 21 Oaks to a place of beauty where people can visit
00:59:21 22 their loved ones and others can view and honor the
00:59:24 23 resting places of people like Dinah Washington and
00:59:25 24 Emmett Till, Ezzard Charles and the Negro Baseball

00:59:30 1 League, people like my late wife and uncle and aunts
00:59:35 2 that are buried there was well?

00:59:37 3 SHERIFF TOM DART: Honestly, William, I think
00:59:39 4 that it happened because nobody's watching, nobody's
00:59:43 5 watching, and the thing that has troubled a lot of us
00:59:48 6 as we've gone through this is that it has led us to
00:59:54 7 question activities elsewhere, too, that this, you
00:59:58 8 know, has a criminal element to it that has been well
01:00:03 9 documented as it pertains to Burr Oak, but there are
01:00:07 10 other issues as well -- as well at other locations
01:00:09 11 that all scream out the same thing: That when no one
01:00:12 12 is watching, there are people that will do things
01:00:17 13 that they would otherwise not do.

01:00:19 14 And it's just very clear -- I just start
01:00:22 15 with the objective side of it, William, just the
01:00:25 16 things that are not open to interpretation. When you
01:00:28 17 walk through a cemetery as I have and on -- I
01:00:35 18 couldn't count right now, but 20, 30, I don't even
01:00:40 19 know, incidents it's there's huge holes larger than
01:00:45 20 basketballs in the ground that go down quite deep and
01:00:49 21 in many, many cases go either right to the top of a
01:00:53 22 vault or the vault has broken through and you're
01:00:56 23 looking into the vault, and it's abundantly clear
01:00:59 24 from the growth of the foliage that it's been that

01:01:02 1 way for a long time, when you have something like
01:01:04 2 that, it is quite clear that nobody has been out
01:01:06 3 there, no one cares, and when no one cares, people
01:01:09 4 will do some things, A, and B, they'll be able to do
01:01:13 5 things for a longer period of time because they can
01:01:15 6 get away with it for a longer period of time.

01:01:18 7 And I wish I could say that this was some
01:01:21 8 type of state secret, nobody knew about this, but
01:01:24 9 these poor families, honest to God, I really don't
01:01:27 10 know which stories were the more heartbreaking that I
01:01:30 11 heard on those days when e had all the people coming
01:01:30 12 out there, because the thing that broke my heart the
01:01:34 13 most was the dignity of the people that I was dealing
01:01:36 14 it, because this was not irrational people who were
01:01:40 15 screaming and yelling, frankly, which is probably how
01:01:42 16 I would have acted if it was me on the other side,
01:01:45 17 but were just incredibly dignified people who were
01:01:50 18 just stunned that something like this could occur and
01:01:52 19 just looking for answers, and we were left not being
01:01:55 20 able to supply them with a lot of answers, and so
01:01:58 21 much of it came back to the fact that this
01:02:00 22 environment was allowed to go on for this long period
01:02:02 23 of time with no one watching, with no one watching.

01:02:06 24 MR. McNARY: So what I'm hearing from you,

01:02:08 1 though, is -- let me ask you, the list that I've made
01:02:10 2 of some things that we could possibly recommend that
01:02:12 3 could make this better, if there's anything else to
01:02:15 4 add to this list, one is regulation, obviously, and
01:02:19 5 oversight, which means inspection to make sure that
01:02:22 6 there is some inspections going on. If a building is
01:02:26 7 not up to code, then somebody is inspecting and
01:02:28 8 they're looking at it, and they can offer fines. So
01:02:31 9 we inspect cemeteries and they're in these
01:02:33 10 conditions, somebody is held accountable.

01:02:36 11 Two, consumer bill of rights. In other
01:02:38 12 words, everybody should know what to expect when they
01:02:40 13 go to a cemetery and a funeral director; record
01:02:44 14 keeping; and finally, is the problem, and this gets
01:02:48 15 back to Senator Emil Jones and Representative Davis
01:02:52 16 and maybe Representative Brady is point as well, is
01:02:56 17 that we realized since -- we don't license -- we
01:02:59 18 license cemeteries and not individuals -- because I
01:03:02 19 want to get back to this owners of Perpetua as well,
01:03:05 20 who are now owning Burr Ridge -- Burr Oaks as we were
01:03:09 21 told in the last panel, and they're still -- they're
01:03:13 22 not -- they're not being held accountable for the
01:03:16 23 money that they made there, but they're now making
01:03:19 24 money still at this other cemetery. How can we allow

01:03:22 1 people to -- who own one cemetery to continue to make
01:03:25 2 money in the same state a few blocks down? How could
01:03:29 3 we allow that?

01:03:30 4 SHERIFF TOM DART: We have been left scratching
01:03:32 5 our heads a lot on this one because of the inability
01:03:36 6 for somebody to swoop in and be able to deal with
01:03:41 7 this, because when you think about it, William, there
01:03:43 8 are so many other scenarios where there is abilities
01:03:46 9 to shut down liquor establishments, there's abilities
01:03:48 10 to shut down a building for a restaurant for the fact
01:03:52 11 that they don't have their refrigerator at a certain
01:03:55 12 level, and yet here you have an operation that has
01:03:58 13 serious issues and yet there is an inability to do
01:04:01 14 it.

01:04:01 15 We had to go into court to get a receiver
01:04:04 16 because obviously I was not suited to be running a
01:04:06 17 cemetery for more than the weeks I was doing it, and
01:04:10 18 it was puzzling, and then the thing that has gotten
01:04:13 19 to be more difficult is I attempted to move ahead
01:04:17 20 with some of the criminal matters to attempt to get
01:04:19 21 some answers here. You start asking questions about,
01:04:22 22 all right, what's the regulation for how deep an
01:04:24 23 individual has to be buried? There really isn't one.
01:04:28 24 What's the regulation for how close people can be

01:04:31 1 buried next to each other? There isn't one. Basic
01:04:35 2 things like that are not there.

01:04:37 3 Now, are there arguments to be made that
01:04:39 4 you're violating a health code by someone being
01:04:43 5 buried to close to the surface? Possibly, but we've
01:04:46 6 had to explore issues such as in a potter's field,
01:04:51 7 you know, for individuals who do not have any needs,
01:04:55 8 who are indigent. You want to talk about an area
01:04:58 9 where there is no regulation? I mean, there you go.
01:05:00 10 There's another one that screams out for some
01:05:04 11 assistance there, and there have been cases over the
01:05:07 12 course of years where human remains have surfaced in
01:05:12 13 some of those fields with no criminal element to it,
01:05:15 14 but because there is no regulation about how you even
01:05:18 15 conduct that, you're left scratching your head saying
01:05:21 16 what is wrong with our society that we don't value
01:05:24 17 this as something that is important, that is
01:05:26 18 something we're just going to ignore, and that's what
01:05:29 19 we're dealing with here.

01:05:30 20 MR. McNARY: I'm going to let someone else speak
21 but, I think you already answered my third question.
01:05:33 22 Does this Historical Preservation Society, does that
01:05:36 23 lead to the third point where I talked about how we
01:05:38 24 can begin to restore Burr Oak?

01:05:42 1 SHERIFF TOM DART: I think so, because, William,
01:05:43 2 just so we're clear here, we have done excavation
01:05:47 3 issues for the purposes of the criminal matter. You
01:05:50 4 reach a certain point, though, when you have enough
01:05:53 5 for your criminal case and then you cease that part
01:05:56 6 of it, but there needs to be a well thought out plan,
01:05:59 7 and the individuals that I've met with seem to
01:06:02 8 have -- definitely sincerity is absolutely there,
01:06:06 9 they have the credentials and all that going for
01:06:09 10 them, but you need to do something that is
01:06:11 11 appropriate for what we're talking about.

01:06:13 12 This just is not any old cemetery. This is
01:06:15 13 a very significant cemetery for a load of reasons,
01:06:19 14 and real thought has to be put into it, because if
01:06:22 15 not, with erosion and rain could something surface?
01:06:26 16 Possibly, because I'm not going to contend to people
01:06:29 17 that we dug through every section of that cemetery.
01:06:33 18 We did not do that. That was not what anybody
01:06:35 19 suggested that should be done.

01:06:39 20 There needs to be thought put into putting
01:06:39 21 in layers of topsoil, putting in landscaping, all
01:06:43 22 things that will keep the soil intact so these things
01:06:46 23 do not surface in the future and then an appropriate
01:06:48 24 memorial to all the people that may rest there.

01:06:51 1 Those are good things that should be done.

01:06:54 2 I am not an architect, I am not the
01:06:56 3 visionary that some of these other folks are. They
01:06:59 4 have some great ideas as well, but I do think it
01:07:01 5 should be thought of in those terms as a destination
01:07:03 6 for people to go to for an incredibly historic,
01:07:07 7 important place and treated that way.

01:07:09 8 MR. McNARY: Thank you, Sheriff Dart. Just like
01:07:12 9 you, we at Citizen Action believe every human being
01:07:15 10 has equal worth, and that every human being is
01:07:17 11 entitled to a meaningful fulfilling life, but we also
01:07:21 12 believe that the respect and that dignity and honor
01:07:22 13 should follow them when they are laid to their rest.
01:07:24 14 Thank you for your testimony. We're going to make
01:07:26 15 sure that this never happens to anybody anywhere in
01:07:30 16 Illinois again.

01:07:30 17 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you, Sheriff, for
01:07:31 18 your patience. I'm going to let three more people
01:07:33 19 give you questions.

20 SHERIFF TOM DART: Sure.

01:07:35 21 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: And if you'll be just a
01:07:38 22 little bit patient.

01:07:41 23 SHERIFF TOM DART: No, no, that's fine.

01:07:41 24 MR. SULAMOYO: Sheriff, Dalitso Sulamoyo with the

01:07:49 1 Illinois Community Action Association. Thank you,
01:07:52 2 again, for your testimony this evening.

01:07:55 3 First question is really a follow-up to
01:07:59 4 testimony that was provided to the task force at our
01:08:02 5 first task force hearing a few weeks ago, and that is
01:08:07 6 when do you anticipate after everything has been
01:08:12 7 done, you testified that you're getting close to
01:08:16 8 completing at this gathering the evidence from the
01:08:20 9 cemetery, there is this historic society that has
01:08:26 10 been put together, when do you anticipate the
01:08:29 11 cemetery being reopened?

01:08:32 12 SHERIFF TOM DART: That's a very, very good
01:08:34 13 question, and the -- I'll give you two answers,
01:08:39 14 sorry.

01:08:42 15 The proper person to answer that question
01:08:45 16 would be the receiver, because legally speaking that
01:08:47 17 individual now is in charge of the management.

01:08:49 18 That being said, because of my -- my
01:08:53 19 intimate connection to the cemetery now, I can tell
01:08:57 20 you certain things really need to be done before it's
01:09:00 21 opened. We, as I said, have -- our office cleaned
01:09:04 22 all the headstones up, we dug around some of them so
01:09:07 23 that they can be exposed. I feel very confident that
01:09:10 24 that area is fine right now.

01:09:13 1 There are still large holes in some areas of
01:09:17 2 the cemetery that must be filled. There are a --
01:09:24 3 there's going to be a need to -- to somehow block off
01:09:29 4 certain areas until topsoil has been put down and
01:09:33 5 things like that. It just wouldn't be right to have
01:09:36 6 people walking in an area like that. It's like a
01:09:38 7 hallow ground. They should not be just wandering
01:09:40 8 through that. So there's going to be a need to do
01:09:43 9 that.

01:09:43 10 But then from just a logistical standpoint,
11 I can't emphasize enough to you -- once again, we're
01:09:47 12 talking about regulation issues. It would be so nice
01:09:51 13 if there was a requirement that cemeteries had
01:09:55 14 up-to-date databases because we're dealing with card
01:09:58 15 files from the 20s and 30s. We're dealing with
01:10:02 16 records -- we're not even sure, frankly, what it is
01:10:05 17 we found in one of the basements. It looks like the
01:10:07 18 records they used, but they were left in this
01:10:10 19 condemned building that all the paper had congealed
01:10:13 20 into one solid block. So we're not even sure what
01:10:17 21 that is.

01:10:17 22 But for it to be properly opened, my
01:10:21 23 suggestion to the receiver is that we're putting this
01:10:25 24 database together, so all of the documents that we

01:10:27 1 have we're putting in a database, and that is going
01:10:30 2 to be something that is -- yeah, I felt the same
01:10:34 3 thing -- that database is going to be required for
01:10:38 4 any opening to be done because otherwise what you're
01:10:41 5 going to have is what we experienced there where
01:10:43 6 you're going to have a rush of individuals, some
01:10:45 7 individuals who go to the cemetery once a week, once
01:10:48 8 a month, some they haven't been there in a year.
01:10:51 9 We've had some people that have come from around the
01:10:53 10 country, who they moved years ago, their family moved
01:10:56 11 to Texas, but once a year they come there on the
01:10:59 12 mother's birthday, and they put flowers there. So
01:11:01 13 there are some people that aren't as intimately
01:11:04 14 familiar with locations that get turned around. So
01:11:07 15 you're going to have this rush of people.

01:11:08 16 So the database that I should have completed
01:11:11 17 within two weeks I will then turn over to the
01:11:14 18 receiver. I am strongly suggest that he needs to
01:11:17 19 reimburse me for that, because the County cannot
01:11:20 20 afford to take on all of this, and I think there are
01:11:22 21 some commissioners that are going to insist on me
01:11:25 22 acting this way as well, but I'm going to turn that
01:11:29 23 over to him.

01:11:29 24 With that database, what I would suggest to

01:11:31 1 him is that we were doing to try to keep family
01:11:35 2 members informed is we put together a blast phone
01:11:37 3 message where we called all the phone numbers that
01:11:40 4 people gave us, we were giving them an update once
01:11:41 5 every two or three days on the latest comings and
01:11:43 6 goings. I'll give him all that information.

01:11:46 7 I would suggest that through the media or
01:11:47 8 something like that to let people know they can go to
01:11:50 9 a website now that has this database on it, look up
01:11:53 10 your loved one so that you don't even need to go to
01:11:55 11 the office. You can go right to the cemetery, right
01:11:58 12 to the grave site, and for those individuals who do
01:12:01 13 not find their loved one's information, here's
01:12:04 14 another number to go to another location, and even
01:12:05 15 with all that on the first day of opening he's going
01:12:08 16 to need to have ten or 20 laptops sitting at tables
01:12:12 17 so that as people are coming in, they're not standing
01:12:15 18 out in the rain or the heat, but then quickly there
01:12:17 19 should be someone inputting it, the database will pop
01:12:20 20 up and direct them where to go.

01:12:21 21 There's also -- the other thing is there's
01:12:23 22 going to be a need, and I'm confident the receiver
01:12:26 23 understands it, to put accurate maps and numbering
01:12:29 24 together because a lot of the numbering system was

01:12:31 1 removed at different times by different people. So
01:12:36 2 just telling someone they're in lot whatever is not
01:12:40 3 terribly helpful given what was done.

01:12:42 4 So that is the type of logistical thing I
01:12:47 5 think that needs to be done. I -- somebody mentioned
01:12:47 6 this, don't hold me to it, there was a date
01:12:49 7 mid-September they were talking about. I know that I
01:12:51 8 should have the database to him within two weeks. So
01:12:54 9 I do think we're not looking too far down the road
01:12:58 10 here. I think it can be done pretty expeditiously if
01:13:01 11 the thought is put into it.

01:13:03 12 MR. SULAMOYO: My last question, you have
01:13:07 13 certainly shared some great recommendations to the
01:13:10 14 task force for us to consider. I'm wondering, have
01:13:14 15 you had an opportunity talk to your counterparts for
01:13:19 16 other communities where unfortunately similar
01:13:22 17 tragedies have occurred?

01:13:24 18 SHERIFF TOM DART: We have studied the -- in
01:13:25 19 Florida, they had an incident down in Florida, I want
01:13:29 20 to say, four, five years ago, I can't remember the
01:13:32 21 exact time frame. We've studied that. We looked at
01:13:36 22 some of the things there. There's a lot a
01:13:38 23 similarities. What they basically -- they had a task
01:13:40 24 force that talked about regulations that were missing

01:13:43 1 as well.

01:13:45 2 I can't tell you that my suggestions came
01:13:47 3 from that, because I haven't fully read that yet. I
01:13:52 4 have been very, very swamped, so -- but my staff has
01:13:54 5 looked at that. They said there's a lot of
01:13:57 6 similarities. We've broken a lot of it down, and
01:13:59 7 we'd be happy to supply it to the task force.
01:14:02 8 There's also some others -- there's nothing really
01:14:03 9 quite fitting this, but the Florida incident was --
01:14:05 10 had a lot of similarities.

01:14:08 11 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you, Sheriff.

01:14:13 12 MR. CAGE: Sheriff Dart, I'm Augustus Cage.

01:14:16 13 First of all, I'm going to take this
01:14:19 14 opportunity to thank you for a tremendous job from
01:14:20 15 the standpoint of investigation, to backtrack to
01:14:31 16 thank you for such an outstanding job from the
01:14:34 17 standpoint your the criminal investigation and your
01:14:37 18 follow through.

01:14:39 19 What concerns me as a relatively new
01:14:42 20 appointed task force member, I'm very concerned about
01:14:46 21 the agency that should have and has been charged with
01:14:50 22 the responsibility of oversight. The notion that
01:14:57 23 people did not observe the problems at Burr Oak,
01:15:04 24 that's not altogether accurate. I know quite a

01:15:08 1 number of funeral directors, families, and clergy who
01:15:13 2 have contacted Burr Oak over the years to let them
01:15:15 3 know there were problems there. So -- and some of
01:15:19 4 these things went beyond the office to the
01:15:21 5 comptroller's office. Now, to what extent they
01:15:26 6 followed up investigatively is anybody's question,
01:15:30 7 but I don't -- I want to throw out one thing that I
01:15:33 8 want you to kind of chew on as the chief law
01:15:36 9 enforcement officer for this county.

01:15:38 10 It appears to me -- as a funeral director I
01:15:41 11 get into all of the cemeteries, and one of the things
01:15:44 12 that I've noticed about certain ones in the county
01:15:47 13 where there's a particular emphasis on burials of
01:15:51 14 African American decedents, some of those -- have I
01:15:59 15 been -- okay. I thought I was being censored here.
01:16:04 16 I've noted over the years, and I think some of my
01:16:08 17 colleagues can attest to this along with as certain
01:16:10 18 of the clergy in our community, that certain sections
01:16:13 19 and areas where there's been a predominance of
01:16:16 20 African Americans interred and indigents interred,
01:16:21 21 those sections tend to have been the most lacking,
01:16:25 22 the least maintained, and there are some high profile
01:16:30 23 cemeteries. You mentioned the importance of Burr Oak
01:16:34 24 being the resting place of notable citizens, but to

01:16:38 1 my way of thinking, every soul that's interred in
01:16:41 2 there is high profile.

01:16:45 3 But nonetheless, and I know you feel the
01:16:47 4 same very same way, you don't need to mention famous
01:16:52 5 people, a lost soul is as important as the next
01:16:54 6 fellow, but I wish you could kind of keep in the back
01:16:57 7 of your mind to take a look at some of these other
01:17:00 8 cemeteries, some of whom -- which you may have been
01:17:03 9 informed about, particularly in those areas where
01:17:06 10 African Americans and the poor folks have been
01:17:10 11 buried, because some of those sections, the front
01:17:14 12 parts might look pretty okay, but toward the rear of
01:17:17 13 those sections, they need a lot of work.

01:17:20 14 SHERIFF TOM DART: And your point is very well
01:17:22 15 taken, and I have been out to quite a few of them,
01:17:26 16 and as I said, I am -- we are looking at a lot of
01:17:30 17 different things right now that I can't talk about,
01:17:33 18 but your point is very well taken, and the -- the
01:17:38 19 fact is, specifically as it applies to indigents, for
01:17:43 20 example, that has been very troubling because I don't
01:17:46 21 know if there's a callousness that develops over a
01:17:49 22 period of time or what, but when we have been looking
01:17:51 23 into specific cases in regards to potter's fields and
01:17:56 24 the burial of indigents, it doesn't seem as if there

01:18:00 1 is a rhyme or reason to anything as far as death,
01:18:03 2 numbers of people, how close people are together,
01:18:07 3 where they're at, just almost as if individuals are
01:18:10 4 being discarded, and that is the last we think of
01:18:13 5 them, and we don't think of them as the person they
01:18:15 6 were, and that they were somebody's child at one
01:18:17 7 point, and they had potential and all the rest.
01:18:20 8 They're now just a set of remains that we're going to
01:18:24 9 let happen whatever happens.

01:18:25 10 Because the issues with some of these burial
01:18:28 11 sites in the past has been that because of the way
01:18:31 12 some of the burials were conducted, bones and remains
01:18:35 13 arise to the surface rather readily, and it's almost
01:18:39 14 thought of as, okay, well, we'll just reinter it now,
01:18:43 15 and it seems to be so repulsive to the soul that
01:18:47 16 that's how it happens, but it's the truth.

01:18:49 17 And what you talked about earlier, our
01:18:52 18 staff -- this has been really difficult on everyone.
01:18:55 19 I'm not just talking the hours that we had people
01:18:57 20 working, that's been crazy, but so many of us, myself
01:19:00 21 and the rest of us, you can't help as you're
01:19:03 22 wandering through the cemetery, you're reading the
01:19:07 23 headstones, you're reading beloved father, beloved
01:19:10 24 grandfather, our little boy, our little baby. This

01:19:12 1 is heartbreaking stuff, because you're visualizing
01:19:15 2 that person that sat there as their loved one was
01:19:18 3 being interred, and now you've left with saying how
01:19:21 4 could we allow this? How could we just sit and
01:19:23 5 walk -- and blindly allow this to go on, which seems
01:19:26 6 to be what's going on. Because as you were saying,
01:19:29 7 Augie -- you've been so helpful, and I can't thank
01:19:33 8 you enough for your help throughout this, because do
01:19:35 9 I think it needs to be noted that when we recently,
01:19:38 10 for criminal purposes, had to disinter -- exhume
01:19:44 11 somebody, there was -- necessitated that a -- we had
01:19:47 12 to acquire a new casket for that individual.
01:19:50 13 Mr. Cage, without any fanfare, frankly, gave us a
01:19:56 14 casket, which was incredibly kind of him to do
01:19:59 15 because we needed to do that, and we didn't have to
01:20:02 16 do anything but call him, which was amazing. Sharon
01:20:08 17 Black is my partner, really appreciated it.
01:20:09 18 There is a lot that needs to be done here,
01:20:11 19 and there are some areas that need more work than
01:20:15 20 others, and that's why while you're looking at all
01:20:18 21 this, too, to not really spend a lot of time and
01:20:21 22 energy on the indigent burials would be a horrible
01:20:25 23 mistake.
01:20:25 24 MR. CAGE: Do you feel based on what has happened

01:20:28 1 in the recent weeks with Burr Oak that it might be
01:20:32 2 worthy of a consideration to set up maybe a special
01:20:35 3 task force? A lot of law enforcement agencies have
01:20:39 4 cold case files, and such things like that. Would it
01:20:42 5 be a consideration that a designated unit might
01:20:49 6 be put in place?

01:20:50 7 SHERIFF TOM DART: You know, that would be a
01:20:52 8 great idea, it really would be a great idea. I
01:20:55 9 didn't bring that up in my list of suggestions, but
01:20:57 10 frankly, whether it's the local county sheriff or
01:21:00 11 whether it's some metro regional thing, because
01:21:03 12 downstate has different issues than us, to say that
01:21:06 13 our office has been taxed beyond our resources is an
01:21:09 14 understatement, and yet at the same time I keep
01:21:13 15 pushing people because of the significance of not
01:21:15 16 just Burr Oak but the rest of the cemeteries out
01:21:17 17 there, and I have had a couple individuals who said I
01:21:21 18 would love to be just focused exclusively on this
01:21:24 19 issue and head up a group that focuses just on
01:21:28 20 cemetery enforcement issues and follow up on this,
01:21:32 21 and I wish I had the ability to do that, and I don't
01:21:34 22 right now, and I don't foresee the county giving me
01:21:37 23 the money to do that either.

01:21:39 24 So if there was some thought, and I don't

01:21:41 1 have the solution here, whether if there was regional
01:21:42 2 or something where there were a task force appointed
01:21:45 3 and had somebody that was paid by somebody that their
01:21:49 4 sole focus was just this issue, that would be a
01:21:52 5 tremendous help.

01:21:53 6 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: One final question due
01:21:55 7 to time.

01:21:57 8 DR. BRAZIER: Dr. Byron Brazier, pastor of the
01:22:01 9 Apostolic Church of God.

10 I just have a couple -- couple comments, and
01:22:06 11 my thanks as all the other committee members have
01:22:07 12 thanked you. I think you've done an outstanding job.
01:22:10 13 I really enjoyed when you put the website up for the
01:22:13 14 families.

01:22:15 15 One, who is -- who is investigating the
01:22:20 16 company Perpetua? Is it you, or is it the State's
01:22:24 17 Attorney?

01:22:24 18 SHERIFF TOM DART: Well --

01:22:26 19 DR. BRAZIER: Or both?

01:22:29 20 SHERIFF TOM DART: Yeah, we work in partnership
01:22:30 21 on all of our cases. So as far as Perpetua goes, all
01:22:36 22 I can say is that wherever we can get evidence as far
01:22:38 23 as criminal activities whoever it may be wherever we
01:22:41 24 will follow that.

01:22:42 1 I can't speak to specifics, whether certain
01:22:44 2 people are under investigation or not under
01:22:47 3 investigation, but just the normal route of things
01:22:50 4 would be that we would operate in unison quite
01:22:54 5 frequently. As I said the State's Attorney's office
01:22:57 6 has been just phenomenal, they've been so helpful,
01:22:59 7 but there is also always opportunities as well to
01:23:02 8 proceed on a federal level as well in certain
01:23:04 9 circumstances, too. So those options are all always
01:23:09 10 on the table for all crimes that are out there.

01:23:12 11 DR. BRAZIER: I asked that very specifically,
01:23:14 12 because it's quite unusual for a company to call the
01:23:18 13 police department to tell on themselves.

01:23:22 14 SHERIFF TOM DART: That's what we -- yes.

01:23:25 15 DR. BRAZIER: There's something financially going
01:23:28 16 wrong with my own books, there's just something wrong
01:23:29 17 with that, and you have to be as, we were very
01:23:31 18 specific with those who were found doing the work, we
01:23:35 19 have to be as specific with those who are responsible
01:23:38 20 for the people doing the work, and so I just want to
01:23:43 21 leave that to you.

01:23:44 22 For the record, Madam Chairman, I would
01:23:47 23 really like to have a representative from an
01:23:52 24 information systems organization who provides

01:23:55 1 cemetery software come and sit before us. They
01:24:00 2 will -- they could lay out standards of different
01:24:04 3 operations, because the software is set up in order
01:24:08 4 to do standards, and they could be a very helpful
01:24:10 5 input to us.

01:24:12 6 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Excellent idea. We'll
01:24:13 7 make sure that we have someone.

01:24:16 8 Sheriff Dart, thank you so much for your
01:24:18 9 testimony. We really, really appreciate your
01:24:21 10 appearing here. I have before me a DVD that
01:24:27 11 indicates Cook County Sheriff's Office Burr Oak
01:24:29 12 Cemetery Informational Video. These are from your
01:24:32 13 office, is that correct?

01:24:33 14 SHERIFF TOM DART: Yes. What that will -- we
01:24:36 15 memorialized with video a large portion if not a
01:24:42 16 majority of the cemetery itself as it existed when we
01:24:46 17 got there. This was not done the day we walked in
01:24:48 18 the door, shortly thereafter, but nothing really
01:24:50 19 changed. It really was meant to show what you had
01:24:55 20 there. So when you're looking at -- questioning
01:24:58 21 whether or not these were issues that somebody should
01:25:01 22 have seen or not seen, I think the video will answer
01:25:04 23 all your questions you have there.

01:25:06 24 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you. We will make

01:25:07 1 sure that this is uploaded to the Cemetery Task
01:25:10 2 Force's website, which is
01:25:14 3 CEMETERYTASKFORCE.ILLINOIS.GOV, and lastly before you
01:25:15 4 leave, you mentioned a website and some telephone
01:25:18 5 numbers. Is it possible for you to give any of that
01:25:22 6 information for our public?

01:25:23 7 SHERIFF TOM DART: It is, and I will have someone
01:25:25 8 from my staff give it to you before we leave the
01:25:28 9 building here. I don't have it handy on me now, but
01:25:32 10 we have it here.

01:25:33 11 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: We'll make sure that
01:25:34 12 information is added to our website as well so that
01:25:37 13 the public will know.

01:25:39 14 Thank you all so much for your patience in
01:25:42 15 allowing Sheriff Dart to testify much longer than the
01:25:46 16 ten-minute limit. We felt as a committee that it was
01:25:50 17 extremely important for him to be vetted with
01:25:54 18 questions and to give as comprehensive information as
01:25:59 19 he possibly could give us, given the constraints of
01:26:02 20 the criminal investigation, and I think you have done
01:26:06 21 a tremendous job.

01:26:08 22 It is -- it is highly commendable of you to
01:26:12 23 come to subject yourself to the questions and to give
01:26:15 24 information to the public. We think you have done a

01:26:18 1 wonderful job. We truly appreciate it, and we also
01:26:21 2 would like you to come back to any of our other
01:26:24 3 meetings should you desire to do so, and as further
01:26:29 4 information becomes available to you, that would be
01:26:32 5 helpful to the committee.

01:26:33 6 SHERIFF TOM DART: Thank you for having me.

01:26:36 7 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you so much. I
01:26:41 8 really appreciate it.

01:26:41 9 The next witness that we are going to call,
01:26:44 10 and unfortunately, we definitely keep to our shorter
01:26:47 11 time frame, will be Mr. Tony Burroughs, who is
01:26:53 12 representing the Burr Oak Cemetery Preservation
01:26:58 13 Society that was mentioned by the sheriff.

01:27:03 14 MR. BURROUGHS: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

01:27:16 15 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you.

01:27:18 16 MR. BURROUGHS: And I would like to thank the
01:27:19 17 governor for convening this task force and thank the
01:27:22 18 members of the task force for the hard work that
01:27:25 19 you're doing. We really appreciate it. We really
01:27:27 20 need it.

01:27:29 21 I also want to thank Sheriff Tom Dart and
01:27:32 22 his staff. We have been working with them for the
01:27:34 23 last couple weeks, and they have been tremendous, and
01:27:39 24 I can't think of anyone better that I would like to

01:27:43 1 work with. They have really been that helpful.

01:27:45 2 Our hearts go out to the families for the
01:27:47 3 pain they are suffering from the tragedy at Chicago
01:27:50 4 Burr Oak Cemetery. We share that pain because we
01:27:53 5 also have loved ones buried in Burr Oak or have
01:27:56 6 friends or loved ones buried at Burr Oak. This has
01:28:00 7 affected thousands of people around the world.

01:28:04 8 Chicago Burr Oak Cemetery is a historic
01:28:08 9 cemetery. It was founded under the historic
01:28:13 10 circumstances of racism. It took perseverance and
01:28:16 11 fortitude to accomplish the first burial, which was
01:28:19 12 made under armed guard.

01:28:23 13 When this cemetery was opened in 1927, it
01:28:27 14 got started in 1926, the reason it got started was
01:28:31 15 because a lot of blacks did not want to be buried in
01:28:34 16 the segregated cemetery of Lincoln Cemetery. It was
01:28:39 17 segregated by a fence where, quote, quote, coloreds
01:28:43 18 were buried on one side and whites were buried on the
01:28:46 19 other side, and many of the other cemeteries around
01:28:48 20 Chicago refused to accept blacks.

01:28:51 21 Now, there are blacks that are buried in
01:28:53 22 many cemeteries around Chicago even before Burr Oak
01:28:55 23 got started. We can talk about that to answer your
01:28:59 24 question, Representative Davis, a little bit later,

01:29:01 1 but when they went to make the first burial, they
01:29:04 2 could not make the first burial because whites had
01:29:07 3 put together a posse of 75 people and five sheriffs
01:29:11 4 to prevent them from being buried there and said you
01:29:15 5 have to go to the colored cemetery over in Lincoln.

01:29:18 6 So the people that owned the cemetery turned
01:29:21 7 away from what was then Worth, Illinois, came back to
01:29:25 8 downtown Chicago, they went to court, and they got a
01:29:29 9 court injunction which showed there should be no
01:29:32 10 interference with the cemetery, and they turned
01:29:34 11 around and went back to the cemetery with a police
01:29:37 12 motorcade and the first burial was made under armed
01:29:41 13 guard, and that's what we have to go through just to
01:29:43 14 bury our people.

01:29:46 15 The cemetery holds the remains of many
01:29:50 16 historic figures in American history, and the story
01:29:52 17 of this uniquely black cemetery reflects the
01:29:56 18 heritage, the struggles, the faith, and the
01:29:59 19 achievements of African Americans, not only in
01:30:02 20 Chicago, but beyond Chicago and around the world.

01:30:06 21 Chicago Burr Oak Cemetery must be preserved
01:30:10 22 and returned to a sanctuary of respect. Our goal is
01:30:15 23 to ensure that a lot of good comes out of this
01:30:19 24 horrific tragedy. Like Tupack Shakur said, this will

01:30:24 1 like be turning the rose that grew out of concrete.

01:30:28 2 Therefore, family members of those buried in

01:30:32 3 Burr Oak Cemetery, community members, cultural

01:30:35 4 leaders, government and civic organizations have come

01:30:39 5 together and formed the Chicago Burr Oak Cemetery

01:30:44 6 Historical Society. We want to preserve Chicago Burr

01:30:48 7 Oak Cemetery as well as honor and interpret the

01:30:52 8 traditions, the history, the contributions of African

01:30:57 9 Americans who are laid to rest at Burr Oak.

01:31:00 10 We are incorporated in the State of Illinois

01:31:02 11 as a not-for-profit organization and will be seeking

01:31:06 12 tax exempt status. We just got incorporated this

01:31:10 13 week. Thank you.

01:31:14 14 We have been meeting with representatives

01:31:17 15 from the Cook County Sheriff's Department and the

01:31:21 16 Burr Oak receiver on a regular basis in the last

01:31:23 17 couple of weeks. We are currently developing plans

01:31:27 18 to preserve and memorialize Burr Oak Cemetery and the

01:31:32 19 African Americans who are buried there and seek

01:31:35 20 support of your committee of the governor and of

01:31:39 21 other entities.

01:31:40 22 We are asking family members and the

01:31:44 23 community to petition the governor's task force to

01:31:48 24 let them know your feelings and what changes you want

01:31:51 1 in cemetery regulations. So please submit what your
01:31:55 2 feelings are to the task force.

01:31:58 3 We're also asking families to write to
01:32:01 4 Congressman Bobby Rush and to do so by August 15th so
01:32:05 5 your statements can be included in the Congressional
01:32:07 6 hearing that Congressman Rush held on July 27th.
01:32:13 7 Your statements to Congressman Rush can be accepted
01:32:16 8 on-line at WWW.HOUSE.GOV/RUSH. And naturally, you
01:32:26 9 can call Congressman Rush's office.

01:32:30 10 And finally, many cemeteries are now owned
01:32:34 11 by corporations across state lines. We believe that
01:32:37 12 cemeteries should be federally regulated by the
01:32:40 13 Federal Trade Commission. Right now they regulate
01:32:44 14 funeral homes but not cemeteries. We also advocate
01:32:51 15 adding grave and lot numbers to death certificates,
01:32:55 16 which was mentioned in Congressman Rush's hearings.

01:32:58 17 We would also like to require cemetery
01:33:01 18 owners to give copies of records to families. I am a
01:33:04 19 professional genealogist, and I visit cemeteries all
01:33:07 20 the time, and some cemeteries will give us copies of
01:33:11 21 the records and some will not. If it's a regulation,
01:33:14 22 then they have to do it, and this would eliminate
01:33:17 23 some of this problem of people not knowing if their
01:33:20 24 loved ones are there and where they're buried.

01:33:23 1 We also advocate of putting long -- short
01:33:27 2 term burials in large print on the cemetery contracts
01:33:31 3 and requiring the cemeteries to explain those
01:33:34 4 limitations to families and having both parties sign
01:33:38 5 that in print.

01:33:40 6 The members of our society currently include
01:33:43 7 Timuel Black, who is an author and historian who many
01:33:47 8 of you know; his wife Zenobia Johnson-Black, retired
01:33:53 9 government official and our group's organizer;
01:33:55 10 myself, who is an author and genealogist; Antoine
01:34:00 11 Crenshaw who is in special projects and an educator
01:34:03 12 from DuSable Museum; Henry English, who is the
01:34:07 13 president and CEO of Black United Fund of Illinois;
01:34:08 14 Marsha Hayes, retired Circuit Court judge; Peggy
01:34:14 15 Montes, a founder of Bronzeville Children's Museum,
01:34:18 16 and she is very, very interested in Babyland;
01:34:21 17 Dr. Christopher Reed, who many of you all know who is
01:34:25 18 a historian and author here in Chicago; Juliana
01:34:27 19 Richardson, who is executive director of History
01:34:29 20 Makers, who has been in the process of interviewing
01:34:31 21 people, African Americans who have made contributions
01:34:34 22 to history. She's already interviewed 2,000 people
01:34:36 23 across the country and has a goal of interviewing
01:34:40 24 5,000 people, and Antoinette Wright, president and

01:34:44 1 CEO of DuSable Museum.

01:34:48 2 Some of the few institutions we already have
01:34:48 3 aligned with us are the Afro-American Genealogical
01:34:53 4 and Historical Society of Chicago, which is 30 years
01:34:55 5 old; the Black United Fund of Illinois; the
01:34:57 6 Bronzeville Children's Museum; the DuSable Museum of
01:35:02 7 African American History; the Midwest African
01:35:06 8 American Heritage Preservation Network; and History
01:35:08 9 Makers. We've also been in touch with a few other
01:35:11 10 individuals and a few other institutions of which
01:35:14 11 we're not at liberty to use their names today.

01:35:18 12 And on a personal note, my grandfather's
01:35:20 13 sister, Harriet Harding, is buried at Burr Oak, and
01:35:25 14 she is the daughter of a Buffalo Soldier, my great
01:35:29 15 grandfather, who served out west in the 1880s. We
01:35:34 16 still have not been able to get verification if they
01:35:36 17 found her grave or not, and as I said, I'm a
01:35:39 18 professional genealogist, and I go into cemeteries
01:35:43 19 all the time, and I advocate that relatives go to
01:35:46 20 cemeteries and see where your loved ones are and ask
01:35:50 21 for photocopies of the records.

01:35:52 22 When I first went to a cemetery when I was
01:35:55 23 doing my genealogy 30 years ago, I went to Oak Ridge
01:36:00 24 Cemetery out in Hillside, Illinois. I saw my

01:36:03 1 grandfather's grave, I saw my great-grandfather's
01:36:06 2 grave. I went into the cemetery into the sexton
01:36:07 3 office, and I asked for copies of the records.
01:36:10 4 Fortunately, they made me photocopies of the record.
01:36:13 5 When I saw the record, I looked at the
01:36:15 6 names, and I saw people buried in our family lot that
01:36:19 7 I could not identify. I went to my father, I said,
01:36:22 8 who are these people buried in our family lot? My
01:36:27 9 father didn't know. He said go ask your grandmother.
10 So I went to my grandmother and I said, who are these
01:36:32 11 people buried in our family lot? And grandma said
01:36:33 12 she didn't know.
01:36:34 13 So I went out and I did research,
01:36:37 14 genealogical research on every one of those
01:36:39 15 individuals, and I determined who they were. My
01:36:45 16 great-grandmother's brother, my great-grandmother's
01:36:49 17 mother, my great, great-grandmother, and all my
01:36:53 18 ancestors buried in the family lot exactly where
01:36:57 19 they're supposed to be and none of their descendents
01:37:00 20 knew who they were, because we don't do our family
01:37:03 21 history, and we don't visit the cemetery anymore. So
01:37:08 22 this is why we need to do this.
01:37:11 23 In addition to that, they did not have grave
01:37:13 24 markers, and like professor -- I mean Sheriff Dart

01:37:18 1 said, perhaps half of the internments in Burr Oak do
01:37:22 2 not have grave markers, which sets itself open to
01:37:26 3 abuse, and one of the things personally that I'd like
01:37:29 4 to see regulated is that every unmarked grave should
01:37:33 5 have some kind of marker. If the family can't afford
01:37:37 6 it, the cemetery should put some kind of marker
01:37:40 7 there. Thank you very much.

01:37:44 8 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you very much,
01:37:45 9 Mr. Burroughs. I have one -- I have one quick
01:37:53 10 question for you. I am very interested in the
01:37:57 11 suggestion that grave lots be tied to the death
01:38:01 12 certificates, specifically with respect to the short
01:38:04 13 term burials to the extent that they exist. Would
01:38:07 14 you also advocate that a date be placed on the death
01:38:11 15 certificate that the body may or may not be exhumed
01:38:16 16 so that you can tie the next person who may or may
01:38:19 17 not be buried in that short term lot? How would you
01:38:24 18 handle that?

01:38:26 19 MR. BURROUGHS: Well, I would say that on that
01:38:27 20 death certificate, if it is a short term burial, then
01:38:30 21 that should be indicated on the death certificate so
01:38:33 22 it's understood by the State, by the vital records
01:38:36 23 department, and by the family and the cemetery that
01:38:38 24 this is not a permanent grave, this is a short term

01:38:41 1 grave.

01:38:41 2 Personally, I don't even agree with short
01:38:43 3 term burials, but I mean, if that exists, I mean, I
01:38:47 4 don't have anything to do with that, but I don't
01:38:49 5 agree with them.

01:38:49 6 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: To the extent that it
01:38:51 7 exists, would you advocate that there be an end date;
01:38:52 8 in other words, a date that someone would know that
01:38:54 9 this --

01:38:54 10 MR. BURROUGHS: Absolutely, absolutely. And that
01:38:57 11 the family should be -- if it's for 20 years, 25
01:38:59 12 years, the family should be notified when that time
01:39:02 13 is up, and if they want to pay for -- more that
01:39:04 14 longer period, they should have the option for doing
01:39:06 15 that.

01:39:11 16 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Thank you very much. It's
01:39:13 17 so nice to meet to. I'm related -- are you related
01:39:16 18 to Margaret Burroughs? I know you get that a lot.

01:39:18 19 MR. BURROUGHS: I get that question almost every
01:39:19 20 day, and I'm only related to her in spirit, Madam
01:39:21 21 Representative.

01:39:21 22 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: She's a wonderful person,
01:39:23 23 and I'm sure you are, too.

01:39:24 24 Where were African American people buried

01:39:28 1 before they went to maybe even Lincoln or Burr Oak?

01:39:33 2 MR. BURROUGHS: Well, that's a good question.

01:39:36 3 I'm sure as you know, Chicago's founded in
01:39:39 4 the 1700s by Jean Baptiste Point DuSable. From that
01:39:45 5 time, African Americans have been in Chicago, and
01:39:47 6 there were many African Americans that were buried in
01:39:50 7 the original city cemetery, which is up where Lincoln
01:39:54 8 Park is now, later moved up to Graceland Cemetery on
01:39:56 9 Irving Park, and those records from that cemetery
01:40:00 10 have just been published just recently. So blacks
01:40:03 11 have been buried in almost every cemetery in the
01:40:05 12 city.

01:40:06 13 You mentioned there has been the protests at
01:40:07 14 different cemeteries. There was a lot of protest, as
01:40:10 15 you well know, at Oakwoods Cemetery on 67th and
01:40:14 16 Cottage Grove back during the 60s, if I recall, but I
01:40:17 17 had ancestors that were buried there in 1899, but
01:40:21 18 during a certain period, you could not be buried
01:40:23 19 there unless -- if you were black unless you owned a
01:40:25 20 lot there. Then later on, you know, after Harold
01:40:28 21 Washington was buried there, and right prior to
01:40:30 22 Harold Washington they opened it up because all the
01:40:32 23 white Americans had moved out to the suburbs, so they
01:40:35 24 needed to continue burials over there.

01:40:38 1 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: I think they're full. I
01:40:40 2 know you want to go. I think are they full at this
01:40:41 3 time?
01:40:42 4 MR. BURROUGHS: Who is that, Oak Woods?
01:40:44 5 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Oak Woods.
01:40:47 6 MR. BURROUGHS: I don't believe so, but I'm not
01:40:48 7 sure.
01:40:48 8 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: You don't think so. Okay.
01:40:48 9 I want to ask, do you think the owner of a
01:40:51 10 cemetery should be an Illinois resident? Do you
01:40:53 11 think we should continue with permitting out-of-state
01:40:56 12 owners of cemeteries? Because I think if this person
01:40:59 13 who lived in Arizona lived in Illinois, perhaps he
01:41:02 14 would have been more cognizant of what was going on
01:41:05 15 in his business.
01:41:07 16 MR. BURROUGHS: I think that's probably -- seeing
01:41:09 17 as cemeteries are a private business, I think it's
01:41:13 18 going to be probably pretty difficult in order to
01:41:13 19 have a requirement like that.
01:41:15 20 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Oh, I don't think so.
01:41:17 21 MR. BURROUGHS: You know better than I do.
01:41:19 22 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: I don't think so. Thank
01:41:20 23 you, sir.
01:41:21 24 MR. BURROUGHS: Quickly follow up on your

01:41:23 1 question, Mt. Glenwood Cemetery as well as Forest
01:41:26 2 Homes Cemetery, which were black cemeteries both
01:41:27 3 predated Burr Oak.

01:41:29 4 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Thank you very much.

01:41:32 5 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you.

01:41:32 6 MR. SULAMOYO: I think this question may have
01:41:36 7 been asked earlier, but I'm trying to understand if
01:41:41 8 this cemetery was opened in 1927, how can it still
01:41:45 9 be -- how can there still be land to bury people?

01:41:51 10 MR. BURROUGHS: Well, I'm not the best person to
01:41:56 11 answer that question, but the receiver did address
01:41:59 12 that question, and because he deals with many
01:42:02 13 cemeteries in the Catholic Church, they have done
01:42:06 14 some studies on how many burials you can make per
01:42:10 15 acre, and based on the number of burials per acre and
01:42:15 16 how many acres you have determines how many can
01:42:17 17 actually be interred there if the cemetery is filled
01:42:19 18 up.

01:42:22 19 REPRESENTATIVE BRADY: Thank you, Madam
01:42:23 20 Chairwoman. Thank you very much for your testimony.

01:42:24 21 Are you aware, sir, that Illinois has moved
01:42:26 22 to electronic filing of death certificates?

01:42:29 23 MR. BURROUGHS: I have heard that they have been
01:42:32 24 moved to electronic filing of death certificates,

01:42:33 1 although I understand that it is still somewhat
01:42:35 2 problematic because everybody is not computerized,
01:42:40 3 but I understand that started this year.

01:42:40 4 REPRESENTATIVE BRADY: They're working on that.
01:42:40 5 As the author of the legislation, sir, I want to tell
01:42:42 6 you it's taken us nine years to get to that point.

7 MR. BURROUGHS: Sure.

01:42:45 8 REPRESENTATIVE BRADY: So from electronic records
01:42:47 9 of cemeteries, it's going to be quite a lengthy and
01:42:52 10 expensive process as well.

01:42:53 11 But if I could, and excuse me, Madam Chair,
01:42:58 12 I have a three-hour drive home, so I'm going to
01:43:02 13 excuse myself and head downstate, but I know the
01:43:05 14 charge of this task force is to come up with
01:43:07 15 recommendations. I myself have advanced legislation
01:43:11 16 to the legislature, it's met with resentment for
01:43:14 17 different reasons, but we also went to these people
01:43:18 18 who are here in the audience who are family members,
01:43:18 19 people throughout Representative Davis' district and
01:43:21 20 Senator Jones' district and many, many others are
01:43:24 21 represented here, you know, we have an entire act
01:43:28 22 here, ladies and gentlemen, we have an entire
01:43:30 23 division, 20 people in 2008 in a division
01:43:37 24 specifically in the comptroller's office to take care

01:43:40 1 of the Illinois Cemetery Care Act.

01:43:42 2 Now, I think we owe it to you ladies and
01:43:45 3 gentlemen, I hope Madam Chairwoman, you'll keep the
01:43:47 4 direction of the task force, that we owe it to you to
01:43:50 5 find out what happened, what broke down, what went
01:43:52 6 wrong before we come up with all the ideas of what
01:43:55 7 we're going to change.

01:43:56 8 Thank you. Thank you very much for your
01:44:00 9 testimony.

01:44:04 10 DR. ARNOLD: Actually, I'm Dr. Damon Arnold, the
01:44:08 11 Director for the Illinois Department of Public
01:44:08 12 Health. I just came back from the governor's office
01:44:10 13 for a Medicaid meeting, which explains my timeliness
01:44:13 14 here.

01:44:14 15 But one of the things that we have been
01:44:17 16 doing is that the -- currently there's electronic
01:44:21 17 death registry as was alluded to, and that death
01:44:25 18 registry now has been moved completely under the Cook
01:44:29 19 County Department of Health. I signed the transfer
01:44:32 20 order from the City to the County. So we are now at
01:44:37 21 the point where the electronic death registry will be
01:44:40 22 in effect within at least the next month where it
01:44:43 23 will be 48 hours for doctors and for corners to
01:44:46 24 report and an additional 72 hours for the funeral

01:44:49 1 directors, but I have my team also looking into the
01:44:53 2 possibility of adding another code number for the
01:44:56 3 cemetery owner so they can do exactly what you were
01:44:59 4 saying to pre-release the death certificate that, you
01:45:03 5 know, people can take care of their own affairs
01:45:06 6 because they need the death certificate in a timely
01:45:09 7 manner, but also to look at the linking of that to
01:45:14 8 the cemetery owners as a possibility for them to have
01:45:17 9 a code as well to retro -- you know, put the
01:45:21 10 information back into the death certificate which
01:45:24 11 shouldn't be a really technically difficult
01:45:26 12 situation.

01:45:28 13 We also have some other ideas for, you know,
01:45:33 14 talking, also, with the Department of Financial and
01:45:37 15 Professional Regulation. We've been talking about,
01:45:41 16 you know, how to coordinate things in a better
01:45:44 17 fashion so these things won't happen again in the
01:45:47 18 future.

01:45:50 19 We also have an idea of this GIS mapping.
01:45:54 20 We have all these capabilities, you know, to look at
01:45:58 21 those possibilities, and I'm bringing it to the
01:46:00 22 committee now as a possibility for GIS mapping. We
01:46:03 23 put tags on pets and those kinds of things to track,
01:46:07 24 and I'm not sure if the technology is there now to

01:46:11 1 actually put something like a chip and find out
01:46:13 2 whether we can actually track the decedents after the
01:46:17 3 fact and know where they are by GIS coding, and so it
01:46:21 4 seems like it should not be a technically difficult
01:46:24 5 kind of thing, you know, on the computer.

01:46:28 6 So -- but there are a lot of different
01:46:30 7 ideas, a lot of things we can bring forward. I just
01:46:33 8 wanted to commend you for the historic preservation
01:46:36 9 that you were putting into effect. That is very,
01:46:40 10 very key to us understanding who we are as people.
01:46:45 11 So I'm glad that you brought the dignity back to Burr
01:46:50 12 Oak by looking at the genealogy of the people who are
01:46:53 13 there. They are very, very important people in our
01:46:56 14 history as was alluded to earlier, all of them, by
01:47:00 15 Mr. Cages.

01:47:02 16 So do you have any ideas of what you should
01:47:04 17 do for the memorialization of what has happened?

01:47:09 18 MR. BURROUGHS: Well, our committee -- our
01:47:10 19 committee has been looking at several different
01:47:13 20 things, and we want to do something that is very
01:47:15 21 fitting. When I say fitting, something that is large
01:47:18 22 scale and something that will set the bar for African
01:47:22 23 American cemeteries around country. So we're looking
01:47:25 24 at a lot of different options, and once we finish

01:47:28 1 doing a little more leg work then we're going to let
01:47:30 2 the public know what our plans are, but we're not
01:47:34 3 looking small at all, and we think it's a very
01:47:36 4 historic place, and it needs a fitting memorial. So
01:47:40 5 I wish I were at liberty to say right now, but I'm
01:47:42 6 not, but we will reveal our plans in the very near
01:47:46 7 future.

01:47:46 8 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you. Question
01:47:48 9 from one more individual from the back.

01:47:51 10 MR. CAGE: Just a point of information. Are
01:47:52 11 aware who owned the cemetery before Perpetua?

01:47:57 12 MR. BURROUGHS: I am familiar with some of the
01:47:59 13 owners, yes.

01:48:00 14 MR. CAGE: Okay. Anyone in particular that you
01:48:02 15 remember?

01:48:02 16 MR. BURROUGHS: Well, I know that one of the
01:48:04 17 original owners was Earl B. Dickerson, who was the
01:48:08 18 first African American alderman in Chicago, as well
01:48:09 19 as W. Ellis Stewart, who was the secretary to Supreme
01:48:14 20 Liberty Life Insurance Company and a lot of other
01:48:16 21 owners, also.

01:48:17 22 MR. CAGE: The most notable, once we pass the
01:48:20 23 Honorable Mr. Dickerson, the late John H. Johnson,
01:48:25 24 publisher of Johnson Publishing Company, who on a

01:48:28 1 number of occasions I met with, who during my tenure
01:48:32 2 as president of the Cook County Association of
01:48:34 3 Funeral Home owners to talk to him about certain
01:48:39 4 maintenance issues then, and this is way prior to
01:48:43 5 Perpetua, but for whatever reason it didn't work.

01:48:47 6 The question was posed to you about which
01:48:49 7 cemetery was burying black people prior to Burr Oak.
01:48:54 8 There's a cemetery known as Sunset.

01:48:57 9 MR. BURROUGHS: It's up in Evanston.

01:49:00 10 MR. CAGE: In Northbrook.

11 MR. BURROUGHS: Yes.

01:49:02 12 MR. CAGE: Where quite a number of black people
01:49:04 13 were buried prior to being even allowed to be buried
01:49:07 14 on the south side. So as a genealogist I thought you
01:49:13 15 might want to be aware of it.

01:49:15 16 MR. BURROUGHS: Oh, I'm very aware of Sunset.
01:49:17 17 Thank you.

01:49:17 18 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you so much,
01:49:19 19 Mr. Burroughs. We really appreciate your time. I'm
01:49:20 20 looking forward to that party. I know Juliana
01:49:22 21 Richardson very well, and she does know how to throw
01:49:25 22 a really big party.

01:49:26 23 MR. BURROUGHS: Thank you.

01:49:27 24 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you very, very

01:49:29 1 much. We really appreciate it.

01:49:32 2 We will now hear from the members of the
01:49:34 3 public who would like to testify before the task
01:49:38 4 force to give your suggestions, comments.

01:49:43 5 The first individual who has indicated to us
01:49:46 6 that she would like to speak is Ms. Carolyn Tate. If
01:49:50 7 you're here, you can step forward.

01:49:56 8 MS. CAROLYN TATE: Hi, I want to say good evening
9 to Madam Chairman and the panel and the audience. A
01:50:24 10 lot of -- I'm a private citizen, and I have three
01:50:26 11 family members who are supposed to be interred at
01:50:30 12 Burr Oak. A lot of questions that I've heard -- a
01:50:32 13 lot of the questions that I had have been basically
01:50:35 14 alluded to, so I don't want to waste my time and go
01:50:39 15 over those.

01:50:39 16 I did do a little research, and I, like the
01:50:42 17 representative, mentioned there's a lot of state laws
01:50:45 18 on the books. There's the Human Skeletal Remains,
01:50:48 19 there's the Veterans Burial Act, there's the Burial
01:50:51 20 of Dead Bodies Act, there's the Crematory Regulation
01:50:55 21 Act. You can go on. There's the County Cemetery
01:50:58 22 Care Act. I mean, there's a lot of acts. There's a
01:51:01 23 whole pageful here, and my question is what happened
01:51:04 24 to them? Why weren't they being enforced?

01:51:08 1 Before you just start writing a lot of --
01:51:10 2 there was very good suggestions, but I think
01:51:12 3 attention should be directed that somebody dropped
01:51:15 4 the ball along here. It was more than -- as
01:51:19 5 families, you're in the one of your worst state of
01:51:22 6 minds when you go there, and we sign a contract with
01:51:25 7 funeral homes who promise to -- they say that
01:51:29 8 they're -- we entrust the care of the arrangements to
01:51:32 9 them, and I think they should be held responsible.

01:51:36 10 A lot of the onus is being put on
01:51:38 11 cemeteries. Well, I think this particular industry
01:51:41 12 is a very lucrative industry, and the cemetery is at
01:51:46 13 the bottom of the food chain. You have that prepaid
01:51:49 14 burial trust funds, you have all kind of organ
01:51:54 15 donation problems, you know, organization -- organ
01:51:59 16 donation -- I'm very nervous and I don't want to
01:52:02 17 waste my time.

18 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: That's okay.

01:52:03 19 MS. CAROLYN TATE: There's a lot of money to be
01:52:04 20 made in this industry, and those four people that are
01:52:06 21 sitting down in the county jail, I think they just
01:52:09 22 picked up the crumbs of what was out there being
01:52:12 23 made, and I think some attention should be paid.

01:52:15 24 There's one question I can't -- and I'm not

01:52:17 1 hearing it. They're saying there was all these loose
01:52:22 2 bones and bodies out there. Well, to my
01:52:24 3 understanding, everybody that comes in the door is in
01:52:26 4 a casket, and they're fully dressed. Where -- I'm
01:52:28 5 hearing there's stone containers and loose bones,
01:52:32 6 where are the caskets? You can resell a grave plot,
01:52:36 7 but who's rebuying a casket?

01:52:38 8 There's always been this underlying
01:52:40 9 allegation that funeral homes worked in cahoots with
01:52:44 10 grave -- cemetery workers, where they were allowed to
01:52:46 11 loot the bodies and jewelry, whatever, and they
01:52:48 12 resold the caskets. Now, my question is are caskets
01:52:52 13 being found out in Burr Oak? I think this is a good
01:52:56 14 example that's on the table to kind of open the
01:52:58 15 picture and show what is really going on behind the
01:53:00 16 scenes, and I think if you direct the right attention
01:53:03 17 and ask the right questions, you'll get the right
01:53:05 18 answers to find out what should be investigated and
01:53:08 19 who should be investigated.

01:53:12 20 I think I had another question. I don't
01:53:15 21 want to miss my point. It was told that the
01:53:18 22 neighbors around Burr Oaks realized that the funerals
01:53:21 23 were always being held in the same areas, and to my
01:53:24 24 understanding, most of the funeral home directors

01:53:27 1 that cater or go to Burr Oaks are the same ones, you
01:53:32 2 know, and you have this one company that's making
01:53:35 3 maybe 20 visits per month to the same area, and you
01:53:38 4 have their drivers -- and I'm told the drivers meet
01:53:42 5 the cemetery workers at the gate, and they just show
01:53:45 6 them where to drop off the bodies. They're not -- I
01:53:48 7 was told by a cemetery -- a funeral home director
01:53:51 8 that they're not obligated to even get a burial plot
01:53:55 9 number. They meet a guy at the gate or somebody,
01:53:55 10 they take them to the spot, and then you're rushed
01:53:57 11 out of there so you really don't get a chance to look
01:54:00 12 around and see where you are. It's, like I said, a
01:54:02 13 very emotional time.

01:54:03 14 Maybe -- can I just relate my personal
01:54:06 15 experience? I think if the panel listens to the
01:54:09 16 personal experiences of the families, you'll find a
01:54:11 17 lot of loopholes and things that you should direct
01:54:13 18 attention to.

01:54:14 19 My brother and I went there, and we were
01:54:18 20 having a family disagreement at the time. I paid out
01:54:22 21 of pocket, he was given the receipt. We did not
01:54:28 22 corroborate our receipts until this past June. My
01:54:32 23 mom passed away in January, 2000, and when went to
01:54:35 24 get our records together, he pulls out the receipt.

01:54:37 1 Well, I have the receipt. He's got a receipt
01:54:39 2 indicating that she had a prepaid funeral policy, and
01:54:43 3 she never had that, and my receipt that I ended up
01:54:45 4 getting from the funeral home showed just out of
01:54:48 5 pocket what we paid.

01:54:49 6 So, you know, where is the money -- there's
01:54:53 7 some money or something, I don't understand, there
01:54:54 8 was an investigation a few years ago about funeral
01:54:57 9 home directors taking excess maintenance fees from
01:55:02 10 these trust funds. I mean, who is monitoring that?
01:55:06 11 Why would a funeral home need a maintenance fee?
01:55:09 12 They're not doing anything.

01:55:11 13 I could see a cemetery taking a maintenance
01:55:12 14 fee. They're supposed to pay to get the grass cut or
01:55:14 15 whatever, but why are funeral home directors allowed
01:55:17 16 to even -- why would they need the maintenance fee?
01:55:20 17 You're not using it right then. I hope I'm making
01:55:24 18 sense.

01:55:25 19 So those are some of the questions I wanted
01:55:25 20 to bring out. I wanted to find out are they finding
01:55:27 21 caskets out at Burr Oak? Are the funeral home
01:55:31 22 directors in the clear, also? I mean, the trust fund
01:55:35 23 administrators, I think if you're going to do this
01:55:38 24 task force, and it's sad that it came to this to

01:55:41 1 cause it, but I think this is something that is very
01:55:44 2 much needed, and I think if you're going to do it, do
01:55:48 3 a -- I would ask that you please do a complete job,
01:55:50 4 get all the facts, find out, like I said, what is
01:55:52 5 being done with the organ donations. It's a big,
01:55:55 6 long picture, and I think there's more to it than
01:55:57 7 four little people reselling grave plots.

8 My name is Carolyn Tate, I live in Calumet
9 City, and I'm a private citizen. T-A-T-E
01:56:26 10 C-A-R-O-L-Y-N.

01:56:26 11 MR. CAGE: Ms. Tate?

12 MS. CAROLYN TATE: Yes, sir.

01:56:27 13 MR. CAGE: I certainly appreciate your remarks.
01:56:29 14 I am a practicing funeral director, and I am very
01:56:34 15 sensitive to a number of things that you said.

01:56:38 16 Funeral directors are not permitted to take
01:56:41 17 maintenance fees based on state statute for preneed
01:56:46 18 funeral trust funds. As a matter of fact, the
01:56:51 19 legislature says that funeral directors, once they're
01:56:55 20 paid for funerals on a preneed basis, must trust
01:56:59 21 95 percent of those monies in trust. It cannot be
01:57:05 22 bothered.

01:57:06 23 The scope of authority that is transferred,
01:57:13 24 in other words, when the funeral -- when you buried

01:57:18 1 your mother, the funeral procession went into the
01:57:21 2 gates, and then the transfer of responsibility and
01:57:24 3 authority was then conveyed from the funeral home in
01:57:26 4 whose care your mother was placed prior to the
01:57:29 5 burial. Once they passed into the gates, that scope
01:57:33 6 of responsibility was then with the cemetery.

01:57:36 7 Now, I'm with you on questioning how
01:57:41 8 funerals could go to the same general area time after
01:57:45 9 time. I've questioned that, but when you ask the
01:57:52 10 questions with certain cemetery management and other
01:57:55 11 personnel and they give you a blank look, it's
01:57:59 12 really -- you're really hard pressed to go find
01:58:03 13 answers, but you certainly have some very well
01:58:06 14 founded concerns. There's a lot of issues here.
01:58:10 15 Thank you.

01:58:11 16 MS. CAROLYN TATE: And I don't know what this is.
01:58:14 17 It's the Illinois Funeral Directors Association. I
01:58:17 18 understand that there was a big something. They had
01:58:20 19 taken \$10 million in excess fees from these consumer
01:58:25 20 trust funds. So I just think that's a big pot of
01:58:27 21 money on the table that has got a lot of interest in
01:58:29 22 it.

01:58:30 23 MR. CAGE: What is the source of that
01:58:31 24 publication?

01:58:32 1 MS. CAROLYN TATE: This is from Mr. Hynes'
01:58:35 2 office, Comptroller Hynes' office. It was -- I'm
01:58:40 3 sorry, it was a news release, news release from
01:58:42 4 Comptroller Hynes' office that the IFDA must return
01:58:47 5 \$10 million in excess fees to the Consumer Trust
01:58:51 6 Fund, and there was a big scandal, and unfortunately,
01:58:53 7 this -- it was regarding the time period of 2000 to
01:58:56 8 the year 2006. So I won't elaborate on it, because I
01:59:02 9 really haven't really read it all, but that was --
01:59:05 10 let me see. I just want to make sure I get my -- I'm
01:59:08 11 sorry is that --

01:59:09 12 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you very much. It
01:59:12 13 took a lot of courage to come here and to discuss
01:59:16 14 your concerns with us. Trust me, we will take all of
01:59:19 15 your concerns under consideration pursuant to our
01:59:22 16 executive task.

01:59:24 17 Many of your concerns are criminal concerns.
01:59:27 18 I am certain that Sheriff Dart and State's Attorney
01:59:32 19 Anita Alvarez are addressing criminal concerns, and
01:59:36 20 we will definitely take into consideration all of the
01:59:39 21 legislative suggestions that you've made, and we will
01:59:41 22 be making recommendations to the governor.

01:59:45 23 If there are additional concerns, please
01:59:48 24 make sure that you comment on those on the website.

01:59:52 1 There is a section there for anyone in the public to
01:59:54 2 comment and to give us additional feedback if
01:59:57 3 something were to come to mind after tonight.

02:00:01 4 MS. CAROLYN TATE: Can I just add one thing
02:00:03 5 before I leave?

02:00:04 6 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Sure.

02:00:05 7 MS. CAROLYN TATE: The closure, they're not --
02:00:06 8 I'm not hearing anything about the remains that were
02:00:10 9 collected. They're not going to do any DNA analysis
02:00:14 10 of it, and I mean, we have the technology to do that.
02:00:16 11 It's been done for other groups. It's been done for
02:00:19 12 9/11. It was done for -- just this past week, and I
02:00:24 13 commend the United States for bringing home the
02:00:25 14 remains of that soldier that was -- I mean, that was
02:00:27 15 a very good thing that he did. It took a lot of
02:00:30 16 work, a lot of time, and a lot of expense was
02:00:33 17 dedicated to bring those remains home for closure for
02:00:36 18 that family, and I think a lot of us have families
02:00:38 19 out there, and to be denied the simple process of
02:00:43 20 having those remains analyzed --

02:00:47 21 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: I think that's an
02:00:49 22 excellent point.

02:00:50 23 MS. CAROLYN TATE: I don't know why. I'm just
02:00:50 24 hearing it cost too much, it's too expensive, but if

02:00:53 1 you talk about the notability of this particular
02:00:55 2 cemetery and all the historical significance, I think
02:00:58 3 that's -- the matter should be readdressed.

02:01:01 4 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: That's an excellent
02:01:02 5 point. Thank you very, very much.

02:01:05 6 MS. CAROLYN TATE: Thank you very much.

02:01:06 7 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: I'm told that we have
02:01:08 8 another individual who would like to speak, Azurea
02:01:11 9 Jackson.

02:01:14 10 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: May I say something, Madam
11 Chairman?

12 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Sure.

02:01:16 13 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: If you wish, you can also
02:01:18 14 provide us with written testimony that you've already
02:01:20 15 given.

16 MS. CAROLYN TATE: Okay.

02:01:20 17 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: We appreciate that, and it
02:01:21 18 was the FBI who said it would be too costly to
02:01:25 19 continue to identify them, but we must become active
02:01:29 20 and let them know we don't like it. Identify those
02:01:34 21 bodies.

02:01:39 22 MR. McNARY: And one more thing for Ms. Tate, I'm
02:01:40 23 sorry. There was legislation that was passed this
02:01:42 24 year from the comptroller's office to deal with what

02:01:44 1 you just talked about. So what you just cited is
02:01:46 2 real, and the comptroller moved to pass legislation
02:01:49 3 this year to take more control of the preuse funds.

02:01:54 4 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you.

02:01:55 5 MS. AZUREA JACKSON: My name is Azurea Jackson,
02:01:56 6 and I just want to say --

02:01:58 7 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Ms. Jackson, can you do
02:01:59 8 me a favor? Keep your voice up and spell your first
02:02:02 9 name.

02:02:03 10 MS. AZUREA JACKSON: My name is Azurea Jackson.
02:02:05 11 My name is spelled A-Z-U-R-E-A, the traditional
02:02:11 12 spelling of Jackson, J-A-C-K-S-O-N.

02:02:13 13 And I'm here to say that I visited Burr Oak
02:02:15 14 Cemetery every day from early July of 2003 until
02:02:23 15 April of 2007, and then from 2007 to 2008 I visit
02:02:30 16 three and four times a week, and from 2008 to
02:02:34 17 presently I visit at least once a week, if not twice.

02:02:37 18 And I want to say I'm very familiar with
02:02:39 19 workers there at Burr Oak. This Tuesday, since I've
02:02:44 20 been unable to go to the cemetery I decided to stake
02:02:46 21 out the cemetery out there at the opening, and I was
02:02:50 22 very shocked to find out that the exact same workers
02:02:52 23 are still working there. The only one that had been
02:02:57 24 replaced is there's a new foreman, and I would say

02:03:01 1 Tuesday I was there from about 7:30 until about a
02:03:05 2 little after 9:00, about 9:15 in the morning, I never
02:03:07 3 saw an Anglo-Saxon male enter the cemetery. So I
02:03:12 4 would say that the new manager, which I understand is
02:03:14 5 Anglo-Saxon, never reported to work. So I'm assuming
02:03:18 6 he's managing the cemetery from a remote location.

02:03:23 7 So I'm saying what is really going on out
02:03:27 8 there? How in the world can you tell me that you
02:03:31 9 want to rededicate these grounds, that it's sacred
02:03:35 10 grounds, and you still have the same people who are
02:03:37 11 under investigation there daily, but we're not able
02:03:40 12 to go there, the loved ones? Something is wrong
02:03:44 13 there.

02:03:47 14 And for the news media to report that it's
02:03:51 15 under new management and not make it clear the squad
02:03:54 16 is still the same is wrong. For ministers to get on
02:03:58 17 TV and say, oh, yes, it's under new manager --
02:04:02 18 management, let's go ahead and pray over these
02:04:05 19 grounds and not tell us, the loved ones, that it's
02:04:08 20 the same squad is wrong.

02:04:11 21 And I think someone should be on these
02:04:14 22 committees who actually talked to us and tell us
02:04:18 23 exactly what's going on rather than try to placate us
02:04:22 24 and make us feel better. I want to know what's going

02:04:25 1 on currently.

02:04:26 2 Once we settle what's currently the
02:04:28 3 problems, then we can proceed with improving the
02:04:31 4 future and having some sort of memorial built, but we
02:04:35 5 need to take care of the issues currently.

02:04:38 6 One lady who works in the office there, back
02:04:42 7 in 2003, 2004, she was a summer worker, and she was
02:04:47 8 also working out in the cemetery with the men. Now
02:04:50 9 she's working, I believe, full time in the office,
02:04:52 10 and she's married to one of the men that has been
02:04:54 11 arrested, and she's there every day, and that's all I
02:05:00 12 had to say. Thank you.

02:05:05 13 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you. Thank you
02:05:06 14 very much for your comments. We really appreciate
02:05:09 15 them.

02:05:09 16 Is there anyone else who would like to make
02:05:11 17 comments today to the task force?

02:05:14 18 MS. JERI RICHARD: Good evening to the panel and
02:05:18 19 to everyone that's here.

02:05:20 20 My name is Jeri Richard. It's spelled
02:05:23 21 J-E-R-I. The last name is spelled just like the
02:05:30 22 first name Richard.

02:05:32 23 I have something like ten family members
02:05:35 24 that are buried at Burr Oak Cemetery. I have records

02:05:42 1 with documentation, dates, names of individuals from
02:05:49 2 Burr Oak, letters of solicitation, signatures, all of
02:05:56 3 that, and any of the panel that's interested in or
02:06:01 4 Mr. Dart who's interested in what I have, I'll be
02:06:05 5 glad to make it available.

02:06:07 6 What I would like to know is how long has
02:06:11 7 this gone on? How many years? How many years has it
02:06:17 8 been that double burial has taken place? When did it
02:06:23 9 start?

02:06:26 10 If we look back we can look at the improper
02:06:31 11 handling of crematoriums. Now we're looking at
02:06:36 12 improper handling of cemeteries. So what's the
02:06:42 13 public to do? Where do we go?

02:06:45 14 And I appreciate the task force being asked
02:06:49 15 to make some recommendations, and I hopefully hope
02:06:54 16 that they'll be very formulated and very useful for
02:07:02 17 our community and for our public. So that's all I
02:07:07 18 have to say. Thank you.

02:07:08 19 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you, thank you
02:07:09 20 very much. Ms. Barbara Jackson.

02:07:16 21 MS. BARBARA JACKSON: Good evening. My name is
02:07:18 22 Barbara Jackson, no kin to Michael or Jesse. I wish
02:07:22 23 I was.

02:07:23 24 My concern is I have about 11 family members

02:07:26 1 buried there starting with 1946 up until this year.
02:07:34 2 How can we be assured that after the investigation
02:07:39 3 that our families are even in the graves that we
02:07:42 4 think they're supposed to be in?

02:07:45 5 And I'm concerned, also, supposedly the
02:07:49 6 sheriffs stated that this has been going on with four
02:07:52 7 people, which I don't believe it was four people, but
02:07:54 8 it has been going on for about five years. When did
02:07:58 9 the owners purchase the cemetery? Does anybody know?
02:08:03 10 Because did they do any investigation before they
02:08:07 11 even purchased the cemetery? It sounds like to me
02:08:10 12 they're kind of in cahoots with something, you know?

02:08:13 13 But I'm just mainly concerned about what
02:08:16 14 kind of reassurance we're going to have that our
02:08:19 15 loved ones are actually there, and they're not mixed
02:08:24 16 up in these bones that they won't do anything about.
02:08:27 17 Thank you.

02:08:28 18 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you. In answer to
02:08:29 19 your first question, with respect to knowledge of
02:08:35 20 whether individuals are there, I think the sheriff
02:08:38 21 mentioned that he is going to post a list of the
02:08:42 22 headstones that they found and the records that they
02:08:45 23 were able to compile so that individuals can look on
02:08:48 24 his website and see if your loved one is actually

02:08:52 1 there.

02:08:52 2 Now, what's going to happen if the name is
02:08:54 3 not there, I don't know, but I would take this
02:08:59 4 opportunity to read the website that they gave us so
02:09:01 5 that the public can look on this website.

6 MS. BARBARA JACKSON: Yes, we wrote it down.

02:09:05 7 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: I think he said in two
02:09:06 8 weeks, and that's WWW.BURROAK.NET.

02:09:12 9 MS. BARBARA JACKSON: Yeah, we wrote it down.

02:09:13 10 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Okay. Great. And with
02:09:14 11 respect to -- what was your last question? Oh, how
02:09:24 12 long have the owners owned it? We're not certain,
02:09:27 13 but that is a question that we will try and get the
02:09:29 14 answer.

02:09:29 15 SENATOR JONES: Madam Chair, excuse me, Perpetua
02:09:31 16 bought Burr Oak in late '99.

02:09:34 17 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Late '99, late 1999. So
02:09:38 18 they've owned it for approximately ten years. I can
02:09:41 19 tell you haven't been a prosecutor, but that
02:09:44 20 information will be interesting to the State's
02:09:48 21 Attorney and to the sheriff who was prosecuting the
02:09:51 22 matter, and more than likely it's just they can't
02:09:54 23 discuss it, and that's --

02:09:56 24 MS. BARBARA JACKSON: I understand there's an

02:09:56 1 investigation going on.

02:09:56 2 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: -- that's something that
02:09:59 3 is difficult.

02:10:00 4 MS. BARBARA JACKSON: It will probably take years
02:10:01 5 for this to be unraveled anyway.

02:10:04 6 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Exactly. It's a
02:10:05 7 difficult line to walk when you need information for
02:10:07 8 civil purposes, but you can't discuss what you're
02:10:09 9 doing for criminal purposes, and that's a difficult
02:10:11 10 line.

02:10:12 11 MS. BARBARA JACKSON: Right. Thank you.

02:10:13 12 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you. We'll hear
02:10:16 13 now from Alice Henry, and following Alice Henry, is
02:10:34 14 Kublai Toure.

02:10:34 15 MS. ALICE HENRY: My name is Alice Henry. I have
02:10:36 16 a son that's buried at Burr Oak. I buried him there
02:10:40 17 in 1976. We visit the grave very often, my family
02:10:47 18 and I, and in 1982 we got a call from a lady, I have
02:10:55 19 her name here, telling me to come out to the
02:10:57 20 funeral home -- I mean come out to the Burr Oaks
02:11:01 21 because they had a headstone in the office, they
02:11:04 22 didn't know what to do with it.

02:11:05 23 They had removed his headstone, which had
02:11:07 24 been down for six years. They moved it from -- it's

02:11:13 1 still in the Everough (phonetic) section, but they
02:11:15 2 moved it from Lot 498 to Lot 325. As far as I know,
02:11:23 3 we were told when we was all out there his headstone
02:11:26 4 is still at 325, because we had just been there
02:11:32 5 Memorial Day, but over the years, I never believed
02:11:38 6 that his body was not still in Lot 498, Grave 4.

02:11:44 7 So what my family and I would do when we go
02:11:48 8 out, we would decorate both grave sites. I get
02:11:54 9 flowers, whatever, I put them on 325 lot, I put them
02:11:58 10 on 498, and we have never been satisfied what they
02:12:02 11 did because they moved the headstone without our
02:12:05 12 permission, and this was in 1982, six years after. I
02:12:10 13 have pictures here where we took care of that grave,
02:12:13 14 498, all those six years, and they moved it.

02:12:17 15 When the lady called my house, I was at
02:12:19 16 work, and she left word for me to come out, you know,
02:12:23 17 to Burr Oak because they had the headstone. When I
02:12:26 18 went out there, she told me, she said, well, we have
02:12:28 19 a headstone, we don't know what to do with it. I
02:12:30 20 said, well, who took it up? She said, well, we took
02:12:32 21 it up because someone else came into town and said
02:12:36 22 that is where their people was buried at. Up until
02:12:39 23 this day that I know of, no one else has ever took
02:12:42 24 care of that grave site or nothing. We have still

02:12:44 1 do. We do both of them just to be satisfied, because
02:12:48 2 I believe my son is buried.

02:12:50 3 I never felt that they had moved him, but
02:12:53 4 with all of this coming up, I don't know if he's
02:12:56 5 there or not. I wanted to think that he's still in
02:12:59 6 498, Grave 4, Everough (phonetic) Section.

02:13:02 7 But with all of this, I don't know where
02:13:04 8 he's at, but we put the headstone down, I have the
02:13:08 9 lady's name, and when I went out there that day she
02:13:09 10 was so rude to me, and I told her, I said, why did
02:13:12 11 you move the headstone? She said because someone
02:13:14 12 came to town and said they didn't want the headstone
02:13:18 13 because their family was there. I said, well, you
02:13:21 14 didn't contact me and tell me you moved it. So she
02:13:24 15 like huh. I said I still believe he's buried at 498.
02:13:28 16 She said, well, what you want me to do? You want us
02:13:30 17 to open the grave and you want to look inside? And
02:13:33 18 that just broke me up, it really did. You want to
02:13:35 19 look and see if he's in there? So up until 1982 we
02:13:42 20 have been visiting two grave sites, and we don't know
02:13:47 21 now where he's buried at.

02:13:49 22 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Ms. Jackson (sic), have
02:13:50 23 you reported that to anyone?

02:13:52 24 MS. ALICE HENRY: I had. Back at that time we

02:13:56 1 tried to obtain an attorney, but we found out that he
02:13:59 2 was working in with Burr Oak, the lawyer.

02:14:03 3 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Have you recently
02:14:04 4 reported it to Sheriff Dart?

02:14:07 5 MS. ALICE HENRY: Yes, I have. I wrote, you
02:14:08 6 know, the papers that we had to come out to the
02:14:10 7 school a few Sundays ago.

02:14:11 8 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Excellent, excellent.

02:14:12 9 MS. ALICE HENRY: I couldn't put all this
02:14:14 10 information in there, but I put a lot in there.

02:14:17 11 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you. That will be
02:14:19 12 extremely helpful. Thank you.

02:14:20 13 MS. ALICE HENRY: This is what I have been doing.
02:14:23 14 He passed in '76, and we be going through this ever
02:14:27 15 since then. When this came up, when this came up, I,
02:14:30 16 you know, I said I don't know where my son is at.

02:14:34 17 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: I'm sure that they will
02:14:36 18 take that information and investigate and make
02:14:39 19 certain that you look to see if his name shows up on
02:14:42 20 the website. Thank you so much.

02:14:49 21 MS. ALICE HENRY: All right.

02:14:52 22 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Mr. Toure? Following
02:14:56 23 Mr. Toure will be Danetta Anfield Newman.

02:15:01 24 MR. KUBLAI TOURE: Greetings to the distinguished

02:15:05 1 guests and to the community.

02:15:08 2 I am, too, a victim of this. My parents are
02:15:11 3 buried there, and I'm very displeased with what's
02:15:14 4 happened. I'm very pissed, and I'm also a community
02:15:18 5 activist, so I've got a lot going on inside of me,
02:15:22 6 because when I went out there, I couldn't find my
02:15:28 7 father. I don't know if he's still there. Only
02:15:40 8 thing I know is that when I went out there to look
02:15:42 9 for my father's grave, his headstone, I seen the
02:15:46 10 others where people had been dug up, other graves had
02:15:52 11 been dug up, all the stones had been turned.

02:15:56 12 I located my mother's burial spot, but I'm
02:15:59 13 not sure if she's in there, you know, but I'm just
02:16:01 14 concerned about the structure and the process. You
02:16:06 15 know, you all getting up there with a lot of
02:16:09 16 professional lip service. I mean, I want to know
02:16:11 17 where the black caucus is at on this? I want to know
02:16:15 18 what structure is going to be set so that we can
02:16:17 19 guarantee that, the community be guaranteed there
02:16:20 20 will be some action actually taken and some heads
02:16:22 21 rolling. That's what I'm interested in, you know.

02:16:25 22 And I just don't want this body of people be
02:16:35 23 up there giving us professional lip service. I want
02:16:37 24 to make sure that you all do what you say you going

02:16:38 1 to do, because if you not going to do what you going
02:16:41 2 to do, then get on out of the way. It's simple. So
02:16:44 3 I rest my case, and I only tell people two words:
02:16:47 4 Stay focused.

02:16:48 5 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Mr. Toure, just in case
02:16:50 6 you have any doubt, there are people on this
02:16:52 7 commission who have people buried in Burr Oak,
02:16:56 8 including, myself, my father and my brother. There
02:17:00 9 are people here who have -- one member has 13 people
02:17:02 10 here buried in Burr Oak. I assure you that this
02:17:05 11 commission will do what it's told and will do what
02:17:08 12 it's set out. Thank you for coming in. We truly
13 appreciate it.

14 MR. KUBLAI TOURE: And I'd be willing to work
15 with you, too.

16 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you. We
17 appreciate it, we definitely do.

18 THE COURT REPORTER: Mr. Kublai, I need you to
02:17:21 19 spell you name.

02:17:21 20 MR. KUBLAI TOURE: K-U-B-L-A-I T-O-U-R-E.

02:17:38 21 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you. Before we go
02:17:39 22 to Ms. Newman, we have someone who is unable to come
02:17:44 23 down the stairs, and so I would ask everyone's
02:17:47 24 indulgence.

02:17:49 1 I don't know your name, sir. I apologize.

02:17:51 2 They didn't give me your name, but if you would

02:17:53 3 please state your name and spell your first and last

02:17:56 4 name.

02:17:57 5 MR. ROBERT STANVEARY: First name is Robert, the

02:17:59 6 last name is Stanveary. I'm the descendant of

02:18:03 7 Stonewall Jackson. Now --

02:18:07 8 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Can you spell your last

02:18:08 9 name because we want to make sure we have it spelled

10 correctly?

02:18:10 11 MR. ROBERT STANVEARY: Stanveary,

12 S-T-A-N-V-E-A-R-Y.

02:18:14 13 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you.

02:18:15 14 MR. ROBERT STANVEARY: Now, my concern is this:

02:18:17 15 You all have given website numbers and telephone

02:18:21 16 numbers, and I've been calling for the last two and a

02:18:24 17 half weeks, and either I don't get nobody on the

02:18:26 18 phone or people said we can't help you, and both I'm

02:18:34 19 handicapped and my mother is handicapped, and

02:18:34 20 according to my mother, I have at least 40 people

02:18:37 21 buried out there in one grave site, and I saw my

02:18:40 22 father's tombstone among all the ones in the pile,

02:18:45 23 but nobody been able to help me, and I need something

02:18:53 24 done about that.

02:18:54 1 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Sir, if you leave your
02:18:56 2 name and information with me today, I'll make sure
02:18:58 3 that the appropriate individuals get your information
02:19:01 4 and give you a call.

02:19:02 5 MR. ROBERT STANVEARY: Okay. Thank you.

02:19:05 6 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: You're welcome.

02:19:05 7 Ms. Danetta Newman.

02:19:09 8 MS. DANETTA NEWMAN: I would like to say good
02:19:10 9 evening to everyone.

02:19:12 10 The reason I'm up here today is because I
02:19:15 11 have four family members that are buried at Burr Oak
02:19:18 12 Cemetery. Out of the four family members, one, my
02:19:22 13 father, John William Anfield, Jr., he was moved, and
02:19:29 14 I did make complaints to the actual office of Burr
02:19:33 15 Oak Cemetery, and for years I had kept telling --
02:19:37 16 making complaints. I know everyone that works at
02:19:41 17 Burr Oak Cemetery because I, too, live directly
02:19:44 18 across the street from the cemetery. I was seeing
02:19:47 19 all types of things going on.

02:19:50 20 I never knew that there were other avenues
02:19:53 21 for me to take my complaints to. I would like to
02:19:56 22 know now what can I do to assure -- I've been to Burr
02:20:00 23 Oak website. They have a picture of my father's
02:20:04 24 headstone, but that's not where my father was

02:20:06 1 originally at. What can I do to assure if he's at
02:20:11 2 his -- where he was originally buried at or if he's
02:20:14 3 currently in the new section for like the last three
02:20:17 4 or four years? And I have been making complaints to
02:20:20 5 the workers of the Burr Oak Cemetery.

02:20:23 6 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: So I would ask you to be
02:20:25 7 patient. I know that that's a difficult thing. The
02:20:27 8 sheriff has indicated that within the next two weeks
02:20:30 9 the -- that there will be sort of -- I can't think of
02:20:35 10 a better word than an inventory, and from there then
02:20:39 11 you can determine if he's in the wrong spot, if he's
02:20:43 12 in the right spot, or if he's even still there, and
02:20:45 13 then we can follow whatever protocol the receiver
02:20:49 14 will have set up, because the receiver has been
02:20:51 15 appointed to deal with all of the claims and to deal
02:20:55 16 with all of the issues that are being brought forth.
02:20:58 17 He will start to do that as soon as he gets the
02:21:01 18 information from the sheriff, and I believe the
02:21:03 19 sheriff indicated the next two weeks, roughly, for
02:21:07 20 him to get that information to the receiver. So if
02:21:11 21 you will just be patient --

02:21:13 22 MS. DANETTA NEWMAN: I have been patient.

02:21:15 23 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: -- and then the process
02:21:17 24 will start.

1 MS. DANETTA NEWMAN: Okay.

02:21:17 2 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: And I think that

02:21:19 3 hopefully we will get some serious results.

02:21:22 4 MS. DANETTA NEWMAN: Okay. And I would also like

02:21:23 5 to say that I can volunteer my services if anybody

02:21:26 6 needs any assistance. I'm here, I'm willing to help

02:21:30 7 any way possible.

02:21:31 8 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you so much. We

02:21:32 9 really truly appreciate it. Absolutely.

02:21:37 10 Next up is Ms. Rosie Kennedy.

02:21:45 11 MS. ROSIE KENNEDY: What I would like you to

02:21:51 12 answer for me is they had said that they had

02:21:54 13 determined that this had been happening, like, maybe

02:21:57 14 like four years back. So what I wanted to know is

02:22:01 15 how did they determine that?

02:22:05 16 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: That's a difficult

02:22:06 17 question for the task force to answer because the

02:22:08 18 sheriff was the one who made that comment, but I

02:22:11 19 would venture to guess that they have done some

02:22:14 20 examinations, and whatever examinations and

02:22:17 21 investigations they're doing, I would guarantee that

02:22:20 22 there is some evidence that they have that leads them

02:22:23 23 to believe that it is at least five years back.

02:22:27 24 What concrete evidence they have I'm not

02:22:29 1 sure, but I don't think he would make that statement
02:22:32 2 without there having been something that he's relying
02:22:34 3 on to make that statement, and I'm sure that as the
02:22:38 4 case goes forward, and as there's a trial and as
02:22:40 5 there's discovery, that the entire public will learn
02:22:44 6 a little bit more about the exact facts that are
02:22:48 7 being discussed with respect to the prosecutions in
02:22:52 8 this case.

02:22:52 9 MS. ROSIE KENNEDY: Okay. Now, are there any
02:22:55 10 regulations about how many people they are supposed
02:22:59 11 to bury? Like are they supposed to double bury? I
02:23:04 12 heard that they double bury, but when I went out
02:23:06 13 there, and I was -- and I had a plot for my brother,
02:23:10 14 they took me out to show me where he would be buried.
02:23:14 15 I wanted him to be buried by my mother and father,
02:23:17 16 but they took me out, and they showed me where he
02:23:19 17 would be buried, and they told me that he would be
02:23:22 18 buried triple. They told me triple, and so I'm
02:23:27 19 wondering, you know, had they just got that bold with
02:23:31 20 what they were doing, so they didn't even realize
02:23:33 21 what they were saying? I could have gone out and
02:23:36 22 mentioned that, but I thought it was something that
02:23:37 23 they do, because they took me out and told me that he
02:23:40 24 would be the third person in that grave.

02:23:45 1 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: The task force is
02:23:46 2 researching exactly what you're talking about,
02:23:49 3 whether there are short term burials, whether there
02:23:52 4 are double burials, whether there can be triple
02:23:55 5 burials.

6 MS. ROSIE KENNEDY: Right.

02:23:56 7 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: And we intend to address
02:23:58 8 those issues in our suggestions for the legislature.

02:24:04 9 MS. ROSIE KENNEDY: Right. Well, you know, I
02:24:05 10 thought that when my mother passed, my brother, and
02:24:10 11 my father, I thought they were all going to heaven,
02:24:14 12 you know. This is just what I felt because of the
02:24:18 13 type of people they were, but you know, I never had
02:24:22 14 any idea that they were going to have to go through
02:24:25 15 hell before they got to heaven.

02:24:31 16 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you for your
02:24:33 17 testifying. We really appreciate it.

02:24:34 18 Next we'll hear from Anna Calvin.

02:24:51 19 MS. ANNA CALVIN: Good afternoon. My name is
02:24:53 20 Anna Calvin.

02:24:55 21 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Can you speak a little
02:24:57 22 closer to the microphone?

02:24:59 23 MS. ANNA CALVIN: My name is Anna Calvin,
02:24:59 24 A-N-N-A, last name C-A-L-V-I-N.

02:25:04 1 My father, my mother, my brother, and other
02:25:07 2 family members are buried at Burr Oak. My brother
02:25:11 3 and myself, we go out there. He lives in Michigan,
02:25:15 4 but his first stop when he comes to Chicago is to go
02:25:18 5 to the cemetery.

02:25:21 6 As you all know, they don't keep the grounds
02:25:23 7 very well, so what we do is we clean the grass off
02:25:26 8 the headstones, and we stand there and we pray.

02:25:29 9 For the last four years, my father's
02:25:32 10 headstone has been taken up, and when we asked them
02:25:34 11 why was it taken up, they said a family member
02:25:38 12 requested it. No one in our family would ever
02:25:42 13 request for our father's headstone be taken up. They
02:25:44 14 put it down, we'd go back, and it's gone again.

02:25:48 15 The very last time my brother was very
02:25:50 16 angry. He said, I know where they're keeping it, I'm
02:25:53 17 going to get it. It was behind big gates. They told
02:25:59 18 my brother it's an unauthorized area, he can't go
02:26:02 19 back there. My brother told them that he wanted my
02:26:05 20 father's headstone down, and he wants it down now.

02:26:08 21 The lady that they show on TV told us that
02:26:12 22 it was almost 4:00 o'clock, we have to go. We said
02:26:15 23 not until you put his headstone down. So they put it
02:26:19 24 down, and when I looked at it, I told my brother, I

02:26:22 1 said they misspelled his name. They've taken his
02:26:26 2 headstone up so many times so now his name is
02:26:30 3 misspelled.

02:26:31 4 I have been checking the website, and I did
02:26:34 5 see my mother's headstone, and I'm very happy to see
02:26:37 6 that, but I have not seen my youngest brother who
02:26:40 7 died at 24, and I have not seen my father's, and I
02:26:44 8 don't think that I am going to see my father's,
02:26:47 9 because if we had to go out there for four years and
02:26:50 10 ask for them to keep putting it down, then that tells
02:26:55 11 us then that he was not there, and I do appreciate
02:26:59 12 the grievance counselors that you had at Eisenhower
02:27:03 13 High School, because I told her that maybe we should
02:27:07 14 have put 2 and 2 together and figured out that there
02:27:10 15 was something wrong, but she told me don't do that to
02:27:15 16 myself, that no one would think that anyone would do
02:27:19 17 anything like that.

02:27:20 18 So, you know, my heart goes out to all the
02:27:24 19 grieving families, because this is hard, but also I
02:27:27 20 think that because the plots were paid for, I think
02:27:32 21 they need to build a monument and have each
02:27:35 22 individual's name on there, because that spot was
02:27:39 23 paid for them to be out there and someplace where we
02:27:43 24 can go to think about our loved ones even though we

02:27:47 1 know that they're not whole. Thank you.

02:27:50 2 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you so much. We

02:27:52 3 really appreciate it. Ms. Deloris Burnam.

02:28:02 4 MS. DELORIS BURNAM: Good evening.

02:28:05 5 D-E-L-O-R-I-S, B-U-R-N-A-M.

02:28:11 6 Many people asked when did all this begin,

02:28:16 7 three, four, five, years ago? My brother and I went

02:28:22 8 out to Burr Oak to see if they put my sister's

02:28:27 9 headstone on, she died in 1938, and I know it was a

02:28:31 10 little late getting the headstone, but this was in

02:28:34 11 1997. My brother discovered a skull with a gold --

02:28:40 12 with teeth, and one was gold, and he reported it to

02:28:45 13 the people up front, and they said, oh, we'll take

02:28:49 14 care of it. Well, he also called the sheriff's

02:28:55 15 office, he called Alsip Police Department. The

02:29:02 16 sheriff's office laughed at him and said, oh, there's

02:29:06 17 plenty of skulls out there. Now, it seems to me --

02:29:10 18 well, my brother went back out there about a month

02:29:13 19 later, and the skull was still there.

02:29:16 20 I mean, this thing has been going on much

02:29:21 21 longer than you think it has, and I think somebody

02:29:25 22 really need to look into that. My sister's name is

02:29:29 23 Hazel Louise Ford, and where they have the headstone

02:29:35 24 that we had gotten in '97 is not where she was

02:29:38 1 buried. I thank you.

02:29:43 2 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you very much. We
02:29:46 3 appreciate everyone's patience. We realize that
02:29:48 4 it's -- that it's extremely late. We were supposed
02:29:52 5 to end at 7:30. We started a little late. We've
02:29:55 6 gone past 8:00 p.m., and so we will end this task
02:29:59 7 force, but we will -- meeting today, but we will
02:30:03 8 invite you to attend other meetings that we will
02:30:06 9 have, and I'll read the dates to you now.

02:30:11 10 The very next meeting is August 13th from
02:30:15 11 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. at the Michael Bilandic
02:30:21 12 Building, which is 160 North LaSalle Street, in Room
02:30:25 13 C500; following we will be in Springfield,
02:30:28 14 August 18th from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the DCO
02:30:34 15 Auditorium -- I'm sorry, DCEO Auditorium on the 1st
02:30:38 16 Floor, which is 620 East Adams Street in Springfield,
02:30:42 17 Illinois. August 27th, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
02:30:46 18 we will be downtown at the Thompson Center, the
02:30:50 19 Thompson Center is known also as the State of
02:30:54 20 Illinois Building, in Room 16503, and our final
02:31:02 21 meeting will be September 10, also at the Thompson
02:31:05 22 Center in Room 16503.

02:31:08 23 In between that time if you have comments
02:31:11 24 that you would like to make to the task force, please

02:31:13 1 feel free to visit the website. Again, it's
02:31:16 2 WWW.CEMETERYTASKFORCE.ILLINOIS.GOV. There is a space
02:31:22 3 there for comments.

02:31:24 4 We will also upload everything that the task
02:31:29 5 force is reviewing, as well as notices of meetings
02:31:34 6 and any other information that we receive so that the
02:31:37 7 entire public can have an opportunity to review what
02:31:41 8 we're reviewing as a committee. So if you have any
02:31:46 9 information for us, please feel free to give that
02:31:48 10 information to us via the website.

02:31:51 11 Thank you very, very much today for your
02:31:53 12 patience. We really truly appreciate the information
02:31:56 13 that we've obtained here. It will be extremely
02:31:59 14 helpful, and our meeting today is adjourned.

02:32:03 15 REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS: Madam Chairman, may I make
02:32:04 16 a closing comment? First I want to say to those who
02:32:07 17 live in the 27th District and to those who just came
02:32:10 18 to listen and to participate, we're very grateful to
02:32:13 19 you, and I want you to know as a member of the task
02:32:16 20 force, our whole objective is to make every effort to
02:32:20 21 make you whole. We want to talk about victims
02:32:24 22 compensation, we want to talk about greater oversight
02:32:27 23 and visitation by those in authority, and I want you
02:32:31 24 to know that we're not just doing this for any kind

02:32:34 1 of show, but I think we're all genuinely committed to
02:32:39 2 make sure this never happens again and to make you
02:32:42 3 whole. Thank you for coming.

02:32:43 4 HONORABLE BROWN HOLMES: Thank you. Our meeting
02:32:45 5 is adjourned. We appreciate it.

6 (End of proceedings, 8:10 p.m.)

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1 STATE OF ILLINOIS)
) ss:
 2 COUNTY OF COOK)

3 NICOLE MARIE DEBARTOLO, being first duly
 4 sworn, deposes and says that she is a Certified
 5 Shorthand Reporter in Cook County, Illinois, and
 6 reporting proceedings in the Courts in said County;

7 That she reported in shorthand and
 8 thereafter transcribed the foregoing proceedings;

9 That the within and foregoing transcript
 10 is true, accurate and complete and contains all the
 11 evidence which was received in the proceedings had
 12 upon the above entitled cause.

13

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15

 16 NICOLE MARIE DeBARTOLO, C.S.R., R.P.R.
 Illinois License No. 084-004127
 Notary Public
 17 311 West Wacker Drive
 Suite 300
 18 Chicago, Illinois 60606
 Phone: (312) 386-2000

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21 SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to
 before me this _____ day of
 _____, A.D. 2009.

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