

New board for formerly abandoned cemetery

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It's the start of a new era at the Jersey City-Harsimus Cemetery.

The Newark Avenue graveyard, which had fallen into disrepair in recent months after its caretakers moved away, has a new board of trustees, a group of seven elected at a meeting Thursday.

About 35 plot owners met at the Hudson County Improvement Authority in Jersey City and picked Eileen Markenstein, of Union City, as president and treasurer, although she could not be at the meeting and was represented by her sister.

Several people at the meeting said Markenstein's financial experience working for Morgan Stanley Dean Witter would be an asset to the cemetery, which has more than \$17,000 in trust and an undetermined amount in other accounts.

Two members of the state

New Jersey Cemetery Board, which regulates non-religious cemeteries, presided over the meeting, along with Executive Director Dianne Tamaroglio and the state board's attorney, Ginger Provost.

Attorney Jorge Aviles, a former Journal Square councilman with an office at Five Corners, was elected vice president. He said he was eager to help because his son was buried in the cemetery in 1996, and he has lived nearby on Magnolia Avenue for 43 years.

"If somebody's going to sincerely take care of that place, nobody's in a better position to do that than me," Aviles said.

Also elected were secretary Jasmine Pinet, of Jersey City; Darlene Cimino, of Bayville; Michelle Egar, a member of the Jersey City Parks Coalition; Brian Lamb, of Jersey City; and Hector Sullivan, who has worked as a groundskeeper at the cemetery for the last four years.

The former board's last



REENA ROSE SIBAYAN JOURNAL FILE PHOTO

GRAVE CONCERN: Angel Ortega at Jersey City-Harsimus Cemetery last month placing a wooden board over loosened and neglected grave slabs.

active member died in December. The cemetery's caretakers, Jorge and Flor Peralta, who lived in the house by its entrance, moved away this spring because there was no one left to pay them.

The NJCB and state Attorney General's office will help the new board determine the state of the cemetery's finances and find records that are believed to be locked in a safe in the house.