

Freetown Cemetery Commission
Minutes of the Tuesday, September 25, 2012 Meeting
Town Hall, 3 North Main Street, Assonet, Mass.

Present: Adrienne Levesque and Mike McCue.

Absent: Keven Desmarais.

Call to order: Chairman Mike McCue called the meeting to order at 7:10p.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of August 1st were received and approved by consensus.

Special Town Meeting

Mr. McCue proposed two articles for the upcoming Special Town Meeting:

- The first to be discussed was an update to the cemetery rules and regulations to establish special regulations particular to the veterans section at Assonet Burying Ground. These codified previous discussions on headstone type, disallowing decorations, and other such items.
- The second article to be discussed was to fund the removal of the large dead pine tree at Plummer Burial Ground. N-Star had been contacted several times regarding this tree, and after providing differing answers each time had settled on not removing the tree. Mr. McCue reported meeting with Bruce Durfee earlier in the day to view the tree. Mr. Durfee would provide an estimate before Friday's deadline for submission. Due to the location of the tree, the situation and voltage of the power lines, the elevation of the cemetery above South Main Street, the preponderance of old headstones in the vicinity of the tree, and other mitigating factors, Mr. Durfee had estimated a difficult process that could be costly, without including the cost of police details. Mr. McCue also reported discussing the matter with Selectman Jean Fox earlier in the evening, and that Mrs. Fox suggested having the town administrator contact N-Star to apply stronger pressure. Consensus was that the article be submitted with a stipulation that it will be withdrawn if N-Star assumes responsibility for the tree. Commissioners and Mrs. Fox all agreed the tree poses a definite safety concern with the approaching winter.

A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque, duly seconded by Mr. McCue, to submit these two articles, including the stipulation for withdrawing the Plummer article if N-Star assumes responsibility for removing the tree. The motion carried unanimously.

Signs

It was acknowledged that the signs ordered for the Friends, Richmond, Plummer, and Winslow properties had been received. John and Jeremy Bernardo of the Highway Department installed the signs the previous week.

Assonet Burying Ground

It was acknowledged that Mark Audette of the Building Department had completed painting the shed. Its appearance is markedly improved. No discussion was held on section signs as Mr. Desmarais was not present.

Discussion was held on purchasing a sign to inform families that decorations and artificial flowers should be removed from graves during the mowing season. Signs at Taunton Catholic Cemeteries and Colt State Park in Rhode Island will be used as guides in determining how the sign in Assonet should be worded. Consensus was to mount the sign to the shed now that the shed has been painted.

A brief discussion was held on the area to be reserved for the flag pole and veterans garden. Mr. McCue felt that consideration should be given to what the dimensions of the area would be before opening it up for the local high schools to provide designs. Also to be considered was a stone sign for the veterans area, designating the area as such and showing the symbols of the military branches.

Braley's Cemetery (East) & (West)

Mr. McCue reported that Heath Chace had estimated a cost of \$150.00 to do a year-end cleanup of these cemeteries. Consensus was to accept this figure, but also be understanding if an upward adjustment was requested as the price seemed to be a bit low for the total size of the two cemeteries.

Chace Cemetery

This matter having been referred to the Board of Selectmen, it was determined that the cost to employ legal counsel to recover the funds would likely exceed the amount of the deficit. The Selectmen opted to request payment of the deficit by Town Meeting to eliminate the deficit from the books. Although the Cemetery Commission still feels that the Chace Cemetery Association owes this money to the Town of Freetown, the matter was considered closed at this point.

Guilford Evans Burial Ground

Mr. McCue reported that Mr. Desmarais had been successful in contacting Crystal Springs School regarding this cemetery, and the school agreed to resume maintaining it.

Nichols Cemetery

Mr. McCue reported that Roger Guimond was still interested in felling trees in this cemetery. He will be arranging for Mr. Guimond to meet with Jack Conway, property owner for most of the right-of-way, to introduce them and settled any remaining matters.

Plummer Burial Ground

The Assonet Boy Scouts have shown an interest in burning some of the brush at this cemetery, which would cut down on the amount needing to be chipped. Per the Fire Chief, this would need to wait until after burning season begins (January 15th).

Tom Copeland was asked to provide a price to treat the next fifteen to twenty feet of the cemetery the same way he did the front portion prior to Independence Day. This was requested after the material did not start to grow back until well into September. Mr. Copeland's price of \$250.00 was accepted, noting that some could be paid for with veterans' graves funds.

Robinson Cemetery

Mr. McCue reported viewing the Robinson Cemetery, and that the land-clearing work in its vicinity did not encroach on the cemetery itself.

Terry/Davenport Cemetery (a/k/a Capt. Job Terry Burial Ground)

Mr. McCue reported that some trees would need to be cleared before previous vandalism could be repaired.

Tisdale Burying Ground

It was acknowledged that Heath Chace had completed the majority of the restoration of this cemetery. Remaining work was on hold until Mr. Chace could meet with Mr. Desmarais to discuss several trees on the conservation property outside the limits of the cemetery.

Fundraiser

Arrangements were being made with Grandpa's Place on South Main Street to have a fundraiser for the cemeteries throughout the month of October. Patrons could purchase a small paper ticket to write their name on to show they support the efforts to restore abandoned and neglected cemeteries. The tickets would cost \$1.00 and be posted in the store during the month. This would be the same as other such fundraisers often held in convenience stores. Mrs. Levesque suggested approaching other stores in town to see if they would participate. Mr. McCue suggested tasking Mr. Desmarais to do this as he knows many of the store owners.

Next Meeting

No further meetings were scheduled.

Meeting Adjourned

A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque, seconded by Mr. McCue, to adjourn at 7:42p. The motion was carried unanimously.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: _____
Michael T. McCue, Chairman