

Freetown Cemetery Commission
Minutes of the Tuesday, September 8, 2015 Meeting
Town Hall, Taunton Hill, Assonet, Mass.

Present: Keven Desmarais and Mike McCue.

Absent: Adrienne Levesque.

Call to order: Mike McCue called the meeting to order at 4:12 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of August 3rd were received and accepted without any amendments.

Assonet Burying Ground

Mr. McCue reported that he had not yet been in touch with Jeff King, but is still working on this option for attempting to repair some of the damaged headstones.

Mr. Desmarais reported that we were given permission to take the stone wall from the entrance to the old Algonquin plant (it being a relatively small wall), but it was then discovered that the project plans called for the wall to be moved back and rebuilt outside the new road layout. All agreed that if the wall were being used in its original location, it should be left there. If there are any changes to the plans, we will have the option to take the wall at that time. These stones were to be used for the flag pole area in the Veterans Section.

Discussion was held on the shed. This building continues to be in very poor condition and the prospects for rehabilitating it seem expensive. Mr. Desmarais will investigate the practicality of getting a smaller structure to sit near the shed until such time as the existing building can be repaired or removed. Another option considered was erecting a cinderblock building covered with a clapboard façade.

Discussion was held on the style of headstone permitted on cremation lots. Currently those buying the "front" halves of lots are advised to buy smaller stones so as not to upset those buying the "rear" halves by obstructing their view. This has had mixed success. Mr. Desmarais asked if "front" lots could be restricted to flat stones. Mr. McCue said front or slant stones, just not larger stones. "Rear" lots could be left as-is. This item will be revisited when Mrs. Levesque is present.

Mr. McCue reported that as part of the ongoing survey projects, the south property line from South Main Street west to the odd fifteen-foot jog in the line was to be marked out as the neighbors appear to be encroaching on the cemetery property.

Dean Family Cemetery

Mr. McCue reported hearing from the Boys' Club regarding the cemetery, and they are very amenable to having it cleaned up. Mr. Desmarais also heard from the Boys' Club, and was also told they were happy to see the cemetery cleaned up. We will consider whether to do this project on a fall weekend after the leaves have fallen. It being so small, it was thought it might be able to be done in one afternoon's time.

Guilford Evans Burial Ground

Mr. Desmarais stated he did not believe the folks at Crystal Springs realize the hilltop lot is there. This will be brought up again going forward.

Mother's Brook Cemetery

Mr. McCue reported that Tom Copeland would clean up some of the outskirts of this cemetery, primarily around the sign and around the Barnaby (fenced) lot.

Updates on Trees

Mr. McCue noted several areas where trees are a concern:

- ♦ **Assonet Burying Ground** – It was noted there are several trees just outside the cemetery that are dead and could fall into the cemetery. Also, trees to the south of the entrance should be cut back to improve visibility.
- ♦ **Braley's Cemetery (West)** – It was noted there are several trees inside the cemetery that are dead, cracked, and/or broken that should be removed. This cemetery is mostly inaccessible to bucket trucks.
- ♦ **Winslow Cemetery** – It was noted there are two or three trees (not cedars) that are in tough shape and should be watched, possibly removed in 2016.
- ♦ **Plummer Burial Ground** – By far the worst, extensive discussion was held on the trees in the Plummer Burial Ground. It was reviewed that one tree was removed in the past fiscal year due to lightning damage. Another tree was taken down at that time because it was dead and tilted. Since then, another tree appears to have died completely and a tree near the front corner with High Street is half dead. A spruce was noted as having snapped off with the bottom half still erect and living. Most notably, another of the tall (sixty-foot-plus) pines is showing signs of infestation, with a sawdust appearance around the base and signs of carpenter ants in and out of the tree. Mr. Desmarais expressed concern with the carpenter ants and dust, fearing the tree could come down in a storm. Mr. McCue expressed concern with the number of trees that are dead, dying, or damaged. He noted that in the past all had agreed to leave some trees in the cemetery, but it seemed to be an exercise in tilting at windmills; for every one damaged tree that was removed, two more trees seemed to become perilous. Consensus was to have the trees looked at and get an estimate on the cost to take down as many as needed to come down. Mr. McCue will contact Marc St. Laurent as he specializes in trees that have to be climbed. Following that, a course of action will be plotted. Consensus was also to put this on the next available town meeting, fall or spring.

Other Business Properly Before the Commission

No other business was discussed.

Meeting Adjourned

A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, seconded by Mr. McCue, to adjourn at 5:15 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: _____
Michael T. McCue, Chairman

