

Freetown Cemetery Commission
Minutes of the Monday, March 6, 2017 Meeting
Town Hall — Assonet, Mass.

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Present: Keven Desmarais, Adrienne Levesque, and Mike McCue.

Call to order: Mike McCue called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

Receipt of Minutes / Superintendent's Report

Minutes of December 5, 2016 were received. A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, seconded by Mrs. Levesque, to accept the minutes as received. The motion carried unanimously. The Superintendent's Reports for December, January, and February, including bills paid since the previous meeting, were also received.

Discussion on Tree Work

Mr. McCue provided updates on pending and ongoing tree work. Bruce Durfee has still to remove the tree from Mother's Brook that is near to the condos on the south side of the property. Carl Brodeur's outfit will take down remaining trees at Mother's Brook and also at Braley's Station if funds permit. Mr. Brodeur looked over the tree at Michael Hathaway Burial Ground and felt that it was fine to be left as-is. It was noted that many of these trees are not accessible by truck, and that Mr. Brodeur and his crew are climbers.

Assonet Burying Ground

Mr. Desmarais provided an update on our prior inquiry into having the sheriff's inmate work crews clean the veterans' stones at the Assonet Burying Ground. Mr. Desmarais met during the winter with one of the coordinators of that service, who said that they have experience cleaning stones and would in fact clean all of the stones in the cemetery that they feel comfortable cleaning with the equipment and materials they have, and not just the veterans' stones. All felt this was a great service. Mr. Desmarais expected to hear from them again in the coming months.

Mr. McCue reported that the Boy Scouts should be working on the firebreak on Sunday, March 12th. The only concern is what to do with the brush; although the fire chief was amenable to burning it behind the shed, there is no water source. Mr. Desmarais suggested bringing the brush out to a paved road and asking the Highway Department to chip it.

Discussion was held on whether or not it was feasible to sell some of the pines in the woods as saleable timber. John Ashley had suggested there could be some money made. Mr. Desmarais was concerned that newer bidding laws, etc., might make it not worth trying to sell the timber. Instead, he wondered if there could be a break-even arrangement where a local mill takes the timber in exchange for the labor of felling the trees. He asked if Mr. Ashley had suggested any particular outfit, and Mr. McCue replied Gurney's Sawmill or Brightman Lumber. This will be looked into.

Discussion was also held on the fence along the south property line. Mr. McCue suggested removing the part of the fence nearest to South Main Street as the trees and brush in that area make it unnecessary to have the land fenced, and because repeated tree and car/plow damage had made the fence unsightly. All were agreeable to this. Discussion continued on the rest of the fence, including areas where the fence is significantly off the property line and a neighboring shed has encroached. It was decided not to move the fence for now but to discuss at a future date informing the homeowner that the shed should be moved. As far as the fence wending in and out of the granite posts, it was agreed there was not enough money to move the entire fence at this time, but that the Historical Commission's prior concerns are still relevant.

Brief discussion was also had on where the entrance meets the roadway at South Main Street, particularly the lines of sight for vehicles trying to exit the cemetery. As to the north side of the driveway, it was agreed to request St. Bernard's Church to post the area between our driveway and the southerly end of the U-shaped driveway of 38 South Main Street as a "No Parking" area during their Harvest Festival as that is the only real

time there is an issue. As to the south side of the driveway, Mr. Desmarais offered to speak to the homeowners at 2 Freeman's Circle and request permission to cut back the tree line.

Cemeteries at Algonquin and Stop & Shop

Brief discussions were held on these four cemeteries as follows:

- Robinson Cemetery – Mr. McCue recounted that Abner Winslow, buried here, is a Revolutionary War veteran, and that several parties including the Historical Society have inquired about having the cemetery cleaned up. This would be cost-prohibitive since, based on similar properties, it could be assumed to cost upwards of \$7500 depending on associated tree work. Mr. Desmarais suggested having someone go with a brush hog and at least make a clear path from the pavement to the Abner Winslow grave and around the gravesite. This would cover the town's obligation to maintain the actual veteran's grave, and we could eventually work out from there. All were agreeable and Tom Copeland will be asked to price it out.
- Capt. Job Terry Burial Ground – Discussion was held on the location of the cemetery and the history of its having been at least partially cleaned up in 2007 and then let to go again. Mr. Desmarais suggested he might be willing to volunteer here if he had help. No further action for now.
- Merrick & Terry cemeteries at Stop & Shop – Discussion was held on these cemeteries, noting that they had been cleaned up in 2004 by the Boy Scouts; the Merrick had been cleaned thoroughly, and the Terry to a lesser degree. The understanding was that afterward, Stop & Shop would maintain the cemeteries, but other than fencing them off no work has been done. Mr. Desmarais will speak to their head of groundskeeping as soon as he is able. Mr. McCue suggested give-and-take, that if Stop & Shop would clean them out or pay to clean them out, we could maintain them afterward if it was somehow not possible for them to do so.

Updates on Old Business

- a. Mr. McCue reported that the FY18 budget submitted was level with the FY17 budget. The FY19 budget will have to increase because bids for that year (third year of a three-year bid) were higher.
- b. Tom Copeland has inquired about doing some work in the Nichols Cemetery since Heath Chace has not yet. The Nichols' heirs were contacted to see if this was agreeable to them, but they have not yet responded. Mr. Desmarais asked that we also contact Mr. Chace one more time.
- c. Mr. Desmarais suggested that the Clark Graves, since there are only two, should not be difficult to deal with. It was suggested also that Carol Bailey might be interested in tending to these as she has with the Crapo Cemetery.
- d. Mr. McCue reported that the Boy Scouts have not yet given up on the Durfee/Hatheway Cemetery, they just haven't been out there yet. It is currently on their radar for March.
- e. This item (cemeteries at Stop & Shop) was addressed earlier.
- f. The State Forest Cemetery was discussed briefly, including prior issues there. Nothing has been done because there is uncertainty on where the permanent access should come from. Mr. Desmarais suggested contacting the State Forest headquarters to see if they had any ability to tend to this plot with state workers since it's on their property.
- g. Mr. McCue reported some interest in the Payne Cove Cemetery from Brian Dunning, as he's recently learned he is a descendent of the Payne family.

Any Other Business Properly Before the Commission

Mr. Desmarais reported that the Crystal Springs School had tended to the Guilford Evans Burial Ground and believed they had discovered some additional graves in the brush. They would like one or more of us to go out there in the warmer weather and check it out.

Mr. McCue reported pricing out geraniums to re-start the tradition of placing geraniums on the graves of veterans for Memorial Day in addition to flags. The price for just the Assonet Burying Ground would run in the neighborhood of \$1,000. All were asked to think of any business in town that might donate, but it was agreed that many business already make substantial donations to the fireworks and Christmas Tree Lighting and that since taxes had risen this year, belts were likely tightening.

It was noted that the next meeting would normally fall on Town Election Day, so if possible no meeting will be held in April. May meeting to be held as normal.

Meeting Adjourned

A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, seconded by Mrs. Levesque, to adjourn at 4:45 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: _____
Michael T. McCue, Chairman

