


Freetown Cemetery Commission
Minutes of the Monday, April 10, 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.

Reorganization

This being the first meeting after the Annual Town Election, reorganization of the board was the first item. A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, seconded by Mrs. Levesque, that Mr. McCue continue as chairman for another year. The motion carried unanimously.

Receipt of Minutes / Superintendent's Report

Minutes of March 6th were received. A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque, seconded by Mr. Desmarais, to accept the minutes as received. The motion carried unanimously. The Superintendent's Report for March, including bills paid since the previous meeting, was also received.

Discussion on Town Meeting Articles

Four articles were being proposed for this year's Annual Town Meeting. Two of those articles were ones routinely submitted, the transfer from the Sale of Lots Account and the Veterans Graves article. The Veterans Graves article was noted to be much higher than usual because the expenses related to maintaining the Abner Winslow gravesite in the Robinson Burying Ground couldn't be calculated until long after the budget was due in January. All agreed on consensus that these articles be submitted.

The third article was in regards to the shed at the Assonet Burying Ground. Mr. McCue recounted the various inspections that have been made of the shed over the years, including by Paul Bourgeois, Scott Barbato, Mr. Desmarais, and others. Also discussed was that a previous vote to purchase a shed was not followed through on because the delivery and installation charges exceeded what was available. Prices were obtained in March, proving out that repairs to the existing shed would far exceed the cost of a new shed. Mr. McCue also stated that the existing shed was much larger than what is actually needed. Mrs. Levesque likened repairing the existing shed to throwing good money after bad. Mr. Desmarais suggested purchasing a new, smaller shed to be put near Section 36 and that the existing shed be left as-is, where-is. All agreed on consensus to submit an article for a new shed. If the selectmen should balk at the article, the town budget will pay for landscapers to take over the smaller and more routine groundskeeping duties now performed by the volunteer commissioners.

The fourth article revisited the issue of how to recognize Richard Brown's volunteering work in the Assonet Burying Ground. Previous attempts to have him designated an official, volunteer caretaker were not followed through on by the Board of Selectmen after a confusing response from the town's insurance agent that was never fully explained and seemed not to make sense. Recalling that the Cemetery Commission is empowered to appoint a superintendent for the cemeteries, it was agreed on consensus to submit an article empowering the Cemetery Commission to appoint an assistant superintendent.

Updates on Tree Work

No updates were available, as no work has been performed.

Assonet Burying Ground

Mr. Desmarais volunteered to take on the task of finally erecting the flag pole in the Veterans Section. He also reported no new information from the sheriff's office regarding the headstone cleaning, but hoped to hear from them soon.

Mr. McCue reported that the firebreak project had again been obstructed by snow on the planned weekend. He also reported no progress on the fence work – an attempt had been made to get two prices, but has not been able to reach the second company after two dozen attempts.

Cemeteries at Algonquin and Stop & Shop

Brief discussions were held on these four cemeteries as follows:

- Robinson Cemetery – Mr. McCue reported that Tom Copeland's crew cleared Robinson's Lane and an area around the Abner Winslow gravesite. The cost to maintain this work in the future will be \$120.00 per visit, and the aim will be to hit it four to five times a year for now. As funds allow, more work will be done here.
- Capt. Job Terry Burial Ground – No further action for now.
- Merrick & Terry cemeteries at Stop & Shop – Mr. Desmarais reported his meeting with Lorenzo from Stop & Shop for this and other purposes had been cancelled, but he will make an effort to reach out soon.

Updates on Old Business

Nichols Cemetery – Tom Copeland's crew did some clearing work at the Nichols Cemetery under the permission and direction of the Nichols family using their donated funds. Allowance has been made that if Heath Chace is still interested, we will make sure he is able to work there as previously agreed. The goats are still scheduled for May as far as is known.

Clark Graves, Durfee-Hathaway Cemetery, State Forest Cemetery, and Payne Cove Cemetery – No new information to report.

Any Other Business Properly Before the Commission

There are serious financial concerns for the future of the Evans Cemetery. Mr. McCue is attempting to contact one of the trustees to discuss their finances and find out what they would like to do.

Also discussed were the flags for Memorial Day. It was agreed to aim for Sunday, May 21st at 11:00 to take care of the Assonet Burying Ground and several other cemeteries.

Meeting Adjourned

A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, seconded by Mrs. Levesque, to adjourn at 4:55 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: Michael T. McCue
Michael T. McCue, Chairman