

Freetown Cemetery Commission
Minutes of the Monday, October 2, 2017 Meeting
Town Hall — Assonet, Mass.

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Ja Brown

Present: Keven Desmarais, Adrienne Levesque and Mike McCue.

Call to order: Mike McCue called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Receipt of Minutes / Superintendent's Report

Minutes of September 11th 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 September, including bills paid since the previous meeting, was also received.

Discussion on Land

This subject was held over until the next meeting.

Discussion on Perpetual Care Investments

Brief discussion was held on this subject, the basic point being that the perpetual care accounts do not seem to be accumulating as much interest as they should be compared to other known bank accounts. Mr. Desmarais asked how the perpetual care accounts are deposited, and Mr. McCue did not know. Mr. Desmarais asked if there are limitations on how the accounts are deposited, and Mr. McCue replied that Anita Howland had always said they had to be in a savings bank (more specifically, not a credit union), but that other than that the law directs the Treasurer to deposit as directed by the Cemetery Commission. It was recalled that this subject was discussed before with little or no results. Mr. Desmarais volunteered to speak to the Treasurer about how the funds are currently held.

Updates on Tree Work

Mr. McCue reported hearing from Carl Brodeur that the tree work was expected to be completed in October.

Assonet Burying Ground

The following items were discussed under this topic:

- Discussion on mowing concerns: Mr. Desmarais recapped a conversation he had had with Richard Brown regarding headstones being bumped or jarred when the grass is mowed. This has happened now and again in the past, but is happening far more often now. In some cases, it seems evident that the person operating the mower must know that he has hit the stone, but isn't reporting it. All agreed that accidents happen, but felt that this was happening too often recently.



Mrs. Levesque asked how often this type of damage happened when the cemetery was taken care of by outside contractors. Mr. McCue stated that Tom Copeland's outfit had never hit a stone that he could remember; Greg Myers' crew was thought to have knocked one over, but it was never confirmed and was repaired inexpensively; and that Marc St. Laurent's crew was not known to have hit any in 2005 or later, but he could not say for the 20+ years before that. These recollections were noted to not include loose stones or stones sitting right on the ground that were nudged and then nudged back, which is common and understandable.

Mr. McCue stated that he has always advised the caretakers, be they outside groups or town employees, that if they hit a stone accidentally, just report it and it will be evaluated and set right.

Mr. Desmarais stated that Mr. Brown's observation was that the Highway Department crew is mowing the cemetery too fast, not taking the time to watch out for stones or stop when they hit one. Mr. Desmarais further stated that he had spoken previously with Chuck Macomber about this, and would do so again.

- Discussion on rearranging certain half-lots: Mr. McCue stated that on further review in the field, this right now appears to be an issue with only one lot in particular. It was agreed to address this in the spring by approaching the lot owner and asking if they would accept the second half of the lot in exchange for allowing the stone to be moved.
- Update on cleaning gravestones: Mr. McCue reported sending a letter the previous week inquiring whether the inmate crew would still be coming to the cemetery in 2017. Mr. Desmarais stated he had received a call from the Sheriff's Department earlier in the day confirming their intent to come the week of Columbus Day. This will be worked out over the next few days as far as scheduling, etc.
- Update on firebreak on the east property line and work north of Section 8: Mr. McCue reported that the firebreak work was on hold until November or December. The work north of Section 8 progressed well through September and right now the area mostly needs stumping. He will work with John Ashley at future times when Mr. Ashley will be in Assonet.
- Discussion on fencing along south property line: Mr. McCue will be meeting with the surveyors on Friday at 12:30, beginning at the East Freetown Cemetery and eventually making their way to Assonet, at which time this matter will be discussed further in the field.

Updates on Old Business or New Business

Mr. McCue reported that Bruce Fensley sent a thank-you note after his visit to the Robinson Burying Ground, and was pleased with the work done there at the Abner Winslow gravesite. Mr. Desmarais was acknowledged for providing access to the site.

Mr. McCue also reported sending a letter in response to the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Riverfront Business Park, requesting that the developers meet with the Cemetery Commission in the future when seeking town permits. This concerns the Robinson Burying Ground and Capt. Job Terry Burial Ground.

It was acknowledged that work will resume in the Nichols Cemetery when burning season reopens.

Discussion was held on the Payne Cove Cemetery. Previous activities at this site were recounted, and Mr. McCue stated that Brian Dunning is interested in cleaning up the cemetery as ancestors of his are buried there. At last contact, Mr. Dunning was trying to arrange access through Craig Cabral's property.

Any Other Business Properly Before the Board

Mr. McCue reported finding D/2 spray on sale on Amazon.com for equal or less than the last supplier. Mr. Desmarais offered to see if it could be ordered without a shipping charge through his wife's Amazon Prime.

This being the last planned meeting until January, Mrs. Levesque, when asked, stated she would run for re-election in 2018.

Meeting Adjourned

A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque, seconded by Mr. Desmarais, to adjourn the meeting at 4:50 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: Michael T. McCue, Chairman