

Freetown Cemetery Commission
Minutes of the Wednesday, February 28, 2018 Meeting
Town Hall — Assonet, Mass.

2018 APR 24 PM 2:18
J. Brown

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

Call to order: Mike McCue called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

Receipt of Minutes / Superintendent's Report

Minutes of January 2, 2018, were received. The Superintendent's Reports for January and February, including bills paid since the previous meeting, were also received.

Assonet Burying Ground

The primary purpose of this meeting was to discuss a request from National Public Radio to film a video segment in the cemetery as part of their "Planet Money" program. Mr. McCue reviewed the request, which included showing a video of a previous program that was provided as an example of what the producers are looking to do. An outline of the program had also been provided. The general story would revolve around the concept of perpetual care and how with low interest rates, perpetual care is not a practical means for supporting a cemetery.

Mr. Desmarais stated his original concern was that the cemetery may be portrayed as an example of one that is poorly maintained, but that after reviewing the provided materials he was no longer concerned about that happening. Mrs. Levesque shared both that concern and the agreement that it did not look like the cemetery would be lampooned. Mr. McCue agreed, and said he believed the cemetery would be used primarily for background footage.

Mrs. Levesque was concerned about families not wanting the cemetery used for this purpose. Mr. McCue stated he had spoken privately with one family that has several older lots and asked how they felt about it, and if they would object to their older lots being used, and that that family received the notion favorably. He stressed this was one example, not a general consensus. Mrs. Levesque asked if the family could consent in writing. All felt this was reasonable.

Mr. Desmarais asked if people could object, or if this body could object where the cemetery is public property. Mr. McCue stated the law requires permission from the Cemetery Commission only, but that that did not preclude discussing it with one or more families to form a consensus. Mr. McCue speculated that, as an example, they may want to use the gravestone for Eunice Hathaway, it being the oldest stone in the cemetery (1783). Mr. Desmarais offered that as an example of a grave that is of general historical interest, and for which no family might be able to be located.

As the discussion ended, it was agreed on unanimous consensus to allow the project to proceed, subject to working out specific details with NPR.

Update on Cemetery at Payne's Cove

Mr. McCue reported that Brian Dunning had made considerable progress on cleaning the cemetery, and would meet with the Cemetery Commission on the property after this meeting to look over the progress and discuss the future.

Any Other Business Properly Before the Board

None.

Meeting Adjourned, Cemetery Visited

The formal portion of the meeting adjourned without vote at 4:22 p.m. Mr. McCue and Mrs. Levesque then visited Mr. Dunning at Payne's Cove to see the progress he has made. This visit lasted approximately 25 minutes, and no votes of any type were taken.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: _____, Chairman