

Freetown Cemetery Commission
Minutes of the Monday, April 23, 2018 Meeting
Town Hall — Assonet, Mass.

RECEIVED
FREETOWN TOWN CLERK
2018 JUN 18 PM 3:23

Present: Adrienne Levesque and Mike McCue.

Absent: Keven Desmarais.

Call to order: Mike McCue called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Reorganization

A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque, seconded by Mr. McCue, to have Mr. McCue continue as chairman for the year ensuing. The motion carried unanimously.

Receipt of Minutes / Superintendent's Report

Minutes of February 28, 2018, were received. The Superintendent's Report for March, including bills paid since the previous meeting, was also received.

Updates on Tree Work, Town Meeting Articles

Mr. McCue reported on the tree work that was completed at Braley's Station and also at Mother's Brook Cemetery. At Mother's Brook, one tree was left that Arborcare did not feel they could safely remove, and it was acknowledged that that tree was unlikely to cause any damage.

This discussion segued into the articles for the spring town meetings scheduled for June 4th. In addition to the two routine articles for Sale of Lots transfer and veterans' graves, two other articles were proposed:

- ♦ An article for \$6,500.00 to remove trees at Mother's Brook Cemetery. Mr. McCue explained that about two years prior, Bruce Durfee had been asked to evaluate the trees on the southern edge of the cemetery due to concerns from the neighboring condo owners. At that time, Mr. Durfee felt that the trees were to be watched but not an imminent concern. Subsequently, the condo owners had had problems with trees or parts of trees coming down in storms, particularly the four March nor'easters. At least one porch and stairs was damaged by the trees. The condo owners have now asked again to have the trees dealt with. Mr. McCue reported contacting five tree companies, hearing back from three, being able to arrange meetings with two, and having only one be interested in the work. That company quoted a price, but had to increase the price due to the so-called "prevailing wage" laws. Mrs. Levesque asked about what the law was, and Mr. McCue provided a brief explanation. All agreed that if the trees are causing damage, they should be dealt with.
- ♦ An article for \$6,344.03 for a new lawnmower for the Assonet Burying Ground. Mr. McCue stated that he queried the Highway Department crew on whether there was anything they needed to improve their work at the cemetery. They requested a weed-whacker and a new lawn mower with a more narrow mowing deck. Mr. McCue stated the weed-whacker could be bought out of groundskeeping funds, but that the lawn mower would be more expensive. Mrs. Levesque asked the reasoning behind the mower, and Mr. McCue stated the crew felt that a narrow deck would be easier for mowing between headstones than the wider deck they have. Mrs. Levesque asked if the deck could be replaced, and Mr. McCue replied that Chuck Macomber felt the size of the current machine and position of the tires would pose the same overall problem even if the deck was replaced. Mrs. Levesque asked about the mower that was bought previously, and Mr. McCue replied that the mower was bought in 2011 for about \$12,000. Mrs. Levesque asked how much it would cost if the work was hired out again like in the past, and Mr. McCue replied it was averaging \$20,000 per year back then and would be higher now with inflation. Consensus was that where the crew has asked for it, the Cemetery Commission would support the request.

It was agreed on consensus to submit all four articles. It was further agreed that if the tree article is not placed on the warrant, a written explanation of why will be requested to cover the Cemetery Commission should any further damage occur.

Discussion on Land

This item was passed over. Mr. McCue stated that when the subject is eventually dealt with, he would like to invite one selectman to attend the meetings and be part of the discussion.

Assonet Burying Ground

Mr. McCue reported that NPR ultimately did not film in the cemetery, as their higher-ups had concerns about using actual gravestones in the video. However, the program was released earlier in April and seemed like it would have been fine had it been filmed here.

Discussion on adjusting lot prices was passed over as this item was at Mr. Desmarais' request.

Updated on Old Business or New Business

The following items were taken up under this heading:

- ♦ Discussion was held on the cemeteries at Algonquin Gas and at Stop & Shop. Consensus was to have Mr. Desmarais approach Stop & Shop to either clean up their two cemeteries or make a donation so the Cemetery Commission could have them cleaned up. Mr. McCue noted the cemeteries had been cleaned by volunteers in 2004 and was supposed to be maintained after that, but had been let go again. Consensus was also to wait and see what Churchill & Banks is doing with the Algonquin land before deciding how to approach these two cemeteries, but similarly to request that the company either clean them up or make a donation to allow them to be cleaned up.
- ♦ Mr. McCue reported that the Nichols Cemetery is roughly 85% cleaned up. Clean-up work is suspended now until the next burning season, but general maintenance will continue to keep it from growing in. Once clean-up is finished, a discussion will need to be had with the property owners about how maintenance will work going forward.
- ♦ Discussion was held on repairing or re-setting headstones in cemeteries that have been cleaned up. Going forward in 2018, one or more cemeteries will be looked at for volunteer days of a few hours to work on standing up the stones and stabilizing them in some manner.

Any Other Business Properly Before the Board

None.

Meeting Adjourned

A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque, seconded by Mr. McCue, to adjourn at 5:01 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: _____
Michael T. McCue, Chairman