

Freetown Cemetery Commission
Minutes of the Monday, April 26, 2010 Meeting
Town Hall, 3 North Main Street, Assonet, Mass.

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

Call to order: Chairman Mike McCue called the meeting to order at 7:00p.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of March 15th were not available.

Assonet Burying Ground

A bill was received from Greg Myers for spring clean-up in the amount of \$250.00. A receipt for reimbursement was also received for \$49.96 for a grass seed/fertilizer mix. A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, seconded by Mrs. Levesque, to sign these bills. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McCue reported spreading a grass seed/fertilizer mix on several of the winter burial graves. This was done to see if an improvement could be made in how long it usually takes for fresh graves to grow new grass. He also reported meeting with Bruce Durfee, owner of Durfee Tree Service in East Freetown, regarding spreading mulch around the trees in the cemetery before Memorial Day. Mr. Durfee estimated the cost of the mulch would be about \$120.00 and the labor for spreading would be about \$375.00. Delivery for the mulch would be an additional \$40.00 unless the Highway Department could pick it up. Mr. Desmarais asked whether a weed guard would be placed, and Mr. McCue stated he would ask. Consensus was that we have the mulching done before Memorial Day.

Mrs. Levesque reported that Rich Levesque had inquired again into having holes drilled in the stone gats so that the flags usually placed by the roadside could be in a more permanent holder. Mr. Levesque has offered the use of his drill, and Mr. Desmarais offered to drill the holes. Mr. Desmarais then asked about placing one or more full-sized flag poles at the cemetery. Mr. McCue recounted the previous discussion of having a flag pole placed at or near the bolder to the east of Section 35. Mr. Desmarais asked about placing one or two at the stone gates. After discussion, it was agreed that Mr. Desmarais will investigate the price of flag poles and solar lights and report at the next meeting.

A discussion was also held on the prices being charged by contractors for digging graves. Some of the prices seem to be becoming excessive. Suggestions were made regarding requiring gravediggers to be licensed and providing proof of insurance when using heavy equipment. The matter will be discussed again in the future.

The current state of the shed was also discussed. Mr. Desmarais suggested that if a new shed were built, it be built closer to Dr. Byers' house, as then the shed would be within view of someone at most hours of the day and night, and be less apt to attract vandals. No definite decision was reached.

A discussion was held regarding the Priscilla Hatheway Durfee flower endowment. Miss Durfee bequeathed \$200 in 1981, the interest to be used for the purchase of geraniums for her family's lot. Mr. McCue contacted a florist, and received a quote of \$105 for flowers plus delivery to Assonet, or \$90 picked up. Both prices were thought to be rather high. An attempt will be made to find the flowers at lesser prices.

Dr. Braley Cemetery

Mr. McCue reported visiting this cemetery after a request was made by several interested parties. The cemetery itself is in fair shape, but the vacant land to the right and the rightmost graves were very greatly disrupted by the initial clearing being done to expand the cemetery. Conversations were had with all parties involved, and the matter seems to be straightening itself out.

East Chipaway Road cemeteries

New Bedford has still not responded to our numerous requests for discussion regarding the right-of-way to the landlocked cemetery. As for the town-owned cemetery, Mr. McCue reported visiting the cemetery with Wallace DeMoranville. Mr. DeMoranville was willing to add this cemetery to the group he maintains. Mr. McCue suggested that the money for all of the cemeteries in Mr. DeMoranville's care – Richmond, Winslow, and now this one – be pooled and that he be asked to do as much work as he could in each cemetery for the total amount available. As

none of these cemeteries have perpetual care, the money can be pooled. A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, seconded by Mrs. Levesque, that this cemetery be added to Mr. DeMoranville's list. The motion carried unanimously.

East Freetown Cemetery

Mr. McCue reported that he has not yet heard back from Dave Cass, but that he felt graves could be offered by starting in one corner, and selling in sequence. Then, when the mapping is continued, it would be easy to assign numbers. The plan will still be to open this cemetery for sales in the summer.

Mr. DeMoranville offered his services for this cemetery, as well. He was very familiar with this cemetery, especially with the locations of the paupers' graves. At present, Harris Chace hays the cemetery throughout the summer, but it was felt that if graves would be offered for sale, then the grass could not be allowed to grow high enough for haying. Consensus was that Mr. DeMoranville should be asked to work in here beginning in July.

Mr. Desmarais asked about the name of the cemetery, and Mr. McCue stated the name is "East Freetown Cemetery". The name of the road leading into the cemetery – Hog Lane – was also discussed. So far, "Pocasset Lane" is the only name which has been suggested.

Haskins Cemetery

Mr. McCue reported on the discussion held with the Selectmen regarding this cemetery. The Selectmen have not yet voted yes or no on any articles for the Annual Town Meeting; however, they were somewhat skeptical regarding this article. There is a respectful difference in opinion of what role the town should play with regard to the ownership of ancient cemeteries. The Selectmen were reminded that should this or similar cemeteries be found to have veterans' graves, then we are responsible for them whether we own them or not.

Mother's Brook Graveyard

Mr. McCue gave a brief history of where we stand with this project. Essentially, the project is at a standstill, as Fall River has been resistant to giving an up-or-down answer on whether they will accept the property. Mr. Desmarais asked if we could move forward assuming it would remain this town's property, and Mr. McCue replied that we could. A discussion was then held about the potential for cutting a new road and selling grave lots to the rear of the historic cemetery.

Old Payne Burial Lot

Mr. McCue reported visiting this cemetery with Jimmy Rego. The cemetery is in excellent condition, although there are some pine saplings starting to come up. There did not appear to be any veterans buried here.

Plummer Burial Ground

The volunteers working in this cemetery continue to make progress, even in the winter months.

Richmond Cemetery & Winslow Cemetery

Mr. DeMoranville agreed to continue in these cemeteries at the same prices.

Nichols Cemetery

Mr. McCue reported speaking to Mr. Nichols by telephone regarding this cemetery. Mr. Nichols asked that quotes be obtained for having this cemetery restored. Mr. McCue obtained quotes from Mr. DeMoranville and Mr. Myers, and forwarded these to Mr. Nichols. As this is a private cemetery, the cost for restoration would be borne by Mr. Nichols.

Next Meeting

A meeting will be posted for Monday, May 17, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting Adjourned

The meeting adjourned without vote at 8:44p.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: _____
Michael T. McCue, Chairman