

Freetown Cemetery Commission
Minutes of the Wednesday, November 3, 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 7:08p.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of September 29th were received and read by Mr. McCue. A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque, duly seconded by Mr. McCue, to approve the minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Signing of Bills

A bill was received from David J. Cass for \$225.00 for work done earlier this same day. Mr. McCue stated he and Mr. Cass spent the afternoon locating corners in Section 1 of the East Freetown Cemetery. Prior to this, Mr. Cass had plotted certain landmarks on the existing plan. Corners were located so that graves could begin being sold in Section 1. Corners in Sections 2 & 3 will be located at a future time, as will the northern line of the Paupers' Section. Graves 81 – 92 of Section 2, as presently exist on the plan, will be eliminated to create a parking area as suggested by Mr. Desmarais at an earlier meeting. This will also take into account that Pocasset Lane (formerly known as Hog Lane) is in the wrong location.

Correspondence

An e-mail was received from Frank Wing providing copies of the two unexecuted deeds for the Haskins Cemetery, as well as a document reactivating Tri-City Associates, Inc., Mr. Wing's former company, for three months for the purposes of executing one of the two deeds. Mr. Wing will have TCA convey the cemetery to him for \$1.00. He will then convey the cemetery to the Town as a gift for "no monetary consideration".

A letter was received from the Swansea Friends Meeting providing contact information for the New England Yearly Meeting, and a check for \$1,000.00 transferring the "Philip Tripp Fund" for the Friends Cemetery from the Swansea Friends Meeting to the Town of Freetown. Mr. McCue stated the check had already been deposited with the Treasurer.

A letter will be sent to the Treasurer requesting that two perceived accounting errors from the 1930s be corrected. These errors resulted in the perpetual care accounts for the Nichols and Richmond cemeteries being eliminated and folded into the account for the Assonet Burying Ground. The amounts are minimal, but will hopefully be a starting point for future contributions.

Assonet Burying Ground

The single bid for maintaining the Assonet Burying Ground was received and reviewed. Greg Myers bid \$1,600.00 per mowing for each of 2011, 2012, and 2013; as well as \$2,000.00 for any clean-ups. Mr. Myers was the only bidder. Discussion ensued, during which time it was mentioned the Board of Selectmen has suggested hiring an additional employee for the Highway Department, and asking the Highway Surveyor, Chuck Macomber, to have his men take care of this cemetery beginning July 1st. Mr. Macomber was agreeable to this idea.

Mr. McCue suggested offering Mr. Myers an agreement for January 1st through June 30th, which could then be extended if the additional Highway Department employee was not hired. Mr. Desmarais felt that might not be wise, as the bid was solicited for January 1st through December 31st. He suggested the agreement be for the year, subject to available funding. Mrs. Levesque asked if there was funding available. Mr. McCue stated that at this time, June 30th would be about the time when funding would become a problem if nothing changes between now and then. It was therefore agreed that funding may settle the issue by itself. A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, duly seconded by Mrs. Levesque, that Mr. Myers be retained for the period January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011, subject to available funding. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion then turned to the vandalized fence at the cemetery. Around Columbus Day weekend, a portion of the fence at the Assonet Burying Ground that separates the cemetery from the old D. L. Johnson farm, where it intersects the fence running along the Fall River-Boston Expressway, was ripped from its posts and frame, causing significant damage to some of the posts and caps. All commissioners were made aware and viewed the fence during late October. Mr. McCue secured a repair quote from South East Fence in Lakeville, the firm typically retained by the Highway Department, and forwarded the same to Mr. Desmarais and Mrs. Levesque for review. The quote given was \$224.93 for materials and \$448.00 for labor, for a total of \$672.93.

Mr. Desmarais felt the labor cost was excessive for the amount of fence that had been damaged, and also wondered whether as much needed to be replaced as was outlined. He suggested that the Highway Department be asked whether or not they could salvage the actual chain link, and also perform the needed labor. Mr. McCue stated that Mr. Macomber typically hires South East Fence to both supply the materials and perform the labor, so he felt that the Highway Department's involvement would be minimal or unlikely. Mrs. Levesque then made a motion that Mr. Desmarais contact Mr. Macomber to discuss the issue, and this was seconded by Mr. Desmarais. A vote was then taken, and it passed unanimously.

Mr. McCue reported on the question of insurance coverage for the town's cemeteries. The insurance company will not cover the repair of the fence, as the fence was never insured. When the three buildings in the cemetery were referred to the insurance company, they were unaware the buildings existed. There currently seems to be a communication gap in getting this matter resolved because the insurance company has requested the value the Assessors have placed on the fence and buildings to use as an appraisal, but the buildings and fence have never been valued by the Assessors.

An inquiry was received from Mr. Myers as to whether we would like the cleanup for the 2010-2011 winter season to be held during the autumn or the spring. It was agreed on consensus that the cleanup be done in the fall, at a cost not to exceed \$2,000. All agreed it would be better to not spend the money, but that we cannot let this go for the next five months.

Gravediggers' Licenses

Mr. McCue reported that Harris Chace and John Ashley have both qualified for licenses, and the licenses were issued the previous week. Their insurance information and price lists were reviewed. At this time, no other applications have been received. Mr. Desmarais asked what the starting point was for licenses, and what to do if an unlicensed person was seen digging a grave. Mr. McCue stated the rule establishing licenses would take effect after Monday's special town meeting, that the licenses themselves would be necessary beginning January 1st, and that any unlicensed person found to be digging graves should be instructed to stop.

Special Town Meeting

The articles submitted for next Monday's special town meeting were reviewed as amended by the Selectmen.

Next Meeting

A meeting will be scheduled in December to approve the budget request for the fiscal year 2012.

Meeting Adjourned

Upon motion of Mr. Desmarais, duly seconded by Mrs. Levesque, the commission voted to adjourn at 7:55p. The motion carried unanimously.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: _____
Michael T. McCue, Chairman