

Freetown Cemetery Commission
Minutes of the Thursday, September 2, 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 7:30p.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of July 16th 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 passed 2-0-1, with Mr. Desmarais abstaining.

Assonet Burying Ground

Mr. McCue reported that the Freetown-Lakeville Middle School sixth grade has once again expressed an interest in gravestone rubbing. A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, duly seconded by Mrs. Levesque, that the schoolchildren be permitted to engage in gravestone rubbing at the Assonet Burying Ground. The motion passed unanimously.

A bill was received from Greg Myers for mowing the cemetery in August. A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, duly seconded by Mrs. Levesque, to sign the bill for payment. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Desmarais reported that he is working on securing a flag pole for the front entryway, which may in the end be donated outright. A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, duly seconded by Mrs. Levesque, that the vacant corner adjacent to the Hierholder lot in Section 1 be designated as the location for the flag pole, and be prepared appropriately. The motion passed unanimously.

A draft request for bids was presented regarding soliciting quotes for mowing the Assonet Burying Ground. Both Mr. Desmarais and Mrs. Levesque had several comments and suggestions for adjustments to the wording. Consensus was that with several corrections, and subject to the approval of the Town Accountant, the request could be posted.

East Freetown Cemetery

As no changes to the layout of this cemetery were proposed, the layout was deemed to stand as presented on July 16th. Mr. McCue reported that he spoke with Dave Cass earlier in the day, and that he and Mr. Cass will go out to this cemetery when the weather cools to set some permanent markers for measuring graves. Afterward, this cemetery will be open for sales and burials.

Discussion was held on the name of the lane leading from Chace Road to the cemetery, which is presently named Hog Lane. The popular explanation for this name is that Joe Simmons, late Highway Surveyor, chose the name as the lane formerly led to a pig farm. However, it was felt that the name was not inviting for a cemetery entryway. A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, duly seconded by Mrs. Levesque, to change the name of Hog Lane to Pocasset Lane, subject to the approval of the police and fire chiefs. The motion carried unanimously. (The name Pocasset Lane was chosen in honour of the Pocasset Purchase, and seemed fitting as the subdivision built beside the Assonet Burying Ground has the street name Freeman's Circle.)

Discussion was held on a sign for the entrance to the cemetery. Mr. McCue suggested that a formal sign be placed in the cemetery proper, and that at the road there be a double sign, similar to the sign on County Road that reads "Town Beach / Long Pond Rd" or the sign on Middleboro Road reading "Hemlock Point / Beach Bluff Rd". The sign for this location was read "Cemetery → / Pocasset Ln" or something similar. This was agreed to on consensus. As for the formal sign, discussion was held on acquiring a wooden sign, a stone sign, or having the name carved into a boulder. Mr. McCue will investigate options and report back.

It was agreed on consensus to maintain a separate Death Register for the East Freetown Cemetery, and to purchase the same at the approximate cost of \$35.00. The Death Register for the Assonet Burying Ground was purchased in January at private cost for the same amount.

Friends Cemetery

Mr. McCue reported sending a letter to the Swansea Friends Meeting regarding their offer of a perpetual care endowment. However, no response has yet been received.

Haskins Cemetery

Frank Wing has sent word that he has taken care of the necessary paperwork with the state to reactivate his company and execute a deed on this property. His plan is to execute two deeds: one deed conveying the cemetery from Tri City Associates, Inc., to himself, and a second conveying the cemetery from Francis W. Wing to the Town of Freetown. He asked that any corrections be forwarded to him.

Consensus was that as other town boards such as the Conservation Commission are specified as grantees in deeds, it will be asked that this deed specify "Town of Freetown Cemetery Commission" or something similar. Wording for the necessary town meeting articles will be prepared for review at the next meeting.

Mother's Brook Graveyard

Discussion was held on the possible sale of standing lumber at the Mother's Brook Cemetery as a means of raising funds for the perpetual care of the cemetery. It was determined that Mrs. Levesque and Mr. McCue were familiar with the property and the lumber in question, but that Mr. Desmarais was not, and he will make arrangements to go and view the property. In the meantime, Ralph Gurney and Paul Darling will be asked to visit the cemetery and determine if the wood has any value, as they are the Measurers of Wood and Lumber.

Cemetery Index

Mr. McCue presented the long-awaited "Cemetery Index" in its completed form. The index numbers and identifies thirty cemeteries in Assonet, nineteen in East Freetown, and one in Fall River, for a total of fifty. The index was reviewed, and will be forwarded to the Historical Society and Historical Commission for comment.

Fee Schedule

Mr. McCue presented a revised schedule of fees. This was necessary as the previous schedule specified Assonet Burying Ground, and fees were needed for the East Freetown Cemetery.

The revision maintained the same prices of \$800 for a single grave. In Assonet, \$300 will go toward the lot and \$500 toward perpetual care. In East Freetown, \$200 will go toward the lot and \$600 will go toward perpetual care. This difference is because the East Freetown Cemetery currently has no perpetual care account. In Assonet, the price of a cremation-only grave would rise to \$300 from \$200. This was done to align our price more closely with surrounding towns. The split will be \$150 each for lot and perpetual care. In East Freetown, the split will be \$100 and \$200 in favor of perpetual care for a total of \$300.

Mr. Desmarais' previous suggestion that veterans receive a reduced rate was addressed, as well as a suggestion the policemen and firemen killed in the line of duty receive a reduced rate. In both cases, the lot fee will be waived for a single grave, and the veteran or family will only be responsible for perpetual care. Spouses and family will not be eligible for the reduced rate.

A motion was made by Mr. Desmarais, duly seconded by Mrs. Levesque, to adopt the fee schedule with minor corrections in wording. The motion carried unanimously.

Gravediggers and Gravedigger's Licenses

Discussion was held on requiring persons who intend to dig graves in the town's public cemeteries to obtain a license for doing so. All present were very clear that the intent behind these licenses would be to keep track

of who is digging graves, and that they are not intended to be a means of preventing anyone capable from doing so.

A draft application was presented and discussed. Mr. Desmarais suggested that the wording on insurance clarify the amount of coverage expected from the gravediggers. He recommended no less than \$50,000 for property and \$100,000 for personal injury. Mr. McCue noted that similar requirements are imposed upon snowplow contractors.

The fee for a license was proposed as \$1.00 per year, with licenses good for five years (or, \$5.00 paid at the time of application). The suggestion was made that the fee still be collected for five years at the time of application, but that the licenses be up for "renewal" annually to ensure continued insurance coverage.

On consensus, it was agreed that the wording would be cleaned up, the insurance coverage be specified, and that the final draft would be reviewed by commissioners independently. If no further changes were suggested, the applications will be made available. Licenses would be required beginning January 1, 2011.

In conjunction with this endeavour, the publishers of the *Dunham's Green Book* have been notified to change the contact information for all public cemeteries to request that funeral homes contact the Cemetery Commission for a current list of gravediggers. This would take effect with their 2011-2012 edition, if possible.

Next Meeting

No further meetings were scheduled.

Meeting Adjourned

Upon motion of Mrs. Levesque, duly seconded by Mr. Desmarais, the commission voted to adjourn at 9:04p. The motion carried unanimously.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: _____
Michael T. McCue, Chairman