

FREETOWN CEMETERY COMMISSION
Minutes of the Monday, June 18, 2007 Meeting
Town Barn, 201 Chace Rd., East Freetown, Mass.

Present: Ralph Gurney, Chairman; and Mike McCue, Secretary.

Absent: Harris Chace was absent due to illness.

Guests: None.

Call to order: Chairman Ralph Gurney called the meeting to order at 7:00p.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of May 14, 2007, were received and read by Mr. McCue. Upon a motion made by Mr. Gurney, and duly seconded by Mr. McCue, the minutes of May 14th were approved as read. The motion carried unanimously.

Assonet Burying Ground

It was reported by both members present that several letters and a number of telephone calls had been received in May and early June regarding the condition of the cemetery.

Chief among the issues raised was the mowing of the grass in the cemetery. Both members stated they had informed callers that the cemetery had been scheduled for mowing the week prior to Memorial Day, and was not usually mowed earlier than Mothers' Day in any year. Both members also commented that while the first mowing had left a little to be desired, the second mowing was on par with the type of quality displayed by the current firm last fall. Mr. Gurney reported that the section in the back southern corner of the cemetery was for some reason not being mowed. Mr. McCue will check the cemetery on June 21st to see if this has been taken care of.

Mr. Gurney reported that the majority of comments and inquiries received about the condition of the cemetery stemmed from a funeral held prior to Mothers' Day. It was acknowledged that every effort would have been made to prepare at least that and the surrounding sections of the cemetery prior to the start of the mowing season, but the Cemetery Commission had not been informed that a funeral was scheduled to take place. It was noted that the job description for the board states that the mowing season begins on Mothers' Day, not in anticipation of.

It was reported that the maple trees alongside the main road into the cemetery are still standing, and are still dead.

Mr. McCue reported that he had helped a family locate the grave of their late sister who had been buried in a single lot in Section 7 sometime around 1975. No headstone marked that grave or the graves surrounding it, leading to confusion when the family went to erect a headstone.

Mr. Gurney reported that several residents with lots in Section 1 were interested in purchasing the space between their lots and the roadway leading from Main Avenue toward the river. Mr. McCue noted that burials in so confined a space would probably have to be perpendicular to the regular lots. Mr. Gurney noted that some folks along that road may not want the spaces sold, and suggested that only current lot owners be permitted to buy the space between their lot and the road, with which Mr. McCue agreed. This will be voted on at the next meeting.

Evans Cemetery

Mr. McCue reported that he had been contacted by a gentleman from the Evans family regarding the condition of the cemetery prior to Memorial Day, and that the cemetery had in fact been mowed later in the week in time for the holiday. Mr. Gurney reported at a recent funeral, the family was pleased with the condition of the cemetery.

Morton Cemetery

Due to limited perpetual care funds, it was decided on consensus that the Morton Cemetery will be mowed once more this year.

Maps

Mr. McCue reported that he had been in contact with Dave Cass on the subject of having new cemetery maps drawn up. He said Mr. Cass was willing to undertake this project, and the two are working on a time that they can get together.

Rules and Regulations

Mr. Gurney reported that he received a number of phone calls reporting that the groundskeepers had knocked over the corner markers on the Pittsley lot while mowing. He stated that he repaired the markers, but that they were not installed correctly to begin with. The markers are six inches high, and had been set two inches into the ground, with four inches exposed. Mr. Gurney buried them to be flush with the ground, as is standard. Based on this experience,

he presented a copy of the Rules and Regulations of the Chace Cemetery Association, and recommended that the town adopt a similar document. Mr. McCue will prepare a draft for the next meeting.

Fees

Mr. McCue reported that the Board of Selectmen had recently suggested a review and revision of the fees. Mr. Gurney recalled that the matter had been taken up in 2005, and no changes were voted. He said the Town tries to maintain fees that are similar to those of the Chace Cemetery and White Cemetery because the trend has been that when the town raises its fees and the private cemeteries do not, the private cemeteries are inundated with purchase requests, which in turn eats up their available space much faster than normal.

Mr. Gurney stated that he would inform the Chace Cemetery that the town plans to raise its fees this fall, and that way they can vote an increase of their own fees at their October meeting. It was agreed on consensus that the town's fees will be raised at a time to coincide with the Chace Cemetery.

Correspondence

A letter was received from the Rev. John Sullivan of New Bedford regarding the condition of the Assonet Burying Ground. Fr. Sullivan had inquired on several points in his letter, and also requested an opportunity to meet with the Cemetery Commission, but his letter had not been received until the day of the meeting. Mr. Gurney asked that a letter be sent in reply with information and an apology for not having responded prior to the meeting.

Next Meeting

A meeting will be posted for a time and place to be determined in July.

Meeting Adjourned

Upon motion of Mr. McCue, duly seconded by Mr. Gurney, the board voted to adjourn at 7:28p. The motion carried unanimously.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: _____
Michael T. McCue
Secretary