

**Freetown Cemetery Commission**  
Minutes of the Monday, June 13, 2011 Meeting  
Benjamin R. Evans Map Room, Town Hall, Assonet

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

**Call to order:** Chairman Mike McCue called the meeting to order at 6:35p.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of March 23rd and June 1st were passed over.

**Correspondence**

Mr. McCue stated he would be sending a letter to the Crystal Springs School regarding the Guilford Evans Burial Ground. It was noted that this cemetery appeared unattended over Memorial Day weekend.

**FY12 Budget**

Mr. McCue reported meeting with Wally DeMoranville at the Mother's Brook Cemetery. Mr. DeMoranville gave a price of \$400.00 per year to maintain the cemetery. This offer was accepted by unanimous consensus.

Also reported was a request from the Highway Surveyor, Chuck Macomber, for funding to put toward the purchase of a lawnmower for use in the Assonet Burying Ground. Mr. McCue explained that the current lawnmowers owned by the Highway Department were too large to use in the cemetery due to the headstones, and Mr. Macomber was looking to purchase a mower with a 48-inch deck. The estimated cost of this mower is \$8,000, and Mr. Macomber asked for a contribution of about \$5,000.

Mrs. Levesque asked which department would own the mower. Mr. McCue stated it would be purchased for use in the Assonet Burying Ground, but would be available to the Highway Department if they needed it otherwise, and would be kept at the Town Barn. Mr. Desmarais asked if there was sufficient funding to cover this. Mr. McCue stated there was \$4,000 added to the budget to cover expenses incurred while converting to Highway Department maintenance that he felt could be used, and also that since the mower was being purchased for the Assonet Burying Ground, another \$1,000 should be able to come from the Sale of Lots account transfer from the annual town meeting. Thereafter, it was agreed on consensus to commit at least \$4,000; \$5,000 if needed and able.

**Assonet Burying Ground**

Discussion was held on the rearranging of headstones in Section 15. The Ouimet stone was placed in the wrong location. A neighboring stone's foundation was placed in the wrong location, also, as a result of the installer basing the location off the Ouimet stone. The parties involved were asked to come to the cemetery in May to discuss a resolution, and at that time decided to exchange certain lots. However, this did not correct the misplacement of the stones.

Mr. Desmarais asked what would be done. Mr. McCue stated that because the Ouimet stone was installed in the location specified by the town, he had agreed the town would cover the cost of moving the stone. The neighboring stone was not installed, and only a new foundation would be necessary. Mr. Desmarais speculated on how to install new foundations without the need of hiring a contractor. A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque, duly seconded by Mr. McCue, to place Mr. Desmarais in charge of rearranging the headstones. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion turned to the June mowing. Earlier in the year, it was agreed to allow Greg Myers to continue mowing the cemetery until June 30th if he chose to do so. As a result of what was later determined to be an illness, Mr. Myers had not mowed the cemetery at all during the spring up to and including the Monday preceding Memorial Day. At that time, out of concern that Mr. Myers had not been heard from and would not be able to complete the task by the deadline, T. E. C. Landscaping of Assonet had been retained to mow the cemetery for Memorial Day at a price of \$1,800. Upon learning the reason for Mr. Myers' absence, he was

informed that he would be able to complete the month of June if he wished. Subsequent to this, it was learned that Mr. Myers had not submitted paperwork necessary for the Town Accountant's office to continue paying him, and Mr. Myers submitted the paperwork shortly thereafter. Since that time, the Accountant's office informed Mr. McCue that they had contacted Mr. Myers several times with additional questions, and he had failed to respond.

Owing to this, Mr. McCue stated he felt the commission was in a difficult position. Although Mr. Myers had been afforded the month of June, he could not be paid while there were questions pending from the Town Accountant's office. Mr. Desmarais felt that ample time and understanding had been extended to Mr. Myers. Mrs. Levesque agreed the situation was difficult. On consensus, it was agreed to have TEC Landscaping undertake the June mowing as their paperwork is in order, and to have Mr. Desmarais contact Mr. Myers.

Also up for discussion was whether to approve another round of headstone repairs. Mr. Desmarais asked if there was money available in the budget to pay for more repairs. Mr. McCue responded that the repairs have been funded in the past through perpetual care, and that that account presently has about \$3,000. Owing to the fact that the perpetual care fund was not slated for any mowing expenses in FY12, Mr. Desmarais suggested authorizing up to \$1,000.00 worth of work. Mrs. Levesque agreed. It was noted that in the past, Albanese Monuments has always come in under their allotment.

At this time, Mr. Desmarais went into the hallway to conduct a Conservation Commission meeting.

Mr. McCue reported a question had been raised over Memorial Day weekend while replacing the flags on veterans' graves about the possibility of replacing irreparably damaged stones. He stated in the past, Albanese Monuments felt it was unwise to try and repair the limestone (white) and marble stones as they would deteriorate from the moisture and recommended simple replacements. He noted two stones specifically from the Hathaway family that had shattered into several pieces, shown in these photographs:



**Edmund D. Hathaway (1802-1869)**

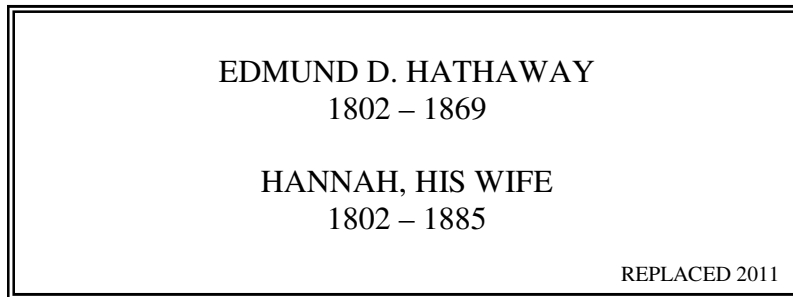


**Hannah Hathaway (1802-1885)**

*Photos taken by Danielle Chudolij, summer 2010.*

Mrs. Levesque asked what responsibility the families have in replacing the stones. Mr. McCue favored full replacement only for stones that were damaged beyond repair and for which relatives of the deceased could not be easily located. Using the Hathaways as an example again, he stated that it would be difficult to locate their relatives on account of the Hathaway name no longer flourishing in town. He felt that if a family was still in the area, they would still be responsible for their stones. If they asked for assistance, the commission could consider it.

Mrs. Levesque then asked about the style of stone. Mr. McCue suggested a flush marker, similar to a veterans' marker. He stated that while some of the stones had elaborate carvings and poems, the primary goal would be to preserve the names and dates. He also suggested that either "2011" or "Replaced in 2011" be added in a smaller font to indicate the stone had been replaced, as in this diagram:



This would allow both stones to be replaced by one marker. Ultimately, he felt the original stones should be left in place, as he was unsure the proper way to dispose of a replaced headstone. Mrs. Levesque agreed, noting that in the case of the Hathaways, the single flush marker could be placed possibly between the two fallen stones. At that point, it was agreed on consensus to ask for a price for replacing stones as needed.

Also suggested by Mr. McCue was to try and complete certain incomplete stones. (As shown in the example at right, there are a number of older stones where the year or date of death is missing for one person, generally.) He speculated that there may have come a time when the final member of a family or branch of a family had died, and no one had been left to arrange for completion of the stone.



*Photo by Danielle Chudolij, summer 2010.*

Mrs. Levesque asked what the standard would be for selecting the stones to complete. Mr. McCue stated he had targeted stones where the date of birth was in the 1800s. It was agreed on consensus that if the correct year or date of death could be ascertained, and the price was agreeable, that incomplete stones could be completed.

Discussion next turned to road repairs. Mr. McCue noted that the corner formed by the driveway at the junction of sections 1 and 8 was completely deteriorated. He stated he had spoken to Mr. Macomber about possibly having the paving crew working on South Main Street repair this. Mr. Macomber had instead suggested money could be saved if the men from the Highway Department did this work. Mr. McCue suggested that any materials costs could be taken from the Sale of Lots article passed at the Annual Town Meeting. Mrs. Levesque agreed, and consensus was that this corner be repaired.

Mr. McCue reported on updating the cemetery maps. Cartographic Associates, the company producing the property maps for the Board of Assessors, was expected to give a price for digitizing the map. However, the perimeter of the cemetery on the south and east sides would still need to be surveyed. It was agreed on consensus to contact Dave Cass and see if he would be interested in surveying and marking those sides.

No discussion was held on the placement of a flag pole or the possible installation of a veterans' memorial as Mr. Desmarais, who had done the bulk of the research on the flag pole, was no longer present.

It was acknowledged that John Ashley has offered to remove trees to the east of the current Section 35.

#### **East Freetown Cemetery**

Mr. McCue stated he had set aside some money in the FY12 budget to install a sign or monument denoting the cemetery. Further discussion was postponed until Mr. Desmarais could be present.

#### **Haskins Cemetery**

Mr. McCue stated the Murphy Woodlot was recently sold, which could complicate access to the Haskins Cemetery. Although a resident on Joaquin Avenue has given permission to cross her land if necessary, the Murphy Woodlot afforded a more direct means of access. A small amount has been set aside for this cemetery in FY12 in the event it is needed. This cemetery will be targeted for headstone replacement at a future time, as all three headstones have vanished.

#### **1995 GMC Pickup**

This item had not yet been acted upon, as the matter of replacing vehicles had been a part of the Annual Town Meeting. As the Dog Officer will be receiving a new truck, an inquiry will be made after that happens.

#### **Veterans' Cemetery Grant**

This item was passed over.

#### **Next Meeting**

No further meetings were scheduled.

#### **Meeting Adjourned**

Upon motion of Mrs. Levesque, duly seconded by Mr. McCue, the commission voted to adjourn at 8:00p. The motion carried unanimously.

This is a True Record by me.

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Michael T. McCue, Chairman