

Cemetery Commission
August 24, 2010
Hooksett Library @ 6:45pm

1. Present: Cemetery trustees Sharron Champagne, John Danforth and Mike Horne. Also present: were Ed and Katherine Deverell.

2. Public Input: Both Ed and Katherine Deverell spoke in favor of changing the current cemetery regulations to allow upright monuments. Ed said he feels that flat markers are disrespectful and that veteran cemeteries like Arlington or the older sections of the Hooksett cemeteries with upright monuments were respectful and appropriate. Sharron Champagne asked if Ed or his daughter had recommended sizes of upright monuments, should the regulation be changed. Ed suggested 30" by 26" like the one on the Demer's lot in Heads. Ed added that one monument for two single lots should not be more than 36" by 36" so as not to be overpowering. Katherine asked who was responsible to maintain the flat markers, to trim back the grass growing over them. Sharron answered the maintenance of the marker was the family's responsibility and that the Hooksett Public Works Dept. does the maintenance in Hooksett cemeteries (mowing and trimming). Katherine first acknowledged that the cemetery trustees are volunteer positions and she is appreciative of the time and efforts of the three cemetery trustees. Katherine then explained her recent experience of scheduling the interment of her mother, finding out after making arrangements (dates/times) with the funeral home that getting a grave opened on weekends cost significantly more on weekends than on other week days. And graves are not opened by the Town on Mondays. She said she was able to convince the Public Works Dept. to open the grave on Friday for the scheduled Monday interment. Katherine recommended the cemetery trustees be sure to inform people buying cemetery lots of the cemetery regulations and policies, the cost and schedule of having graves opened and closed, and other information they need to know when they have to plan a funeral and interment. She said trustees need to insure lot owners are aware of this information to not experience what she and her father did. Ed recommended the monument for a single lot (based on the lot being 42" wide) should be 24" wide by 24" high.

3. Minutes: Reviewed minutes from the June 22, 2010 meeting. Motion to approve as written: Sharron Champagne), seconded (Mike Horne), both voted in favor; John abstained.

4. Eagle Scout Project: Jacob Murphy had contacted the trustees since the last meeting, asking if there was a project he could do in the Hooksett cemeteries. Mike Horne suggested two options, either a project to build and place signs at the cemeteries or a project to start digitizing (photographing headstones, incorporating into existing cemetery data the photographs, etc.) the information of people interred in Hooksett cemeteries. Jacob has decided his proposed project would be to install a sign or signs, similar to the signs at Merrimack cemeteries. (NOTE: Jim Sullivan, Hooksett Historical Society initially proposed signs like Merrimack's be something the cemetery commission and Historical Society work together on). Jacob was not present at the meeting. Mike Horne recommended the commission approve Jacob doing the project for signs, final details of the project to be provided soon by Jacob. The commission unanimously approved the concept and gave Mike the OK to sign off on the Eagle Scout project application. Mike agreed to continue coordinating the project with Jacob.

5. Old Business:

a. Maintenance Issues:

- 1) Martins: Mike said that Mike Clark, a welder and metal repairman from Pembroke, had completed straightening the 16 sections brought to his shop and the other sections connected to the tomb. Mike Horne authorized payment for the work (last year's budget). Sharron asked if the chain link fence gates have to remain. John said he thought there was no requirement for the gates, that some cemeteries has chains or nothing. Mike Horne motioned the gates be removed, seconded by Sharron. Unanimous approval to remove both gates as part of the fence repairs. Mike Horne said he would need some help to level and straighten the fence before seeking volunteers to paint it. The commission agreed to seek volunteers to help paint the fence on the afternoon of Sept. 19th, weather permitting.
- 2) Riverside: Mike recommended painting the rusty chain link fence along Route 3A this fall as a way to improve the appearance for a year or two until funds to replace the fence could be found. The commission approved reimbursement of up to \$50 for supplies to test paint some or all of the fence.
- 3) Heads: Mike said he will make an effort to paint the sign at Heads by the tomb by Oct 2nd when the Heritage Commission will hold an open house at the Heads School and conduct tours of the old section of Heads cemetery. Mike will try to find a paint chip to determine appropriate color and may have to ask Mr. Green or others to see if they recall what the color sign was originally..

b. **Review of Regulations and policies**: Mike Horne made a motion that an interim change be made to the current regulations to allow upright monuments. Discussion ensued on defining maximum sizes, approval process, etc. The commission unanimously agreed to an interim change allowing upright monuments in Heads and Martins cemeteries with the requirement for each proposed monument come before the commission for review/approval before families purchase and/or install the monument. A guideline on the maximum size of the monument was to have at least 6" of clearance from the edge of a single cemetery lot. Example: a single 42" wide lot could have a monument no wider than 30". More side clearance would be required for a monument on multiple lots.

6. New Business:

a. Election of Officers: Sharron said she was willing to continue as Chair, John agreed to be Secretary, and Mike agreed to continue to maintain the database. Unanimous approval of the slate of officers.

b. NH Cemetery Association: Mike recommended the commission join the NH Cemetery Association which costs \$20 per year. Unanimously approved.

c. Alternatives to Town opening graves: Sharron shared a proposal from Mark Hubbard from Chichester, NH to provide grave opening/closing services for the Hooksett cemeteries. No decision made and this proposal will be considered at the next commission meeting.

d. Meeting with the Town Council: The commission agreed to try and schedule the annual meeting with the Town Council for their second meeting in October – October 27.

7. Next Meeting: To be announced; unanimous vote to adjourn at 8PM.

Respectfully submitted,
John H. Danforth
Secretary