

**CEMETERY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

January 23, 2018

5:30 PM

Conference Room C

MEMBERS PRESENT: William Graham
Gail Forsberg

ALSO PRESENT: Scott Charpentier, DPW Director
Donald LeBlanc
Robert Luke

Meeting called to order at 5:35 PM

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 6, 2017 MEETING

Commissioner Graham moved to approve the minutes from June 6, 2017; Commissioner Forsberg seconded the motion. All members voted in favor.

2. UPDATE ON GROUND PENETRATING RADAR PROJECT (GPR)

Mr. Charpentier gave a brief description of the GPR to the commissioners. After reviewing the handouts, Commissioner Forsberg noted that there are several burials without headstones or markers. Mr. Charpentier explained that additional burials were discovered after pushing back the leaves & brush at the rear tree line. He also recommended that the area be marked for the future to avoid additional brush being placed over the burials. Commissioner Graham asked if there were burials on other adjacent properties and Mr. Charpentier responded that while the area is maintained by the abutter, the burials are still within Town property. Commissioner Forsberg suggested a fence around the site, something nice like rod iron. Mr. Charpentier & Mr. Leblanc agreed that this might be an opportunity for the Historical Commission to address.

3. PUBLIC HEARING ON CHANGES TO CEMETERY REGULATIONS

At 5:50 pm Commissioner Graham motioned to open the public hearing. Commissioner Forsberg seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

Mr. Charpentier explained the provision allowing a Northborough resident to purchase several lots and then immediately transfer them to friends, family and other non-residents. He suggested changing the regulation so that lot transfers are subject to the same criteria as lot sales; they can only be transferred to another Northborough resident or someone with significant ties to the Town.

Mr. Charpentier also recommended an increase in the vault fee as the vendor has raised their price and we are simply passing that additional cost along to the resident. Moving from \$75 to \$100 per vault will ensure several years of stability in the fee charged to residents.

Commissioner Graham motioned to accept the changes to the cemetery regulations and Commissioner Forsberg seconded. All members voted in favor.

4. UPDATE ON THE HOWARD STREET CEMETERY RESTORATION & RESETTling PROJECT

Mr. Charpentier explained the project to the commissioners from its inception to the bid process, and finally the award to Westmill Preservation Services of Halifax, Massachusetts. The plan is for Westmill to begin their work in the spring. Mr. Leblanc noted that he will be observing their work for both quality workmanship and for his own education into their process. The commissioners were appreciative of the update.

5. RIGHTS OF INTERNMENT FORM

Mr. Charpentier explained the potential liability to the Town for burying an individual without legal rights to a lot and how that may come about. He noted that without a clear tie to the lot-owner (via Obituary or general Town knowledge) that the Town lacked protection and evidence of any legal right to said lot. Mr. Charpentier noted that in those rare cases we would have the family sign a form absolving the Town of all responsibility for disinterment costs should the lot owner ever dispute the burial. The commissioners discussed this potential problem extensively and ultimately agreed that the Town does not have the resources to trace bloodlines in questionable cases, and therefore the adoption of the form is in the best interest of the Town.

6. OTHER CEMETERY BUSINESS

Commissioner Forsberg stated that she received several complaints regarding the current rules for lot sales, specifically with regard to sequential purchases. Mr. Charpentier explained the problem of selling lots out-of-sequence and being left with many single lots once the cemetery is full. Both commissioners understood the desire of the residents but also realized that it isn't sustainable to sell lots non-sequentially. They both agreed that it might warrant revisiting at a future date.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting has been scheduled for May 2018, with a specific date to be determined in the future.

ADJOURN:

At 6:40 pm, Commissioner Graham moved to adjourn; Commissioner Forsberg seconded the motion; The vote was unanimous in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert Luke
Administrative Assistant

Documents used during meeting:

1. January 23, 2018 Agenda
2. June 6, 2017 Meeting Minutes
3. Printouts from Ground Penetrating Radar results
4. Rights of Internment sample form