

Historic Cemetery Commission Minutes
Town Hall, Conference Room B
October 7, 2014
6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Deron Murphy (Chair), Mary Louise Formisano (Vice-Chair), Jason Beaumier, Gene Dumas, and Chris Feisthamel (arrived at 6:25 pm).

Others Present: Alan Clarke, EGHS Teacher Andy Perrin, and Jim Ostiguy.

Staff present: Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner

EGHS Teacher Andy Perrin – Collaboration Opportunities with HCC

Mr. Perrin explained that he teaches RI/Local history classes as an elective at the high school and is interested in opportunities that are available to engage his students in working collaboratively with the Historic Cemetery Commission; specifically a historically aligned service-learning project with a goal for them to experience a connection to the history of the town they live in. Mr. Perrin explained his interest was to have his students work on a restoration and/or cleanup of one or more of the cemeteries in Town as a project while researching the people who are buried in the cemeteries in order to strengthen the relevance of the service.

The Commissioners were overwhelmingly in support of working with Mr. Perrin and suggested starting with historic cemeteries #48 and #49 considering they are closest to the high school.

In terms of historical sources that would help the students with the research component of the project, the Commissioners suggested using Westminster Archives, Arnolds Record, Spencer Genealogy online, RI Historic Cemetery Database maps, Ancestry.com, The Pendulum newspaper as well as researching obituaries and using local town historians.

Mr. Clark explained that taking photographs is a much better way of retaining stone information than stone rubbing so as not to disturb or ruin the stone in any way.

Although Mr. Perrin was still formulating how he would organize almost 30 students and build a cemetery clean-up around a school day (7:30 am -2pm) and research throughout the semester, he seemed convinced this was a viable opportunity he would be moving forward with.

Mr. Clark also mentioned that Cemetery #8 could be a good research project to undertake since we are not sure why this is labeled as a cemetery.

Approval of Minutes – September 2, 2014

Motion by Mr. Dumas to approve the September 2, 2014 minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. Beaumier. Approved 5 – 0.

Fall EG Cemetery Clean-Up Campaign – Clean-up for October 18th

The Commissioners discussed the cemeteries to be restored for the upcoming cleanup on October 18th; it was determined that Cemeteries #18, #22 and #71, all of which were cleaned in September, would be finished up on the 18th. Mr. Dumas would lead the 25 URI and 15 EGHS volunteers at #18 and once again have Mr. MacGunnigle make his presentation about the historic significance of the Tillinghast Lot cemetery.

Mr. Murphy volunteered to lead the Cemetery #22 cleanup and recommended that he would need about 3 volunteers in order to finish cleaning that particular cemetery and Mr. Feisthamel would head the cleanup at Cemetery #71.

Cemetery Ghost Tour Event

The Commissioners discussed the idea of having a Cemetery Twilight Tour at Cemetery #38, being the East Greenwich Cemetery, located across from the Eldredge School, in order to raise awareness about the historic significance of those buried there and an opportunity to raise money by way of a suggested donation. Any participant could park along First Avenue or use the Santander Bank parking lot. The East Gate, located across from the car wash would be where the tour would start and Mr. Clark volunteered to host the tour.

Commissioners determined a \$2 donation was acceptable and October 24th would work best at dusk.

State Cemetery Advisory Representative Report

Mr. Clarke reported that he has been gathering additional information and gradually sending updates on each cemetery in town; some of that information was from Ms. Hitchen's and his research in land evidence and from Violet Kettelle's book. Mr. Clark explained his recent findings about Cemetery #46. Lastly, he informed the Commission that he obtained approval from the School Department to borrow the larger trailer in order to haul the Steiner mower on as it is too heavy for the smaller trailer.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.