

Historic Cemetery Commission Minutes
Town Hall, Conference Room B
September 2, 2014
6:00 p.m.

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

Others Present: Alan Clarke.

Staff present: Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner

Approval of Minutes – August 5, 2014

Motion by Ms. Formisano to approve the August 5, 2014 minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. Beaumier. Approved 4 – 0 (Mr. Feisthamel abstained.)

Public Comment

The Commissioners reaffirmed their opinion that any money made from selling their equipment obtained from the School Department should go into a “restricted fund account;” the money should go towards the needs of the Cemetery Commission. The Commission will hold onto the equipment until this can happen and a commitment from the Town Council can be confirmed.

Main Street Stroll Report and Outreach

The Stroll was attended by Mr. Beaumier, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Dumas, Mr. Clarke and Ms. Hitchen. There was a lot of general interest from passerbys and many conversations started. Several people picked up flyers of the fall cleanup campaign and a few people signed up to be put on the email list. All Commissioners agreed that it would be worth it to participate in future strolls.



The Commissioners expressed interest in setting up their table at the Land Trust's Fall Harvest set for September 21st and having their float be in the Veteran's Day Parade. Ms. Hitchen confirmed she would contact the appropriate town staff to follow through with the requests.

The Commissioners also discussed putting together a Halloween/Ghost Tour at the EG Cemetery located off of First Avenue. Mr. Dumas would get permission from caretakers and their Board and Mr. Clarke will be the walking tour guide. The idea would be to charge \$3-5 per person while giving a history lesson. More discussion to follow at the next meeting.

Ms. Formisano confirmed that Mr. Andy Perrin, an EGHS teacher who teaches RI/local history classes, is interested in a collaborating opportunity with the Cemetery Commission. She noted that Mr. Perrin anticipated attending a meeting soon. Mr. Feisthamel will reach out to the OLM history teacher to see if there is any interest in participating.

Fall EG Cemetery Clean-Up Campaign

Ms. Formisano noted there were 20 Salve Regina students set to volunteer for the September 27th cleanup and has contact information for members of the Grange. Additionally by the end of September there will be high school kids who will be ready to volunteer. Ms. Formisano added there will be 15 URI volunteers for the October 18th cleanup.

The Commissioners determined the following cemeteries will be restored: Cemetery 34, located in between the Grange and EG Square; Cemetery 18, located on Briarbrook Farm; Cemetery 72, located on the north side of Division Street; and Cemetery 22, located in the Cindyann neighborhood.

Fundraising Opportunity

Ms. Formisano researched the RI DOT Sponsor a Highway program and equated it to how the “Adopt a Cemetery” program could work; marketing the program to families, organizations, businesses and neighbors.

The RIDOT Sponsor a Highway program offers public relations, demonstrates civic pride and corporate environmental responsibility. The HCC program could offer public relation opportunities to demonstrate a commitment to the EG community and while preserving EG/RI history by partnering with the HCC.

The RIDOT Sponsor a Highway program inserts a company name and logo on a sign which is viewed by thousands of vehicles on a daily basis, reflecting the company’s investment in the community, going green and helping the environment. The HCC program could have a sign where the organization name and logo would be viewed by the citizens of EG and RI reflecting the investment in the EG community and history.

The RIDOT program determines frequency of cleaning on highways (some cleaned bi-monthly, some weekly). The HCC could arrange for all cemetery cleanups via the volunteer base.

The RIDOT program does the highway cleaning on behalf of the contributing company per the RIDOT requirements. The HCC could provide volunteers and support with press releases and promotional opportunities.

The RIDOT program signs located on I95 cost \$275 per month plus a one-time set up fee of \$550. The HCC could charge a set amount per month and also have a one-time set up fee.

The Commissioners discussed the opportunities involved with raising funding and where the money could be used towards such as removing large trees in cemeteries, stone repair, restoring iron gates, etc. Mr. Murphy believed there was a lot of merit to the program and Mr. Feisthamel supported the program as long as the money went into a restricted fund for the Cemetery Commission.

State Cemetery Advisory Representative Report (Alan Clark)

Mr. Clark informed the Commission of the happenings at the RI State Historical Cemetery Commission and noted they have a Facebook page.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.