

Historic Cemetery Commission Minutes  
Town Hall, Conference Room B  
October 6, 2015  
6:00 p.m.

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

Others Present: Alan Clarke.

Staff present: Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner

### **Approval of Minutes – September 1, 2015**

Motion by Mr. Beaumier to approve the September 1, 2015 minutes with minor amendment on page 2, first paragraph. Seconded by Mr. Dumas. Approved 3-0.

### **Discussion of Eagle Scout Projects**

Mr. Kendall Soares of E.G. Boy Scout Troop #1 was present with his mother, Kathleen Soares, to discuss the opportunity to perform an Eagle Scout project in conjunction with the Historic Cemetery Commission. The HCC members suggested Cemetery #18, the Tillinghast Lot, since it requires credible management skills and provides for physical, historical and stone correction opportunities. The members informed Mr. Soares that Cemetery #18 has been worked on on several occasions but still requires a substantial amount of restoration work. Mr. Dumas volunteered to talk with property owners Dean & Jerry Thompson.

In other Eagle Scout project news, Mr. Murphy noted he had recently met with Mr. Isaac Pontarelli from Troop #1 who will be restoring Cemetery #17, the Whitman-Wightman Lot. That cemetery is shown on recorded plan #703 in Land Evidence and is located on 1965 Frenchtown Road but most accessible by way of Long Meadow Drive as the cemetery is located to the rear of the property and there will be no disruptions to the homeowner. Mr.

Murphy expects Mr. Pontarelli to perform the cleanup(s) in late October/early November and crew will park along Long Meadow Drive as well as place debris/lawn bags in same place.

Mr. Murphy will also contact Mr. Alfred Timperly of Troop #2 who is also interested in his Eagle Scout project be a cemetery cleanup. The HCC members suggested Cemetery #60, the Pardon Mawney Lot, located on the Camp Fogarty facility.

### **Fall 2015 Cemetery Cleanup Campaign Discussion & Logistics**

As for the October 24<sup>th</sup> Cemetery Cleanup the Commission decided to focus efforts on restoring Cemetery #72, the Wickes Family Lot, located on Division Road and Cemetery #40, the Edmund Andrews Lot, located at 1639 South County Trail. Ms. Formisano indicated there were about 20 URI student volunteers as well as 12 other volunteers for the upcoming cleanup; she will email a final roster volunteer list a few days prior to the cleanup. Mr. Clarke will contact Ms. Lucy Prossner, the resident at 1639 South County Trail for permission to restore the cemetery; backup cemetery options for cleanup include Cemetery 34 and 7.

The HCC members commented the September cleanup was very successful even though there was a small but hardworking volunteer crew on site. According to Mr. Clarke Cemeteries 4 and 10 look fantastic which he wants to use them as a model and show piece.

A small discussion arose as to what other cemeteries, similar to Cemeteries 4 and 10, are located on open space and are supposed to be maintained by a homeowner's association. Ms. Hitchen noted that in addition to the Crystal Creek open space there is The Woods, Residences at Fry Brook, Pheasant Ridge, and Green Farm associations which have cemeteries.

### **Status Update: Trees in Glenwood Cemetery & Hemlock Drive residence**

Mr. Murphy averred that he met with the Superintendent of Glenwood Cemetery (Mr. Bob Gauthier) about the tree issue in Mr. Anthony Gallo's backyard on Hemlock Drive. Mr. Gauthier indicated he would raise the issue with his Board as well as check with the tree warden and quite possibly get it approved by the Glenwood Cemetery Board.

### **Long Term Goals & Strategies**

The Commission would like to identify every cemetery owner, whether it be private, homeowner's association, or maintained by the Town. Staff has an unofficial excel spreadsheet that she can share which provides property owner, address and location of cemetery. Mr. Clarke added that he too has been updating the master book which also includes current owner, address and plat/lot; he will soon be sending to everyone.

### **Update on Equipment and Assets**

Mr. Dumas explained he would like to purchase a small hand tool called a pullerbear, which is essentially a tree puller which yanks small trees and their roots out of the ground in an efficient manner. He noted the cost is about \$200.00. The Commission agreed the tool would be very beneficial to cemetery cleanups.

Mr. Feisthamel motioned to approve the purchase of a pullerbear not to exceed \$225.00. Seconded by Mr. Beaumier. Approved 5 – 0.

Staff had Mr. Dumas sign the Bill of Sale for the John Deere which was officially sold on September 18, 2015 in the amount of \$250.00.

### **Proposed Proclamation for Historic Cemetery Awareness to Town Council**

Mr. Beaumier presented the Commission with draft language of a proclamation for a "Historic Cemetery Restoration Day" in East Greenwich" to be approved by the Town Council for the third Saturday in April with the purpose of educating and informing residents about the significant and important issue of historic cemeteries.

The Commission was comfortable with the draft language but felt it should be presented to the Town Council at a later date. Staff noted other communities should receive the draft proclamation so they too can participate in Historic Cemetery Restoration Day, not just East Greenwich.

### **Draft Language & Conditions for Residents with Cemeteries on their Property**

Mr. Beaumier prepared proposed tax credit for homeowners who maintain a historic cemetery on their property. This was established as part of a long term strategy. Within the proposal there were several conditions the homeowner would have to meet in order to receive the tax credit. The Commission needed further guidelines before it could be submitted for review.

### **State Cemetery Advisory Representative Report**

Mr. Clarke is in the process of updating the Master Cemetery book with information and data that he received from the Planning Department, land evidence as well as from Northeast Revaluation. He will send everyone an updated book when complete. Once complete he plans on retiring.

### **Staff Report**

Ms. Hitchen noted the Facebook page is in process. To date Staff asserted there is \$2,602.44 in the bank account.

Mr. Murphy indicated he received an email from Ms. Leigh Botello, the Town Clerk, asking if the Cemetery Commission wanted to be in the Veteran's Day Parade. There was a unanimous response of yes and would use Mr. Clarke's truck in the parade route. Mr. Murphy would reply back to Ms. Botello that the Commission will participate on Wednesday, November 11<sup>th</sup>.

Next scheduled meeting is November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Feisthamel, seconded by Mr. Beaumier. Approved 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm.