

Historic Cemetery Commission Minutes
Town Hall, Conference Room B
February 2, 2016
6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Deron Murphy (Chair), Jason Beaumier, Gene Dumas, and Chris Feisthamel (arrived at 6:28 p.m.).

Others Present: Alan Clarke.

Staff present: Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner

Approval of Minutes – December 8, 2015

Motion by Mr. Dumas to approve the December 8, 2015 minutes. Seconded by Mr. Beaumier. Approved 3-0.

State Cemetery Advisory Representative Report

Mr. Clarke recommended an East Greenwich HCC member attend the corporate cemetery annual meetings, specifically the Glenwood Cemetery meetings since Mr. Dumas is already a member of the EG Cemetery Corp. Mr. Clarke stated he needs assistance installing a few signs in cemeteries that are hard to get to. Mr. Murphy offered to help.

Mr. Clarke has updated his EG Cemetery Book but cautioned it is very large in content. Mr. Murphy offered to create a Dropbox Account in order to access Mr. Clarke's large volume of useful information at relative ease.

Lastly, Mr. Clarke noted he had been in the process of making sure each cemetery in town is marked accordingly on the appropriate map; due to the holiday season that project fell to the wayside but it will be revisited again soon.

Mr. Clarke left the meeting to attend the Warwick Cemetery Commission meeting.

Discussion of Spring Cleanups

Due to the mild winter the Commissioners discussed starting the spring cleanup campaign earlier this year, with a kickoff on Saturday, March 26th. As long as the weather held up the Commissioners decided to start the cleanup season on March 26th at Cemetery #18 with a light cleaning, raking and spreading seed. The following dates would be April 5th (pending CCRI getting back to Mr. Beaumier), April 16th, May 14th, and June 25th.

Mr. Dumas suggested seed with clover be spread at Cemetery #18 on March 26th. The Commission would make a decision regarding the seed purchase at the next meeting.

All cleanups will be on a Saturday from 9 am to noon and Mr. Beaumier is now in charge of the volunteer database.

Thanks to Mr. Beaumier and House Representative Antonio Giarrusso, April 16, 2016 has been designated as Historic Cemetery Restoration/Awareness Day in the State of Rhode Island. The Commission reiterated that this day should be about highlighting the hard work done by all local cemetery commissions and asserted the house resolution should be sent to all those people in the state who participate in cemetery restoration efforts.

Equipment Purchase

Mr. Feisthamel made his sales pitch again to purchase a leaf blower. He explained he has done some research and has found decent models priced anywhere between \$399-\$599, noting he recently saw a good quality leaf blower at Allen's Seed. Mr. Murphy agreed there are benefits to having a leaf blower in the Commission's "toolbox" as he already has his own backpack leaf blower. He believed a rolling leaf blower would be a good asset and asked Mr. Feisthamel to provide substantial research for the next meeting in order for the Commission to make an educated purchase.

Purchase of Bruce MacGunnigle's "East Greenwich, RI Historical Cemetery Inscriptions" Book

The Commissioners conversed about the importance of each member having their own copy of Mr. MacGunnigle's book as it is a great resource combined

with Mr. Clarke's work. Ms. Hitchen noted she had a copy of the book in the Planning Office and Mr. Murphy had purchased the book online; the other members did not have easy access to the book.

Ms. Hitchen contacted Mr. MacGunnigle who indicated the price of the book is \$20 per book and he would deliver free of charge. She added the purchase would most likely come out of the Planning Department's books and subscriptions account and not have to be paid for by the HCC.

Motion by Mr. Dumas to purchase four "East Greenwich, RI Historical Cemetery Inscriptions" Book by Mr. MacGunnigle at \$20.00 each (\$80.00 total) to stay in perpetuity with the Historic Cemetery Commission. Seconded by Mr. Beaumier.

VOTE: 4 – 0.

Future Goals

The Commissioners discussed how to develop a minimum set of standards and guidelines or responsibilities for those who have cemeteries that reside on their property. The guidelines would vary depending upon whether one is a private residence, cemetery association, corporation, or town/state owned cemetery.

The Commissioners were tasked with researching minimum standards for each group for the next meeting while Ms. Hitchen would contact the Town Solicitor for advice on current enforcement process, particularly with homeowner's associations.

In other news the Commissioners commented on the legislation put forward by House Representative Malik that would ban dogs at the Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Exeter. Mr. Beaumier noted he had prepared similar language preventing dogs in cemeteries. Mr. Feisthamel agreed dogs should be banned from cemeteries as he has seen firsthand residents walking their dogs in Cemetery #62 and leaving the dog waste behind.

Mr. Beaumier volunteered to research what other communities have done about dog walking in cemeteries.

Eagle Scout Projects Update

Mr. Murphy noted he will be working on the cleanup details with Mr. Alfred Timperly re: Cemetery #20.

Public Comments

Ms. Hitchen stated the HCC Facebook page has gone live – check it out.

Mr. Murphy reiterated he will create a Dropbox account for everyone to access. He recently made a presentation to the Lions Club; he hopes to gain a few volunteers from the group.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Beaumier, seconded by Mr. Dumas. Approved 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:53 pm.