

Minutes from 3/17/21 Cemetery Commission meeting final

6:00 PM

Remote Access Meeting with Zoom (Under Emergency Order for Pandemic)

Members present: Walter Tibbetts (WT), Susan Millinger (SM), absent, Steve Sullivan.
Guest, Janice Stone.

Meeting called to order at 6:04.

1. Review and approve minutes of the February 24, 2021 meeting. WT made two corrections in the draft minutes of February 24, 2021, then made a motion, seconded by SM, to approve the minutes as amended. The roll call vote was unanimous.
2. Follow-up on Annual Report for July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020. Guest Janice Stone, secretary through 1/31/2021, was thanked for her work in producing the Annual Report. The Report, approved at the previous meeting, has been sent to the Town Clerk.
In connection with the Report, there was a discussion about the possibility of hiring the firm which worked on the Gravestone Project for further work. Would the Community Preservation Committee (CPC) be more open to annual requests for smaller amounts, or a single application for a large sum for a multi-year project? WT pointed out that a larger grant would require a much more complicated bidding process. Stone suggested it would be easier to apply for \$10,000 every two years for a two-year contract. It was suggested that the Commission check with the CPC about this.
3. The Final Report on the Gravestone Project. The report is missing its cover page. Stone will send this to the Commission members.
4. Cemetery Commission Website. A description of the three cemeteries and the new language for signs has been sent by Janice Stone to be included on the website; a list of cemetery policies and pricing will also be included on the website.

WT asked whether a set of written regulations for Shutesbury cemeteries existed. Stone reported that the current regulations were drawn from an earlier sign. Having researched local cemetery regulations, Stone commented that Wendell's are very thorough. She will send us links to the various area cemetery regulations. These will provide a context for a future discussion of what regulations would be appropriate for Shutesbury.

WT explained the procedure for burials. The family or the funeral home contact the appropriate business or person for digging the graves. Shutesbury uses Grass Roots Landscaping of Leverett to excavate for natural burials; W.W. Clark excavates for traditional burials; WT himself digs graves for cremains. In the case of natural burials, families are required to consult a funeral home so that state regulations are observed.

WT will send Commission members the final draft of Natural Burial Regulations and the pricing sheet. These will be posted on the website.

Other content suggested for the website: Using photos to link to material on subordinate pages is desirable, if feasible. New content should include: description of the cemeteries written by Stone with photos; a brief description of the Gravestone Project, with a photo and a link to the report; names of the graves restored and cleaned should be made easy to find. Also need to add information on the Hearse House, with its original date and the date of reconstruction by the Historical Commission with funds from CPC as well as other sources.

SM volunteered to contact Fleischaker about additions to the website, with special emphasis on adding photos and text from gravesite restoration and the workshop.

It would be a good idea to provide an article for the next issue of *Our Town* with a follow-up to Stone's articles.

5. Publishing cemetery regulations: cemetery signage. The smaller cemeteries will continue to need smaller signs with their names. WT will price commercial signs and look for a nice wooden sign for West Cemetery and another for the Natural Burial area in West.
6. Gravestone Cleaning Workshop? Ta Mara Conde of Historic Gravestone Services said she would be willing to lead another cleaning workshop and give a power-point presentation. Commission members agreed it would be good to hold another workshop; we need to check with Tamara about the best time of year for the cemetery and her.
7. Volunteer Spring Cleanup? The Commission is interested in holding one, in which branches can be picked up and raking done of smaller branches and twigs and of chippings. Stone, who knows how to wash stones, would lead interested volunteers in that. WT will talk to the groundskeepers to see what they think. Early May would be an ideal time. The Town has a volunteer waiver form which we would use. Advertisement would be via Town Announce, NextDoor Shutesbury and a sign.
8. Spring and Summer Projects. WT will service the mowers as usual, asking Steve Sullivan if he can help. Brush needs to be trimmed around the cemetery perimeter, and trees cut which have grown up along the perimeter. Trimming the brush along the stone wall is needed. The large white birch up near the well needs attention, as does grinding the the stumps left from cutting down trees. The Stump Man of Granby did some grinding of stumps; WT wants to have more done, and then loam and grass seed put down. Some gravestones need to be put back up and cleaned. The Surveying Project needs to be finished.
9. Date for next meeting. Members tentatively agreed, pending checking with Sullivan, on Wednesday, April 21 at 6 p.m.
10. Adjournment at 7:00 p.m. A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and unanimously approved by roll call vote.

Submitted by

Susan Millinger

Cemetery Commission secretary

