

Minutes of 12/15/21 Cemetery Commission
6:00 PM
Remote Access Meeting with Zoom
(Under Emergency Order for Pandemic)
Approved 1/19/22

Members present: Walter Tibbetts (WT), Susan Millinger (SM), Dina Stander (DS). Meeting called to order at 6:02

1. Minutes of the September 29 meeting, held over to the meeting of November: acceptance was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved by a roll call vote.
2. Minutes of the November 17 meeting. Motion to accept was made, seconded, and unanimously approved by a roll call vote.
3. New Cemetery Regulations. The question of whether or not to continue to require a vault in the case of traditional inhumations was raised; it was decided to put off discussion until a later meeting. The Chair, WT, pointed that the Board of Health (BOH) has been quite strict about burials, so it is essential to determine its view of the necessity of vaults. He will talk with the BOH. A motion was made and seconded to accept the new Cemetery Regulations as revised at the meeting of November 17, 2021. The motion carried by a unanimous roll call vote.
4. Guidelines for Family-Directed Funerals. This document is in process. DS sent us a document which is oriented to families; she will draft a document for the use of the Cemetery Commission. It will include a checklist of questions and/or information for families. The information included needs to be specific to the regulations of Massachusetts.
5. Discussion of Lack of Markers throughout the Shutesbury Cemeteries. WT pointed out that there are a number of graves that lack markers, both in West and the other cemeteries. This is clearly not a satisfactory situation.
 - i DS suggested that at some point the Commission might do a ground-penetrating radar survey to determine where in the unmarked spaces there are burials.
 - ii The Commission may consider establishing a fund to provide grave markers for burials that lack them.
6. Report on New England Cemetery Management Association conference by DS. The conference meets in different locations; the 2021 meeting was in Sturbridge. DS commented that it was attended by both small-town cemetery commissioners and managers of large cemeteries. There was a presentation on Green Burials by national authority Lee Webster. One of the values of a conference like this is the opportunity to make helpful connections. So, for example, DS met a Barre commissioner, whose concerns are similar to Shutesbury's. Important topics discussed at the conference included managing graves: dealing for example with ground cover regrowing and destabilizing stones, as well as radar-mapping in old cemeteries. DS found the conference useful, and suggested Shutesbury might continue to send a commissioner to the annual conference, at least when held at not too remote a site.

NOTE: Shutesbury averages 8-10 burials a year.

7. Equipment purchases. WT hasn't yet been able to meet with the groundskeepers to see what they need. WT wants to see their list and look at prices, to see if this would be a good time to make purchases. This item is tabled to a future meeting.
8. Annual Report. A motion was made to accept the draft Annual Report for FY 21 and submit it to the Town Clerk. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously by a roll call vote.
9. Unanticipated items.
 - a. WT informed the Cemetery Commission that he had purchased 10 gallons of the D2 Biological Solution used in the workshop on cleaning gravestones, and because he was worried that it might freeze if left in the unheated Hearse House, he took it to the Fire Station.
 - b. DS plans to open communication with the Jewish Community of Amherst to find out who to contact if needed and to whom to refer people, since there tends to be an assumption that Shutesbury Cemetery Commission is responsible for that cemetery, its near neighbor, further west on Leverett Rd.
10. Date for next meeting: Wednesday, January 19, 2022, at 6 p.m.
11. Adjournment at 6:59 p.m. A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and unanimously carried by roll call vote.

Submitted by

Susan Millinger

Cemetery Commission secretary

