

Minutes of Meeting November 19, 2022

Location: Warren Armory, 11 Jefferson St.

In attendance: Pegee Malcolm, Judy Fardig, Christine MacWilliams, Richard Ring, Larry Hunter, David Guiot, Lew Keen, Charlotte Taylor, Jim Bessel, Debbie Suggs, Caroline Wells, Bob Butler and Maureen Buffi

Excused absences: Marjorie O'Toole, Jeffrey Burns, Edna Kent and Betty Mencucci

Also in attendance: Charlene Butler

Meeting called to order at 1:05 pm by Pegee Malcolm, chair

- Introduction of September 24, 2022 Meeting Minutes

It was noted that the location of Pascoag was incorrect. Bob made a motion to accept the minutes with a correction to be made and Charlotte seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

- RIACHC Website

There was a follow-up discussion from the Sept. meeting regarding ownership, responsibility and maintenance of the RIACHC's website and its database.

- database vs. website - separate issues?
- disclaimer - should there be a disclaimer indicating that the website and database are privately maintained? Pegee will check with AG for advice.

- RI Historical Cemetery Awareness & Preservation Weeks

The partnership between the RI Advisory Commission on Historical Cemeteries (RIACHC) and the RI Historic Preservation & Heritage Commission (RIHP&HC) was discussed. It was agreed that the event has been successful and that there is a strong interest in future plans. The event dates going forward would be April 1 - May 31.

- Community Service Volunteers

It was asked if there were forms for cemetery volunteers. Forms can be found on the United Way's volunteer section of their website and on the courts section of the RI.Gov website.

- FAQs/FYI

A new section will be added to the website. Lew prepared a list of questions and answers submitted by commissioners. Adjustments were discussed. Changes will be updated and reviewed at the April meeting. Suggestions included:

- a link to RI General Laws regarding historical cemeteries (presently in Commission Handbook under "Documents" in menu)
- names for cemeteries - graveyard, burial ground, burial lot, etc.
- how to find out where someone is buried - RIACHC database, Findagrave, historical societies, funeral homes, kiosks, etc.
- disclaimers
- rules concerning cemeteries sometimes posted
- rights-of-way

- what to do if gates are locked
 - who takes care of burial site (often no one)
 - can I be buried in a historical cemetery
 - deeds granting cemetery access
 - link to "Groups/Associations" (already on website menu) for contact and work group info.
 - seeking professional/RIACHC help for up righting fallen stones, repairing or cleaning stones
 - reporting poor condition of cemeteries or uncooperative owners
 - link to government website for ordering gravestones for veterans
 - what is perpetual care
 - financial health of cemetery
 - purpose of RIACHC
 - link to RIACHC member's page
 - responsibilities of appointed members
- 2023 Meeting Dates
 - April 19 (3rd Wed.) at Babcock-Smith House in Westerly
 - June 21 (3rd Wed.) Location to be determined
 - September 16 (3rd Sat.) Location to be determined
 - November 18 (3rd Sat.) Location to be determined

Additional Member Comments and Updates - Others have been submitted to Peggie via email

Peggie announced that a new order of cemetery signs will be accepted by DOT but that posts are still unavailable.

Also, Peggie was contacted by someone wishing to bury her grandfather at Oakland Cemetery. She referred them to Bell Funeral Home.

Charlotte reported that the South County Hospital is looking to convert a local playground into a parking lot. There is a possibility that the site may have native burials. A procedure to protect the site from desecration has been suggested but not everyone is in agreement. The issue is being reviewed by Tribal Authority.

Also, Charlotte reported that someone whose grandfather was buried in a mass burial pit when the graves on Pontiac Ave. were removed is now looking to have his remains exhumed. She explained to them that was not feasible.

Larry mentioned that he had been contacted by property owners who were concerned that a hazardous tree in an abutting cemetery could fall onto their property.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:41 pm on a motion made by Lew and seconded by Debbie.

Respectfully submitted by Maureen Buffi, secretary