

Accepted Minutes of Meeting April 18, 2018

Location: Gloucester Town Hall

In attendance: Pegee Malcolm, Alex La Force, Russell DiNoto, Judy Fardig, Edna Kent, Walter Slocomb, Lew Keen, Michael Laferriere, Dory Wagner, Alan Clarke, Charlotte Taylor, Betty Mencucci and Jim Bessel

Excused absences: Jennifer Galpern, David Bell and Bob Butler.

Also, in attendance: Karen Beck, Peter Mair, Christine MacWilliams, Skye Pechie, Nancy Robinson, Ed Robinson, Heidi Colwell, David McCarthy, and Carlo Mencucci.

Meeting called to order at 7:02pm by Pegee Malcolm, chair

The order of the meeting was changed to allow guest speakers to present first.

Presentation of Proposed URI Bike Path by Karen Beck, URI Landscape Architect

Handouts with site photos were distributed

Bike path would be within 25' buffer zone of New Fernwood Cemetery

Test pits reveal that affected area is in a previously plowed zone and there is no evidence of burials outside of the cemetery proper.

Charlotte informed Karen that she must get approval from the town (South Kingstown).

Pegee asked for a show of hands to vote on a letter of "No Objection" from the commission.

Vote: 10 Approved, 2 Rejected, 1 Abstained

Introduction of November 15, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Judy made a motion, seconded by Alan, to accept the Draft Minutes. The Draft Minutes were unanimously approved.

Flagging of Veterans Graves

Jim gave an update on the creation of a database to document the graves of veterans in cemeteries throughout the state. This would aid in the purchasing, distribution and placement of flags on the graves of veterans.

RIGL 30-25-10 Concerning Care of Neglected Graves

In the past Pegee had inquired with the state about this but was told that while it was a state responsibility, there was no funding to support it.

Right-of-Way Access to Cemeteries

Pegee mentioned that unless a right-of-way was included in the property deed a homeowner could decline passage across their property.

Mausoleum at Roger Williams Park

Currently the mausoleum is included as part of Oakland Cemetery (CR 003) even though it is actually in Providence. A proposal was made to have the mausoleum designated as its own cemetery. Dory made a motion, seconded by Judy, to have it assigned its own Providence number. It was unanimously approved. Pegee will contact John Sterling to make the request.

Woonsocket 014 and 009

Michael reported that the city is looking to improve the condition of WO 014 which has been used as a dump. PAL didn't find evidence of remaining burials and some accounts suggest that they were all removed during previous road construction. Michael asked if it is "Prudent and Feasible" to repurpose this location as a "park" or a "public memorial garden" featuring a marker indicating that this had been a burial site and including as many names as known. Charlotte explained that the city can contact her for more details on the law pertaining to abandoned cemeteries. If there are still remaining burials, then a higher level of investigation by PAL would be required.

Pegee was contacted about the condition of WO 009 by someone who would like to be involved in cleaning it. Michael suggested it might also be a candidate to be designated as a park, having significance for veterans. It contains the grave of RI's first Civil War casualty.

Michael and Pegee suggested letting those individuals interested in cleaning to get started and Michael will approach the city to put them in touch with Charlotte to discuss the options.

Website Update

Michael reports that the website needs to be more accessible by contemporary technology. He also would like to be able to have more than one picture of a headstone, give users the ability to add cemetery pictures, have a record of the condition of the cemeteries, and track maintenance. If volunteer hours are recorded it could be a way to secure grant money. He would like the site to have the ability to manage cemetery adoption programs and include additional historic data.

There are 3,000 Facebook "likes". Michael suggested that maybe in the future a button to donate via PayPal might be added to raise funds.

County Representation on Commission

Dory asked about the how the numbers of commissioners for each county are determined. She would like to see an additional commissioner representing Washington County. Pegee said they would need to write a letter to the state.

Additional Member Comments – Other Updates have been submitted to Pegee via email

Pegee acknowledged Christine MacWilliams for her role in coordinating a statewide "Cemetery Awareness Day".

Alex reported that the president of the Westerly Historical Society has said that the historical society which is in ownership of WY 001 no longer wishes to own it. They are unable to access it and are currently paying insurance on the property. They would have to sell or donate it. Alex also mentioned that she is working with the Westerly Assessor's Office to include the historical cemetery designations on the online plat maps.

Lew brought up RIGL 23-18-12 regarding community service for vandalism and said he will look into it.

Next meeting should be June 20, 2018 in Newport but that will conflict with the American Gravestone Studies (AGS) conference. Pegee asked if it was okay to move the meeting to June 27 and it was approved.

Meeting adjourned at 9:16 pm on a motion by Judy, seconded by Alan.

Respectfully Submitted by Maureen Buffi, Secretary