

Minutes of Meeting April 18, 2012

West Greenwich, Louttit Memorial Library

In attendance: Pegee Malcolm, Charlotte Taylor, Alan Clarke, Evelyn Wheeler, Letty Champion, Dory Wagner, Sally Small, Rick Whitesell, Gayle Waite, Lee Teverow, Bob Butler, and Henry Duquette, Excused absences: Lester Hilton, Judith Fardig, Roger Guillemette, David Kirchner, and Edna Kent

Additional Attendees: Michael Laferriere, Julie Nathanson, Charlene Butler, Maureen Buffi, secretary

Meeting called to order at 7:06pm by Chair Pegee Malcolm

Introduction of Draft September 21, 2011 Meeting Minutes
Minutes accepted 12-0.

Status of Cemetery Signs

Mike Hebert of RI DOT sent signs to Johnston. Others are still being worked on. DOT agreed to give sign posts to Tiverton as they already have signs.

- Update on Veterans Cards

Evelyn Wheeler and Letty Champion report that they are done entering information from the cards onto the spreadsheet. Henry Duquette reports that it is still being determined how to make the information accessible, possibly putting it on the web or on the .gov site. The next step will be the standardization of the data to allow for a “searchable” database and more research is needed to fill in gaps on older cards. There was a discussion on how this information might be used by various groups for the purpose of flagging veterans’ graves.

- Update on Website

Henry Duquette was contacted by RIC professor Francis J. Leazes, who along with his students is putting together an online guide to the North Burial Ground. Henry and Mike Laferriere discussed how to go about converting the cemeteries database from Access to a web-based one. Henry will ask RIC if they are interested in being involved in the project.

- Update on Airport Expansion

Pegee Malcolm reports that the airport, city of Warwick and RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission are in agreement to preserve WK 026, Peter Freeman lot, where it is, with various ideas to protect the stones, such as encasing them, tilting them, transferring the info onto metal plaques and moving the stones. In the mean time the public can still access this cemetery by making an appointment with the airport.

In a meeting with Senator Sheldon Whitehouse and staff members, attended by Pegee and Henry, Pegee was asked what role his office could have in raising awareness for cleaning and maintaining cemeteries. Possibly the commission would act as a clearinghouse to connect volunteers with groups looking for help with cemeteries. She emphasized the need to pay attention to all historic cemeteries not just those with veterans. • Charlotte reported that in the new state regulations being created by RIHPHC there is a legal vehicle for cities and towns to take over neglected cemeteries and any available funds, in order to protect and preserve historic cemeteries.

Pegee Malcolm distributed handouts about Lyme disease and an updated Cities and Towns Contact Information for Historical Cemetery Information and Maintenance. Letty Champion requested that Pegee make Roger Guillemette the contact person for Little Compton instead of herself.

Rick Whitesell expressed concern over finding multiple names for the same cemeteries and asked why they were being changed in the database. Pegee pointed out that the database uses names based on the work conducted by James Arnold and later Benn. There was a discussion on how multiple names might be used in a database to allow a cemetery to be searchable by more than one name.

What should be done when a headstone is discovered and is not listed in the database? The names should be sent to John Sterling; he likes photos, or send to Pegee and she can notify him. He is still updating on a semi-regular basis.

Pegee received a call from Kurt who wants to be an intern for the RI Advisory Commission on Historical Cemeteries. She asked if members have specific tasks for him to let her know. Evelyn Wheeler asked Pegee if Kurt might be interested in GPS work. Member Updates/Comments Charlotte Taylor: The Nonquit School grounds may contain an Indian burial ground. The town of Tiverton wants to sell the former school but the realtor must determine if there really is an Indian burial ground.

Alan Clarke: Visited 55 of 80 cemeteries, using forms to record information from stones and taking photos. He has access to some box steel posts which may be useful as posts for cemetery signs.

Evelyn Wheeler: A notice from the Gloucester Heritage Society announced that Edna Kent will be receiving the T.W. Dorr Award in a ceremony at the Crystal Lake Golf Course. Letty Champion: Finished working on veteran's cards and is photographing North Kingstown cemeteries.

Dory Wagner: Working on GPS readings in Westerly. The town of Exeter and the historical society contacted her for help with perpetual care money found for 13 cemeteries. She talked with the Richmond Sun about which cemetery she planned to clean for Earth Day.

Sally Small: Brought in samples of veteran's medallions that the Barrington cemetery commission had ordered, noting that she preferred those that stood next to the headstones as opposed to those which lay flat.

Rick Whitesell: The Woonsocket Historical Society had someone come out to finish working on stones and that a student from Bryant has been taking measurements, recording information found on the stones and documenting stone types.

Gayle Waite: Continues GPS readings with Lori in Richmond.

Bob Butler: Cemetery restoration continues in West Greenwich and the town is mowing and trimming.

Henry Duquette: The cemetery commission in Burrillville received grant money to purchase a one ton manual hoist, the Foster Preservation Society's cemetery group is active, he and Edna Kent have been filling in missing GPS readings and that many cemeteries in Gloucester need work.

Roger Guillemette (via e-mail to Pegee): He ordered 3 gallons of D-2 cleaner to use for an Earth Day cemetery cleanup project.

Pegee Malcolm: Brayton cemetery in Warwick will be cleaned by about 30 volunteers as an Earth Day cleanup project. Approximately 93% of Warwick cemeteries are cleaned at least once a year.

Michael Laferriere: Asked if it was okay to put a link to the Facebook page he created, where anyone can post, list events and cleanups, on the RI Historical Cemeteries .gov website and vice versa. Pegee suggested that Michael place a disclaimer indicating on the government website that the Facebook page is that of a private citizen and not that of the official government site. A motion was made by Letty Champion and seconded by Henry to have a vote to allow the links between the RI Historical cemeteries .gov website and Facebook. The vote was 11-0 in favor of allowing the link with Sally Small abstaining, noting that she didn't have enough information to feel comfortable voting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:31pm.

The next meeting will be June 18, 2012 in East Greenwich