

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL CEMETERIES ADVISORY COMMISSION

Minutes of meeting on June 18 at the Little Compton Community Center, 34 Commons, Little Compton

Present: Margaret (Pegee) Malcolm, chair; Judy Fardig; Sally Small; Evelyn Wheeler; Charlotte Taylor; Roger Guillemette; David Bell; Alan Clarke; and Michael Laferriere.

Open: A quorum was established and the meeting called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Margaret (Pegee) Malcolm, chair.

Minutes: On a motion by Judy Fardig, second by Charlotte Taylor, the minutes of the April 16 meeting were unanimously approved.

Reports: Pegee thanked County representatives for their written reports, which have been placed on file. In addition:

- Judy Fardig reported she is working with the Governor's Office on medallions for the graves of deceased governors. What needs to be determined first is what firm made the medallions and at what cost, along with a listing of which governors do not have medallions. It was decided that the representatives from each County would check their cemeteries for governors' graves and whether those graves have medallions.
- Evelyn Wheeler reported she went to the Coventry Cemetery Commission and, in the process, learned that the Commission receives \$4,000 from the Town of Coventry and has repaired more than 300 stones
- Sally Small reported she is having trouble contacting representatives of privately-owned Oakland Cemetery in an effort to locate a missing stone, and if it cannot be found, to replace it. Other Representatives said they, too, have had problems with getting information from the Cemetery.
- A lengthy discussion was held about congregants of a Baptist church in North Kingstown who use an adjacent historic cemetery to park while attending services. Stones and graves have been damaged by the cars, commissioners reported. A **motion was made** by Judy Fardig, with a second by Evelyn Wheeler, to send a letter to the Town of North Kingstown asking it to prohibit the cemetery from being used as a parking lot during church services.
- Michael Laferriere reported receiving many responses to before-and-after photos posted on FaceBook of work in historic cemeteries. Evelyn Wheeler reported the State Police are in possession of a stone with the wording "KOBÉ 1890" and are seeking information. She asked Michael if the mystery stone would be a good post for FaceBook. He replied in the affirmative. Michael also noted the Commission's handbook needs updating.
- Alan Clarke reported the East Greenwich Cemetery Commission is doing with well, with "five good people who are energetic and organized." He said the goal of the Commission is to convince the Town of East Greenwich to take over all the historic cemeteries. Also, Alan asked if the 25-foot buffer around an historic cemetery count toward the tax break the cemetery receives. He was told that it did.

Reports from the Chair Margaret (Pegee) Malcolm:

- The oldest private cemetery in Warwick has been founded and “GPS(ed).” She said the first public school in Warwick was also on the site. It is about 20 by 20-feet with at least three burials.
- The airport cemetery needs to be an object-free zone because of new flight paths. The airport laid down the stones but a couple a still too high. The airport is leaning toward moving the stones and leaving the bodies there.
- Roger Williams University is seeking applications for community-based projects that its students can do as part of their community service requirement. Applications are due by Aug. 4 at 5 p.m. and can be done on-line.
- The New England Genealogical Society will meet in Newport in April, 2015, and is looking for projects.
- She will keep the Commission posted on possible paranormal activity in Pawtucket that, in turn, could be linked to North Providence Historic Cemetery #3. A woman in Pawtucket claims she keeps hearing the words “Malcolm” and “Lee” being uttered by spirits at her home there. Pegee said she does not know how the link to NP #3 was made. She said the homeowner and her “ghost buster” believe the woman may have helped clean the cemetery as a child. Stay tuned.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m. on a motion by Judy Fardig, second by Alan Clarke.

Next meeting: Pegee said the next meeting will be September 17th at the Rhode Island Veterans Cemetery (since changed to Woonsocket).

