

Minutes of Meeting Feb 19, 2025

Location: Warwick City Hall Annex

In attendance: Peggie Malcolm, Judy Fardig, Jim Bessel, Larry Hunter, Deb Suggs, Betty Mencucci, David Guiot, Caroline Wells, Elise Carlson, Charlotte Taylor, and Maureen Buffi

Excused absences: Richard Ring, Jeff Burns, Lynne Rider and Christine MacWilliams

Also in attendance: Carl Tucker, Judy Nathanson, Carlo M., Mark, a guest interested in cemeteries

Meeting called to order at 6:37 pm by Peggie Malcolm, chair

- Introduction of October 16, 2024 meeting minutes

Dave noted a correction regarding his report on Cranston cemeteries. Deb made a motion to accept the minutes with the correction noted, Judy seconded the motion. All voted in favor to accept the minutes.

- New Members

Elise Carlson who will be replacing Edna Kent in Providence County, was introduced. Peggie noted that she is seeking replacements for Newport County representatives.

- Cemetery Weeks

The new coordinator for Cemetery Weeks at RI Historic Preservation & Heritage Commission will be Kelsey Mullen.

- Cemetery HP #82

Larry noted a found cemetery thought to be in Charlestown was determined to be the Barber Lot, HP#82 after some names were checked. Supposedly the remains had been removed but apparently not all. Most of the stones were broken and leaning against the wall.

- Burrillville Cemetery

Betty received a call from police that a car crashed into a cemetery and broke 4 stones and damaged the stone wall. They got an estimate for the repairs to the wall and for them to make the headstone repairs. It was suggested that they inquire into the Justice Assistance program and also, that they pursue if the driver had insurance.

In January, the site of a house foundation with possible cemetery was discovered. The 4 stones present didn't exactly resemble gravestones and the town planner called it a corn crib. It will not be marked as a cemetery.

Two cemeteries were discovered on DEM property near Round Top Pond in Burrillville. The first had no visible stones and it was too cold to probe. Nearby, a second one was found with fieldstones including an engraved stone dated Jan 15, 1781.

- Historical Cemetery Signs

DOT sign shop notified Peggie that most signs had been picked up or delivered already. There were 9 signs to be picked up. Going forward, a contact name of the person requesting the signs should be included.

- Elm Grove Cemetery NK #26

Carl Tucker, an attendee with a family interest in the cemetery outlined a history of the cemetery and expressed his concerns regarding the cemetery's loss of perpetual care funds and therefore, maintenance. The town of North Kingstown has stated the cemetery is privately owned and therefore, not involved.

The commission asked him questions and offered suggestions on the situation such as: if the cemetery has an established corporation and is selling plots, then it's privately owned, recommending they try the Champlin Foundation for archivist grants, checking for corporation papers through Freedom of Information Act, contacting the Attorney General's office and the Secretary of State. Deb offered to make a call to try to determine non-profit status.

- Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday May 21, when Cemetery Weeks will be discussed. The final meeting of 2025 will be October 15.

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

Elise noted that not much was going on in Johnston.

Charlotte said that PAL is waiting for the ground to thaw to follow up on some work in Barrington. She also reports that RIHP&HC's Revolutionary War Board is considering projects for the anniversary.

Jim said in Barrington they will work on yearly grave restoration in June and a fence was put up at Tyler Point. At the Veterans Cemetery, letters regarding the ordering of flags for Memorial Day were sent out.

Larry reported that the Land Trust acquired some new property containing cemetery WY #34, which he will submit a request for a correct name spelling of Lamphear. St. Bernard's parishioners want to clean NK #47, tentatively on April 12, coinciding with Cemetery Weeks. He's been asked to clean another monument for the Veteran's Roll of Honor.

Dave reported that at Oakland Cemetery, which has a special-master, the building has been taken down. Previously, there had been plans for Mulligan's Island to become a COSTCO. Now, a mixed-use site, including condominiums has been proposed. The training school project has a clean-up scheduled for April 26. A clean-up grant of \$500 is available. He also recommended to anyone interested, to take a tour of Pocasset Cemetery.

Betty and Carlo have been asked to do a March 16, conservation slideshow. Later they will host a free hands-on presentation.

Deb reported that in South Kingstown various groups have been looking to take on projects. A man with plans to do a lot of work had to slow down. South Kingstown Land Trust has properties with cemeteries. SK #185 needs work but private property has to be crossed to gain access. A URI student veterans' organization is petitioning to take over care of the Franklin-Gardiner (NG #10) cemetery. Please contact Deb about cemeteries for podcasts.

Judy had nothing new to report except that she will need to order more signs.

Julie reported that the database had been updated the previous week and that she had been photographing in November and December. A cemetery volunteer in Oakland has been submitting transcriptions for sections 5 and 7. Julie has also received some from St. Mary's in Bristol.

The next meeting will be on May 21, 2025 at 6:30 pm, at the Warwick Town Hall Annex.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:27 pm on a motion made by Charlotte and seconded by Jim.

Respectfully submitted by Maureen Buffi, secretary