

Minutes of Meeting June 17, 2015

Location: Gloucester Heritage Society, 1181 Putnam Pike, Chepachet.

In attendance: Pegee Malcolm, Edna Kent, Evelyn Wheeler, Rick Whitesell, Michael Laferriere, Charlotte Taylor, Bob Butler, Roger Guillemette, Alex LaForce, Dory Wagner, Judy Fardig and Jonathan Rascoe

Also in attendance: Colin Parker, Skye and Steve Pechie, Frank S., Walter Slocum, Betty and Carlo Mencucci, Charlene Butler and Bruce Frail.

Excused absences: Alan Clarke and Sally Small.

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

- Commission Member Changes

Henry Duquette resigned and will be replaced by Betty Mencucci. Rick Whitesell also resigned.

- Introduction of Draft Meeting Minutes from April 15, 2015

Bob Butler made a motion, seconded by Jonathan, to accept the Draft Minutes with a correction to note that Roger Guillemette was excused from the April meeting. The Minutes were unanimously approved.

- GIS Update

Evelyn distributed updated lists by town of cemeteries left to find or confirm.

- Flagging

Jonathan is working on a spreadsheet to record which groups are flagging which cemeteries to avoid duplicate distribution of flags and eliminate stockpiling of flags, resulting in higher costs. He will submit the list to the commission for review. Bruce Frail offered Jonathan a template database used by the Sons of Union Veterans to help create a record keeping system for flag distribution.

- Handbook Update

The decision of distributing hard copies or e-mailing copies will be made on a town-by-town basis by the responsible commissioner. Judy noted she wished to print copies for distribution in her town. Pegee suggested those wishing to e-mail copies to their towns should send an e-mail to the appropriate parties in advance, informing them that the handbook is forthcoming.

Suggestions for town offices which would benefit from a copy include: town clerks, mayors, police and fire departments, libraries, planning commissions, building inspectors, public works, tax assessors and cemetery committees.

- Helpful Websites

Pegee asked for suggestions to compile a list of helpful websites to be included on the RIACHC's website. A correction will be made to the SAR and SUV links.

- RI Treasures Brochure

The RI Alliance of Historical Associations put together a treasure map highlighting interesting RI attractions. The RIACHC voted to make Roger William's final resting place as their stop on the treasure map.

- Guidelines for Geocache Placement

Colin appeared before the commission for their final approval of the guidelines he previously submitted which set standards for obtaining permission and the safe placement of a geocache in a cemetery. Jonathan made a motion to accept the guidelines, seconded by Bob. All were in favor of accepting them.

- Partnership with Roger Williams University

Alex informed the commission that RWU students are available to take on the planning of various cemetery-related projects. There was a discussion of whether the students actually participate in the work but it was determined that the responsibility would fall strictly on the planning aspects.

- Met School Update

Evelyn reported a successful cleanup by the students on June 1, at SK 046, the burial place of James Arnold. The students also helped clean a cemetery in Clayville. Previously cancelled cleanups in Wickford and Warwick need to be rescheduled. Pegee and Evelyn plan to meet with the Met School to discuss other cemetery projects and set up a fall schedule.

- DOT Projects

Pegee reported receiving letters from DOT concerning a repair project in Burrillville and road work within 25' of a cemetery in East Greenwich.

- Serve RI

Pegee received a certificate from Serve RI thanking the commission for its participation. She sent them a letter explaining why the commission was looking for volunteers and why there was no money available to continue. Serve RI offered to waive its fee. In Warwick, Pegee reports that a girl put in 10 hours of community service on a cemetery project.

- BBC Documentary

A documentary maker is looking for cemeteries, possibly in Exeter and West Greenwich, which were taken over by nature. Pegee didn't know when production was to start.

- Historic Cemetery Signs Update

Anyone who needs to pick up signs must do so by making an appointment with DOT Sign Shop through Pegee. Mike Hebert reports that the signs are fine but the new posts are longer and heavier. The sign program is now under review for funding. Pegee plans to submit a new list for sign requests.

- Governor's Medallion Update

Judy reported that she was unable to locate an original template for the governor's medallions. Rick suggested using the Governor Pothier medallion presently at the historical society as a template to make markers for the most recent burials and any know to be missing.

Member Comments/Updates were reported to Pegée via email but additions are reported below:

Dory reported a new cemetery was found in the Carolina Mgmt. Area. A woman found 2 graves, apparently not yet registered, with fieldstone headstones and footstones and no inscriptions. Also, Richmond now has an official Cemetery Committee.

Charlotte reports that a cremation burial was found on Block Island.

Bob asked West Greenwich to make an official Cemetery Commission.

Pegée announced that the Cranston Cemetery Commission has been inactive but Walter Slocum (in attendance) and another person were interested in joining the commission.

Edna noted that the Memorial Day parade in town had children carrying flowers to place on veteran's graves. An Eagle Scout project planned for the cemetery at Paris Irons Rd. and Snake Hill hasn't started. Mystery stones found on Pine Orchard Rd. turned out to be concrete squares set against an old foundation and not actually headstones. Investigation of other mystery stones nearby will have to wait until November. Some bone fragments found on Tanyard Lane turn out to be animal remains. Edna is still working to help get the Dorr Rebellion Museum started near Acotes Hill.

Pegée received a letter from someone who read an article in RI Monthly about a cemetery in Cranston. Pegée will contact Cranston DPW to see if she can arrange a one-time cleaning or see if she can get a volunteer from Serve RI.

A guest of Bob Butler, Frank S., attending the meeting, reported having ancestors in CU 003 and noting that many of the stones in that cemetery were in need of work. He is interested in learning how to do stone repair.

The next meeting will be Sept 16, 2015 at the Pettaquamscutt History Society at the former Washington County Jail in Kingston.

Meeting adjourned at 8:36pm on a motion by Roger and seconded by Charlotte.

Respectfully Submitted by Maureen Buffi, Secretary