

Minutes of Meeting June 19, 2019

Location: Clark Memorial Library, Richmond

In attendance: Pegee Malcolm, James Bessel, Walter Slocomb, Lew Keen, Russ DiNoto, Alan Clarke, Edna Kent, Betty Mencucci, Judy Fardig, Alex La Force, Joe Jordan, and Charlotte Taylor

Excused absences: Bob Butler, David Bell, Christine MacWilliams and Caroline Wells

Also in attendance: Carlo Mencucci, Bill Brown, Colin Parkhurst, Doug (Charlotte's intern), Dave McCarthy, and Maureen Buffi

Meeting called to order at 6:48 pm by Pegee Malcolm, chair

- Introduction of April 17, 2019 Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Judy and seconded by Lew to accept the draft minutes. The minutes were unanimously accepted.

- Historical Cemetery Signs

Pegee met with Ken Orenstein who had attended the April meeting in Warren, to discuss the creation of a cemetery sign which would indicate that the desecration of a Jewish cemetery would be considered a hate crime. Anyone on the commission having responsibility for a Jewish cemetery should let Pegee know so they can get a sign made.

- Oakland Cemetery (CR 003)

Pegee was contacted by Channel 12 to conduct an interview to address complaints concerning the cemetery. She is considering if the interview could help to improve the situation. The suggestion to create an oversight committee and how to address some of these issues will be discussed at a future meeting.

- Cemetery Groups

Pegee reminded the commissioners to review and update the list of Cemetery Groups by city and town as they appear on the RIACHC website. Updates can be sent to Christine MacWilliams or Michael Laferriere directly.

- Perpetual Care Funds

There was a follow-up conversation to an earlier request to understand how various cities and towns deal with perpetual care of their cemeteries.

- Volunteers

Pegee reported that someone from Providence needed 20 hours of community service time. Serve RI has been providing many people looking for service hours. Anyone looking for community service volunteers should contact Pegee.

- Solar Farms

Alan and Charlotte noted there have been instances of run-off from these sites leading to erosion downhill. Cemeteries near these areas should be checked to make sure they aren't affected.

Additional Member Comments and Updates - Others have been submitted to Pegee via email

Charlotte noted that DOT is doing more work on Route 37 near the state institution cemeteries. An archaeologist who did some scrapings found no evidence of burials.

Lew reported that his term is expiring in 2019. Also, Betty and Pegee's terms will also be up for re-appointment. Pegee noted that RIHS is supposed to be sending a representative to the commission.

Betty reported that the Bathsheba Sherman stone was again vandalized and she temporarily removed it while contemplating what to do with it in the future. She also reported another cemetery was damaged when someone scraped away a large area of soil from the front.

Bill asked about how other towns address the maintenance of their cemeteries and is particularly concerned about long-term maintenance of cemeteries. Several commissioners responded, noting the obstacles they have found such as the prohibitive cost of utilizing prison laborers, the lack of federal gov't involvement in historical cemeteries containing veteran's graves (with the exception of replacement headstones), and the expense and difficulties involved in establishing a 501(C)3. A suggestion was made that perhaps more corporations could be called on to help.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:23 on a motion made by Charlotte and seconded by Walter.

Respectfully Submitted by Maureen Buffi, Secretary