

Minutes of Meeting September 21, 2016

Location: RI Historic Preservation & Heritage Commission Office, Providence

In attendance: Evelyn Wheeler, David Bell, Alex Laforce, Michael Leferriere, Charlotte Taylor, Bob Butler, Jennifer Galpern, Alan Clarke

Also in attendance: Charlene Butler

Excused absences: Pegee Malcolm, Sally Small, Edna Kent, Betty Mencucci, Dory Wagner and Walter Slocomb

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm by Alan Clarke, vice chair

- Introduction of Draft Meeting Minutes from June 15, 2016

Charlotte made a motion, seconded by David, to accept the Draft Minutes. The Draft Minutes were unanimously approved.

- Update on Cemetery Signs

Requests for signs should be submitted to Pegee. Any recent orders that haven't been filled should be re-submitted.

- Website Update

Michael reported receiving a number of emails that the site was down. He made some changes and has not heard any complaints since.

Alex mentioned that she created a form to update the database only to find that John Sterling already had them, so he gave her a copy. Commissioners made suggestions to include additional information in the existing database such as contact persons for larger cemeteries, updating location descriptions such as street addresses, pole numbers, updating the condition of the cemetery, headstones and signs. Michael commented that he is considering how to link additional information to the database since the original is not ours to change. Presently there is a "Cemetery Inspection" form online (Appendix C, page 31) at the end of the handbook.

- Tax Abatement Update

Evelyn distributed an updated list of cities and towns that she visited to present information concerning RIGL 44-3-63, the state law regarding potential tax abatement for people caring for historic cemeteries on their property. Of the towns she visited to date most seemed open to consideration. There are still towns she has yet to visit.

- 501(c)3 and Grant Proposals

Michael is considering starting a statewide historic cemeteries group such as a Friends of Cemeteries with 501(c)3 status or getting sponsorship from Preserve RI. He has a meeting scheduled with Preserve RI to discuss.

Once a 501(c)3 is set up then a group would be able to identify eligible grants. The goal would be to involve more people and therefore more resources for historic cemetery throughout the state. He also proposed that a "history of historic cemetery preservation" be written.

- Volunteer Recovery Efforts

There was a discussion of what to do when cemetery volunteers with good intentions are engaged in work that is controversial or unsatisfactory. Should there be “before and after” documentation? Who determines if it is an issue of vandalism? Should there be rules governing such projects?

- Airport Update

(Submitted via Pegee’s email update) Conserve Art of Connecticut is working with PAL to reconstruct the old headstones in new location. The flat markers are finished and being stored at Sciolto Bros. and are awaiting installation.

- GPS/GIS Update

Evelyn distributed printed copies with instructions for accessing the ARCGIS site for RI cemeteries. She recommended using Firefox instead of Internet Explorer to view the map. Greg will be including cemeteries which have not been confirmed in hopes that there will be public recognition to confirm them.

- Johnston 069

The Johnston Historical Society has been monitoring the construction activity near the cemetery on the site of the future Citizens Bank Corporate building.

Member Comments/Updates have been submitted to Pegee via email

At the meeting Evelyn mentioned that a group wants to erect a statue at the Veterans’ Cemetery but an employee says that there is an unmarked cemetery in that location. Evelyn will be meeting there tomorrow when GPR will be done on the site.

Alan sent a letter to the Planning Commission in Warwick letting him know that he had learned about two cemeteries in Potowomut. Although he had not actually found them he would like them to be added to the plat map to protect them from future development.

There was a discussion between Alan Clarke and Charlene Butler about an East Greenwich cemetery owned by the DAR in which two people were using metal detectors.

The next meeting will be November 16, 2016 at a location to be determined.

Meeting adjourned at 8:33pm on a motion by Bob, seconded by Alex.

Respectfully Submitted by Maureen Buffi, Secretary