

Minutes of Meeting April 19, 2017

Location: Robinson Research Center, Providence

In attendance: Pegee Malcolm, Bob Butler, Alan Clarke, Walter Slocomb, Michael Laferriere, Edna Kent, Alex La Force, Judy Fardig, Cara Condit, Charlotte Taylor, Jennifer Galpern, and Lew Keen

Excused Absences: Dory Wagner, Betty Mencucci. David Bell

Also in attendance: Michelle Chiles, Charlene Butler, Dave _____, and Bruce Frail, graves registrar of the RI Sons of Union Veterans

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 by Pegee Malcolm, Chair

- Introduction of Draft Minutes from November 16, 2016

Bob made a motion, seconded by Alan, to accept the Draft Minutes with the correction of Alex's surname. The Draft Minutes were then unanimously approved.

- Report on Flagging

Cara discussed the flagging order for Memorial Day. She said that it will cost \$100,000 for flags for this year. She and Bruce Frail are working together to create a database of all of the veterans' graves within the State. This year, veterans' organizations requesting flags will be asked to make lists of the actual veterans' locations in each cemetery. When asked, Bruce stated that a veteran was anyone who had served in the military with at least one day of active duty during wartime or two years duty during peacetime, with some exception. The database is expected to be online at the beginning of 2018; he expects that eventually, maps can be created from the database of the location of veterans' graves in each cemetery. He recommends that when a grave is flagged, a photo of the headstone be taken. The database will help with accountability, preventing duplication of flagging and help coordinate which groups go into which cemeteries to flag.

There was discussion of the fact that our website has so much data about veterans, but Bruce believes that the number of veterans on our website is incorrect. Michael asked for a sharing of information both ways – us giving Bruce information from the website and his providing us with information on veterans we don't know about. Michael also asked if veterans' graves marked by slate stones would be prioritized – Bruce answered in the negative. Bruce wants the legislature to add something to the statutes regarding fines for removal of flags of anything else on the gravesites.

- Airport Cemetery Update

The cemetery at T.F. Greene Airport has had the headstones relocated and is awaiting placement of the flat markers.

- Kiosk for Poor Farm cemetery

The Warwick Historical Cemetery Commission and Warwick Historical Society have raised money and are in the process of purchasing a kiosk for the cemetery containing the remains of those who lived at the Warwick Poor Farm. Their names will be shown on the stand.

- Website/Facebook Update

Michael said that Facebook is going along fine; people like to see before and after photos of cleanups – that's how he was introduced to the son of a woman who had copied information from cards found regarding the residents of the State workhouse and almshouse. In addition, the website seems to be working fine. Michael has been working with John Sterling and sharing information between the website and John's database.

- Updates from Peg

Peg had a request from someone in England who wants a photo of the gravesite of a Titanic victim buried in Swan Point Cemetery.

She wants to help Cara clean off the lichen from the disintegrating stones of students from The Ladd School

She has had an inquiry from a man who wants to clean every Masonic headstone in the State; he is working on figuring out where the graves are

Ms. Brightman from the Center for Reconciliation is looking for slaves' graves; Peg referred her to Lew for assistance

- Discovery of remains in South Kingstown

During new construction, a contractor dug up some remains. Charlotte's office was eventually contacted, and she contacted PAL. Charlottes got together with the medical examiner and the State Police to figure out coordination. A new resting place was created for the remains

- Additional Member Comments

Bob asked Peg about the status of signs; she indicated that the State would start working on them soon

Lew asked about making R.I. Historic Cemetery Restoration/Awareness Day an annual event; Peg said that it wouldn't be a problem next year

Michael received a photo of a cemetery sign sitting in the middle of a pond or lake – Dory went out and discovered that it was a prank; likely some kids had moved the sign from where it belonged out into the water

Michael was hiking in Cascade Brook at the Boy Scout Camp in Smithfield and came upon rows of stones that looked like a cemetery. He thinks that they're former support posts from seating, while the Friends of Smithfield Cemeteries think it was an elaborately-created spooky scene for telling ghost stories

Edna provided her updates. FM Global is cutting trees near a cemetery and she is concerned that they don't drop any trees onto the cemetery. The DPW mixed up Revolutionary War signs. The Smithfield Conservation Commission might be cleaning a cemetery. At Ponaganset High School, gravestones are sitting in the secretary's office after a bulldozer operator working on an addition to the school ran over them. A specific stone at GL038, being cleaned by an Eagle Scout, cannot be located.

The next meeting on June 21st will be held at The Veterans' Cemetery in Exeter. September's meeting will be in Newport, while the November meeting will be in Chepachet.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m. on a motion by Bob, seconded by Judy.

Respectfully submitted by Alexandra La Force