

Minutes of Meeting April 21, 2021

Location: Zoom meeting (hosted by Judy and Dave McCarthy)

In attendance: (via Zoom) Pegee Malcolm, Judy Fardig, Christine MacWilliams, Jeff Burns, Jim Bessel, Russell Dinoto, Bob Butler, Charlotte Taylor, Lew Keen, Joe Jordan, Walter Slocomb, Betty Mencucci, Edna Kent, and Alan Clark (joining later)

Also in attendance: Dave McCarthy, Maureen Buffi and visitors Kirsten Czupryna and Nicole L.

Excused absences: Marjory O'Toole, Caroline Wells and Richard Ring

Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm by Pegee Malcolm, chair

- Introduction of November 18, 2020 Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Bob and seconded by Charlotte to accept the draft minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

- Access to State Farm Cemetery Annex (CR 107) Update

Pegee and members of the Cranston Cemetery Commission met with Carpionato Group. There will be cemetery access with parking and a crosswalk on Pontiac Ave. The state which is currently using the building is expected to be there until June 30th (2021). Topgolf plans to be in by July 2022.

- University of Rhode Island Update

The remains found at URI will be removed this spring and buried at a cemetery in Perryville. The costs will be paid for by RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission.

- Headstone at Brown University Update

The headstone, broken off along the bottom, is of a husband and wife and belongs in Brayton Cemetery in Warwick (WK 034). The exact gravesite has yet to be determined.

- Historical Cemetery Signs Update

DOT has accepted the order for signs. They may possibly be available by September.

- Perpetual Care Fund Update

Alan will be speaking to the East Greenwich Cemetery Commission about perpetual care.

- Perpetual Care Legislation

The availability of perpetual care funds and the quality of care is being questioned throughout the state. Pegee and Lew have been discussing perpetual care legislation with Representative Lauren Carson of Newport. Some of the issues being considered are:

- Increasing the amount of money that is added to the funds from 20% to 25%
- Petitions to view the available funds in the account
- Establishing an annual report to be submitted with fees
- What is the town's reporting responsibility?
- Who has to file and what needs to be filed?
- Reporting fees?

- Will it apply only to owners of active cemeteries or to every cemetery with perpetual care?
- Will separate reporting be required for each family making ongoing contributions?
- Active cemetery owners need to be notified

Lew proposed that the commission (RIACHC) takes an official position on this bill. Pegee stated that voting will have to take place during a later meeting, maybe June, after it's posted on the agenda. Lew noted that no changes to the draft will take place between now and when the commission (RIACHC) would vote (in June). Rep. Carson wants the legislation moved along to the Speaker of the House.

- RI Historical Cemetery Restoration & Awareness Day 2021

Christine reported 26 official responses within the first 2 weeks with another 6 weeks remaining. She noted positive feedback to an 8 weeks-long event. Pegee reported that Turn to 10 ran a list of cemetery clean-up events and the contact persons. Michael is posting the events to Facebook.

- Historical Cemetery Photos

Christine gave an update for photographs for the website. Of the state's approximate 3,200 cemeteries, 1,179 cemeteries are photographed. Another 2,000 are needed and can be sent to herself or to Michael. Christine requested that, if possible, the cemetery sign be in the photo. She also noted that she's been able to borrow photos from historical societies.

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

Charlotte reports that in Lincoln the town will be asking a property owner to move a fire pit further away from headstones in a cemetery located on their property. The town was also notified about a cemetery (LN 015?) where the easement has been blocked by the construction of a fence.

Walter reports that new people were added to the Cranston Cemetery Commission and there is a new chair and vice-chair. New By-Laws will be needed since it is a public commission.

Jeff has been posting on Facebook and sending one-drive links to John Sterling. He's been cleaning cemeteries, working with Charlestown Historical Society on the Champlin Cemetery and with Joe in WY 055, and looking through land evidence records trying to find WY 065.

Joe reports working with Westerly Land Trust and other volunteers to finish up WY 055.

Walter said that Cranston lined up CR 108 for May 1 for the statewide cemetery event.

Lew reported that as of January all records for NT 001, Island Cemetery, are online and available to the public.

Jim announced that flagging at the Veterans Cemetery in Exeter will not be open to the public due to COVID concerns. Instead they will be placing the flags themselves. There will be a Memorial Day ceremony.

Pegee noted that Pawtuxet Memorial Park hosts an annual Avenue of Flags event with a volunteer piper.

Russell inquired about a cemetery off exit 3 which he planned to clean but that already been worked on.

Edna reported that the Gloucester cemetery committee began a 39 week cleaning schedule at GL 031 with 10 volunteers. There is an eroding embankment close to Putnam Pike that they are trying to get DOT to correct with retaining wall. At the Benjamin Richmond Lot (GL 001) volunteers put up a stone. On April 22 volunteers will work at GL 019 on Snake Hill Rd. She also noted plans to flag veterans graves.

A visitor to the meeting, Kirsten, volunteered to take cemetery pictures in West Warwick. A second visitor, Nicole will be working at NP 002 on Saturday with about 10 volunteers.

Dave McCarthy will host the June 16 meeting via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 pm on a motion by Bob, seconded by Judy

Respectfully Submitted by Maureen Buffi, Secretary