

Minutes of Meeting Feb 18, 2026

Location: Warwick City Hall Annex

In attendance: Pegee Malcolm, Elise Giammarco Carlson, Dave Guiot, Laurie Greaney, Jim Bessel, Maureen Buffi, John Harrison, Eileen Costa, Charlotte Taylor, Jacob Begin, Richard Ring, and Deb Suggs.

Excused absences: Betty Mencucci and Larry Hunter

Also in attendance: Julie Nathanson and Dory Wagner

- Meeting called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Pegee Malcolm, chair
- Introduction of October 15, 2025 meeting minutes
Charlotte made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Deb. All voted in favor to accept the minutes.
- New Commission Member Introductions
Eileen Costa of Tiverton and Laurie Greaney from Portsmouth will serve as Newport County representatives. Jacob Begin will represent Providence County. John Harrington is the new League of Cities and Towns representative.
- RI Historical Cemeteries Preservation and Awareness Weeks 2026
Charlotte will take over as the coordinator of Cemetery Weeks activities on behalf of the RI Historic Preservation & Heritage Commission. Deb volunteered to assist by creating a spreadsheet to submit planned cemetery activities. These will appear on the RIHPHC and RI Historic Cemeteries websites.

Many planned events will coincide with the celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary. See below:
- RI 250 Celebration
Planned events can be submitted online to the RI 250 website. Some of the activities planned so far include:
 - Warwick has an event planned on June 20.
 - Exeter and Richmond will be cleaning cemeteries with Rev. War veteran burials
 - North Kingstown is planning a parade which will end at Elm Grove Cemetery. There are plans to clean stones in the John Eldred section of that cemetery in honor of Capt. Thomas Cole, a trainer of Rev. War soldiers.
 - Jim liked the idea of the "Betsy Ross flags" for Barrington and intends to present the idea to their committee.
 - Cranston has an arts committee with a budget for a concert in Knightsville, which Dave will try to dovetail into something with a nearby cemetery. He hopes to post stories of Cranston's Revolutionary War veterans on Facebook
 - John announced that there will be monthly clean-ups in West Greenwich from March to October, including a flagging event in early May, working with Boy Scouts and the 4-H. Cemetery signs are all up with help from the Boy Scouts.

- In Tiverton, Eileen is hoping to restore the gravestones of 42 Rev. War veterans before July 4th, getting them stood up in place, fixed, cleaned, and photographed. They are considering workshops and talks about individual soldiers.
- Deb is planning to do 7 podcasts, 1 per week, featuring Revolutionary War stories. Submit any requests of unique Rev. War stories to Deb.
- A suggestion was made that of the possibility of an Adopt-a-Rev. War Gravestone.
- In Portsmouth, Laurie reports that one cemetery having 5 Rev. War vets will have a gravestone cleaning by DAR volunteers. She noted that DAR has a matching fund grant, with an application due in Oct.
- Richard reported that RIHS received a grant to cover part of the expenses of adding 9,000 cards with Rev. War names and units to a searchable database.
- Pegee has packets for the Newman Cemetery and Swan Point

- Historical Cemetery Signs

The Commission has been given the OK by the DOT sign shop to submit sign requests by late March.

- CLG Grants

Charlotte announced that there is some federal money available for certain types of cemetery projects. She cited examples of Newman Cemetery in East Providence and on Block Island.

- Proposal for Volunteers

Maureen contacted the RI Nurseries and Landscapers Association to ask if members could earn certification credits through community service such as cemetery volunteer work. The suggestion that interested parties would contact appropriate commissioners for suitable volunteer work in a cemetery was well-received by their Executive Board but there is no official response yet.

- GIS

After it was determined that some cemeteries in Exeter had not been recorded in the GIS system, it was recommended that the commissioners check to confirm GIS coordinates in their cities and towns. An official protocol needs to be established to submit GIS coordinates to the URI online GIS map. Julie Nathanson will be the official point person to forward any new coordinates to Amy Mandeville at URI.

- South Kingstown

Deb reported that a cemetery group in South Kingstown has been established as a non-profit. She noted various groups in South Kingstown vying for cemetery projects. She then raised the question of what authority grants permission for any cemetery group “to be in charge”?

- Next Meeting Date is May 13, 2026

- Meeting Adjourned at 8:31 pm on a motion made by Dave and seconded by Elise.

Respectfully submitted by Maureen Buffi, secretary