

Minutes of Meeting June 16, 2021

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

In attendance: (via Zoom) Pegee Malcolm, James Bessel, Judy Fardig, Edna Kent, Walter Slocomb, Betty Mencucci, Alan Clarke, Christine MacWilliams, Richard Ring, Joe Jordan, Russell Dinoto, Marjory O'Toole, Lew Keen, and Charlotte Taylor

Also in attendance: Dave McCarthy, Maureen Buffi, Bill Brown and Dory Wagner

Excused absences: Bob Butler and Caroline Wells

Meeting called to order at 6:35 pm by Pegee Malcolm, chair

- Introduction of April 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Judy and seconded by Alan to accept the minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

- University of Rhode Island Update

More remains were discovered in a closet at URI, this time from Cranston. The exact Cranston cemetery where they will be buried has yet to be determined. The previously discovered remains will be buried in South Kingstown as soon as URI signs the release.

- Cemetery Photo Project Update

Some of the photos Christine received may be too small and she requested that when submitting photos taken with phones that the photos be set to large. She is hoping for another 200 photos by August.

- RI General Law 23-18-7 (Re-interment of bodies in structure becoming health menace)

According to the law the owner of the unsafe mausoleum at Oakland Cemetery in Cranston is responsible for relocating bodies. The contact number for the owner of the mausoleum is no longer listed. The mausoleum is surrounded by chain link fence to prevent anyone from entering but video has surfaced showing people wandering inside the mausoleum.

- RI General Law 23-18-15 (Installation of veteran's plaque)

Pegee noted that headstones for veterans graves are supposed to be available for free and installed for a maximum cost of \$75 but recently when attempting to order one through the VA she was told that only a relative of the deceased veteran can apply. Previously, families, cemeteries or veterans organizations were able to request. She asked Jim to check if this was a new rule.

- Temporary Signs

Alan and Christine were looking into the design and cost of official signs which could be installed temporarily at cemeteries while work is being performed. A 24" x 18" sign is available for \$13.99.

- Support of House Bill 5373 (Cemetery perpetual care funds reporting)

Lew made a motion, seconded by Marjory, for the commission to vote on whether to support a House Bill introduced by Rep. Karen Carson regarding accountability and transparency of funds held

for perpetual care. Before the vote took place some questions were addressed. Additional hearings and testimony can amend the bill. The purpose of the vote by the commission is to determine its support of the concept of required annual reporting and the increase to 25%.

Vote Results - The commission voted to support HB 5373 with 13 in favor and 1 against.

Questions and concerns included:

- \$50 filing fee too much?
- Requires annual report
- Would churches have to file?
- All perpetual care accounts need to be reported whether active cemetery or not
- Fines for those in non-compliance?

Lew gave an update that the bill was currently in the Health and Human Services Committee and that there could be action this year. He will draft a letter that can be used by commissioners to show their support. Sen. Joshua Miller introduced it to senate as S-0260.

- Perpetual Care Funds for Capt. Samuel Greene Lot (WK 025)

The Warwick Historical Cemetery Commission was notified by Bank of America that they were closing a perpetual care account created in the late 1800s for the Samuel Greene Lot behind Narragansett Bay Baptist Church. A check for \$1325 was sent to the Warwick Historical Society. Pegee questioned what to do with the funds? She proposed meeting with the church that is currently caring for the cemetery and transferring the funds to them for its continued care.

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

Pegee:

- gave an update on the communities that volunteers have been placed in since April. She had a request for someone looking to volunteer in the East Bay and notified those commissioners.
- received a call from Christ Episcopal Church about starting a columbarium. She referred them to town and state general laws.
- noted that Michael is looking to compile a list of rights-of-way. Marjory recommended conducting a title search (for accuracy).
- received a call regarding SK 069 and a lost cemetery and asked Russell to look into it.
- was contacted by St. Mary's regarding their "Day of Service" in September on Aquidneck Island. Pegee referred her to Lew about possibly Jamestown.
- referred a request from an Eagle Scout looking for a project in Scituate to Skye Pechie.
- noted that a cemetery in Cranston was reportedly damaged by a developer.
- requested Jim follow up on veterans markers.

Jeff:

- was asked by Pegee about ownership of CH 023. He learned that when the property was sold years ago the cemetery was excluded from the sale of lot. WY 057 was found to be on property donated to tribal land (but not a Native American burial ground). Pegee asked Jeff if John Brown is aware that the cemetery is there.

Walter:

- gave an update on COSTCO. After their original application was turned down they came back with a modified version which was also rejected. Pegee noted that she and others had written letters objecting to the proposal to re-locate the cemetery but the latest plan still appeared to show the cemetery being moved. COSTCO can re-apply in 3 years.
- was asked to contact Public Works about a limb from a cemetery hanging over a nearby roof.

- asked if anyone had experience with cemetery mapping programs.

Bill Brown:

- has been researching companies to produce SAR and GAR markers like originals. He received pricing from a foundry to make the molds and for the cost of each pour. Bill is looking for interested persons to invest in the initial cost of the molds. This item will be re-visited once placed on the agenda.

Lew thanked Charlotte and Peggie for information regarding the bridge ramp realignment project.

Dave and Judy were thanked for hosting the meeting.

Upcoming Meetings:

- Jim offered use of the Veterans Cemetery in Exeter for the September 15 meeting. The meeting will likely be held in-person in accordance with the state emergency edict set to expire July 9.
- Peggie proposed discussing the details of the November meeting during the September meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 pm on a motion by Alan, seconded by Walter.

Respectfully Submitted by Maureen Buffi, Secretary