

Minutes of Meeting May 15, 2024

Location: Warwick City Hall Annex

In attendance: Pegee Malcolm, Debb Suggs, Larry Hunter, Christine MacWilliams, Charlotte Taylor, Caroline Wells, Jeffrey Burns, Richard Ring, Betty Mencucci, Christine MacWilliams, David Guiot, Judy Fardig, Jim Bessel and Maureen Buffi

Excused absences: Elliot Caldwell, Marjory O'Toole and Edna Kent

Also in attendance: Carlo Mencucci

- Meeting called to order at 6:35 pm by Pegee Malcolm, chair
- Introduction of February 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Judy and seconded by Debbie to accept the minutes. All voted in favor to accept the February 21, 2024 meeting minutes as is.

- Desecration of Cemetery in Pawtucket

In response to reports of extensive destruction due to construction activities in the rear of Walnut Hill Cemetery, Charlotte visited the site. She called the city and spoke with the solicitor who will be taking action against the cemetery for the damages. At least 10 gravestones were removed or damaged and a minimum of \$500 each could be assessed. An archaeological survey will be needed to find graves which were missing their headstones.

- Proposed Developments Abutting Cemeteries

Pegee received notification from the Town of Coventry about a planned subdivision in western part of town. Maureen reached out to the Planning Dept. to confirm that they are aware there is a cemetery abutting the proposed neighborhood and to request that a right-of-way be incorporated into the plans.

In Cranston, David noted that Mulligan's Island Golf Course is for sale. CR #58 is on the property.

- Complaints about a South Kingstown Cemetery

Deb reported that there are two groups cleaning cemeteries in South Kingstown and there was an issue concerning communication in which she was able to assist.

- Trash Free Grants

Christine notified the Commission of available grants for trash removal.

- North Smithfield Creains

Pegee received a complaint from someone in North Smithfield stating that someone's cremains were buried without a funeral director and over another burial.

- Charlestown Cemetery Concerns

Jeff reported that a cemetery sign for CH #60 disappeared about 3 months after its installation. He ordered a replacement and will again notify the police after the new one is installed.

In the Charter Ct. cemetery, someone reported a modern “slate” stone which might be a pet burial.

- DCYF Project

David reported that in Phase 2 at CR#107, the State Farm Annex, they partnered with the Corrections Dept. to pick up a massive brush pile. Pegee noted that the cemetery signs for the institution cemeteries were appropriately re-positioned.

- Cemetery Weeks

Christine noted that 140 cemetery events were posted for April and May, with 22 still to go.

- Historical Cemetery Signs

Pegee reported that the latest batch of signs have been ordered

- Newspaper Articles

Charlotte was contacted by a Pro-Jo reporter interested in laws protecting historic cemeteries. Pegee was interviewed by the Beacon where she was able to take them to the cemetery that she personally takes care of.

- Community Service

Pegee reported sending volunteers to Warren, Cranston, N. Smithfield, Woonsocket, Richmond, and Hopkinton

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

Pegee received an email from ‘Missing in America Project’ regarding a Civil War soldier who died in Seattle. They were hoping to have his cremains removed from the shelf in a funeral home to be with family at Oak Grove Cemetery in Pawtucket. The question is who will pay for this? Jim advised that they need to provide proof that the family buried in Pawtucket are direct descendants of the individual.

Pegee announced that the Sons of Union Veterans, Camp #3 extended an invitation to a cookout and celebration in honor of their 1,000th gravestone repair, to be held at Goddard Park on June 22.

She also reported that she received an email regarding Tiverton #41, asking if graves were being moved but closer inspection revealed no issues.

Pegee gave an update on scheduled events, noting that there will be a clean-up at Brayton Cemetery (WK #34). On July 13, there will be a dedication at the George Sears Greene Cemetery due to the renaming of the section of road to “George Sears Greene Way”. All are welcome to attend.

Lynne reported that 11 cemeteries were cleaned in Foster.

Maureen gave an update on clean-up events in Coventry and West Warwick.

Deb said that at URI, a talk was given about Revolutionary War patriots buried in Washington County. She also announced an upcoming clean-up event at the Rowland Robinson Cemetery in Narragansett. She is please with the way the podcast is going.

Larry was contacted by someone trying to track down someone from the Mid-West who served in the Civil War but wasn’t certain of the name.

Larry also gave an update on clean-ups, noting a clean-up event at the Babcock Lot (WY #07), another at the Jonathan Foster Lot (WY # 31) and said that another event was planned for the upcoming weekend. He also mentioned that the Land Trust will be taking over a new property which has a cemetery on it.

Jeff reported that the Kenyon and Wilcox cemeteries have been cleaned. They have also been making use of their tripod.

Betty gave an update on a situation previously mentioned regarding a requested right-of-way for a proposed development. That plan wasn't approved and now a new development has been proposed. Accommodations would need to be made to ensure the new plans include a right-of-way. She reported on Cemetery Weeks events, noting that they had their first event in early April, followed by another a week later. Betty hosted a Women's Wilderness Group event where she led a tour and taught how to clean stones.

Jim reported that he received a phone call from someone concerning Little Compton #23 or #24 that the town had been mowing and suddenly stopped and she didn't know why. Since the cemetery contains veterans, she thought that Jim should be responsible. Jim told her that he would email the Little Compton rep., Marjory O' Toole.

He also noted that there will be a Memorial Day observation at the Veterans Cemetery. At Tyler Point in Barrington, Jim reported that a fence had been installed around the cemetery to separate it from the boatyard.

Caroline mentioned a Valley Inn in Portsmouth podcast that featured a walk-thru in old cemetery in a forest in Newport County.

Judy reported that there will be flagging with volunteers at 5 cemeteries. On Flag Day there will be a Retirement of Colors ceremony. She is still looking for someone to work on stones.

Dave gave an update regarding Oakland Cemetery (CR #03). The City appointed a special master and approached Bank of America to get control of the money and is hoping to use funds to form a non-profit. This will have to be taken up by the courts. The mausoleum was closed off by the city two years ago.

Dave announced that Atlas Preservation will be in Newport on August 15 as part of its 48-state tour.

The next meeting will be on October 16 at 6:30 pm, at the Warwick Town Hall Annex.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:24 pm on a motion made by Jim and seconded by Dave.

Respectfully submitted by Maureen Buffi, secretary