

## Minutes of Meeting November 20, 2021

Location: Newport Public Library

In attendance: Pegee Malcolm, Bob Butler, Russel Dinoto, Alan Clarke, Christine MacWilliams, Charlotte Taylor, Jim Bessel, and Joe Jordan

Also in attendance: Elliott C. (Newport Cemetery Advisory Commission), Sarah Zurier (RI Historic Preservation & Heritage Commission - RIHP&HC), Maureen Buffi, secretary

Excused absences: Walter Slocomb, Richard Ring, Judy Fardig, Caroline Wells, Edna Kent, Marjorie O'Toole, Betty Mencucci, and Jeff Burns

Meeting called to order at 11:10 am by Pegee Malcolm, chair

- Introduction of September 15, 2021 meeting minutes

Bob made a motion to accept the minutes and Jim seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously accepted.

- State Institution Cemeteries

Channel 12 did an exposé on the state institution cemetery which was buried under Rte. 37. Pegee ordered signs for cemeteries 1, 2 and 3. She has a book of names she would like to see digitized. The database doesn't have a listing for those moved to mass graves. Pegee reviewed the following:

- #1 (CR 060) State Farm Cemetery is underneath Rte. 37.
- #2 (CR 061) State Institution Cemetery 2 is at the corner of Pontiac Ave. and Knight St.
- #3 (CR 063) State Institution Cemetery 3 is a mass grave in back of #2.
- #4 (EX 035) Exeter School Cemetery is behind the RI Veterans Cemetery.
- #5 (CR 114) Oaklawn School for Girls Cemetery existed but the exact location is unknown. A sign won't be ordered until the location is determined.

- Perpetual Care Reporting Update (H-5373)

Pegee and Lew met with Rep. Lauren Carson. In order for a perpetual care funds report to be required a specific request must first be made. Problematic cemeteries will likely be the most requested. It was suggested that RIACHC serve as the funnel for requests for reports. The local commissioner or Pegee would serve as the initial point of contact who would then request a report.

Lew noted that the bill has passed from Health & Human Services Committee to the Corporation Committee and that it could possibly be introduced in January.

Also discussed was fines for unanswered requests for reports. Suggested amounts varied at \$100 or \$500 or graduated fines for repeated violations. Would the AG's office be responsible for enforcement and who should be notified?

- Woonsocket #017

Charlotte reported that the site of a former cemetery on Cato St. in Woonsocket was being reviewed before the city processes a variance to allow building within 25' of the buffer zone. She noted that the process was working as it should.

- RI Historical Cemetery Restoration/Awareness Event - 2022

Sarah of RIHP&HC noted that the annual State Preservation Conference would not be held in 2022. Instead, she suggested helping to promote the annual statewide Historical Cemetery Restoration/Awareness events. She and Christine will work out more details. Some ideas:

- Keynote speaker to make virtual presentation
  - RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission to host with links to RIACHC website
  - Cemetery scavenger hunt utilizing GooseChase app
  - Themed ideas for virtual talks, headstone cleaning, repairing, etc.
- Warwick #151

The property on which WK 151 sits is for sale. The question was asked if an easement to the cemetery exists or if it can be added when a property changes owners. It was noted that the cemetery was pictured on the realtor's website. An easement has been included in the transfer. The suggestion was made that historical cemetery training for realtors might be helpful.

- Roger Williams Mausoleum

The mausoleum is a health hazard that no one wants to take financial responsibility for. Reportedly a Tiverton cemetery offered to take some burials and there have been a few volunteer undertakers. Cranston boarded it up to prevent more trespassers. The city and state need to determine how to proceed. It's on the property of Oakland Cemetery but not owned by them. Transaction records are supposedly stored on the 3rd floor. Pegee noted a stained glass window.

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

Russell was working with someone regarding an unmarked cemetery. The person claims the land was taken from family by a false deed. A driveway goes through a fieldstone cemetery of about 10 - 15 burials.

Charlotte reported that the Champlin remains have now been removed from URI and taken to the cemetery in Perryville. The unidentified remains from Cranston are still awaiting burial.

Jim reported that a construction project at the Veterans Cemetery will wrap up on Dec. 16. The "Wreaths Across America" is scheduled for Dec. 12. The control of the veterans database will migrate to the state in near future. In Barrington, GPR at the Allin Burial Ground showed some anomalies which were marked for later research. Next year's project will be at Tyler Point.

Sarah Z. announced that a new commission has been formed for the RI 250 year celebration which will highlight the Revolutionary War.

Joe reported that a period-appropriate marker was received from the VA for a Westerly cemetery. He clarified the division of responsibilities for Washington County cemeteries. Joe: Westerly, Jeff: Charlestown, Dory: Exeter and Richmond, Russ: South Kingstown, North Kingstown and Narragansett.

Lew notes all is OK with Newport cemeteries and the bridge ramp project and bike paths going in by the Common Burial Ground.

Meeting adjourned at 12:54 pm after a motion made by Lew and seconded by Charlotte.

Respectfully Submitted by Maureen Buffi, Secretary