

## Minutes of Meeting September 15, 2021

Location: RI Veterans Cemetery in Exeter

In attendance: Pegee Malcolm, Charlotte Taylor, Jim Bessel, Marjory O'Toole, Edna Kent, Lew Keen, Betty Mencucci, Caroline Wells, Russ Dinoto, Jeff Burns, and Joe Jordan

Also in attendance: Carlo Mencucci, Bill Brown, Maureen Buffi

Excused absences: Bob Butler, Richard Ring, Christine MacWilliams, Judy Fardig, and Alan Clarke

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

- Introduction of June 16, 2021 Meeting Minutes

A correction to the minutes was noted. The first name of Representative Carson is Lauren. Charlotte made a motion to accept the minutes with the correction and Joe seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously accepted with the noted correction.

- Proposed Perpetual Care Bill Update H 5373/S 0260

One major change is that the annual reporting requirement would be upon request only. A second change would be that the perpetual care funds to be collected would remain at 20% of the purchase price instead of being raised to 25%. The bill still needs to be introduced in the senate.

- RI Advisory Commission on Historical Cemeteries Handbook Update

The handbook will be updated to note that, "Passage to a cemetery shall not be guaranteed to anyone regardless of whether they're related." An additional clause was suggested to read, "unless it is specified by deed or right-of-way." If the deed specifies a right-to-pass and re-pass then the property owner is obligated.

- Senior Volunteers Bill - S0103

Governor McKee recently signed a bill that anyone 60 years or older can do volunteer work and earn credit on their local tax bill. Each city or town would have to create their own ordinance. Then \$11.55/hour in tax credit up to \$1500 can be earned. The work has to be pre-approved then checked and sent back to the tax office for a separate bill.

- Cemetery Photo Project Update

Pegee noted that anyone with photos of cemeteries should send them to Christine who will forward them to Michael after confirming they are the correct size. If possible, please include the sign in the overall photo of the cemetery.

- Little Compton Perpetual Care Concern

An individual wanted to send a gift to the historical society through the RI Foundation to pay for the care of his wife's grave. The society board's reaction is mixed because it is not known if it would be ethical if the individual were to receive a tax deduction when there is a "fee for service". The historical society doesn't know if they can make sure this cemetery is cared for by accepting the money. What will happen with the future sale of the property if a new landowner doesn't welcome the cleaning of the cemetery?

- November Meeting Date Change

Instead of meeting on the scheduled date of Nov. 17 the commission agreed to have the meeting on Saturday Nov. 20 at 11 am in Newport.

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

Pegee:

- mentioned being unable to order a military headstone unless a relative and also if there is already a marked stone then a new stone cannot be ordered.
- noted that an Eagle Scout cleaned a cemetery in Scituate.

Charlotte:

- The Champlin remains which are to be buried in Perryville will require additional funds.
- The remains from a Cranston cemetery at URI are still a mystery.
- Warwick will be directional drilling for a sewer project in an area near where there are Narragansetts buried. PAL has been hired.

Joe:

- asked what was required for a transcription? A photo of the headstone as proof?

Bill:

- has been working with DOT on the retaining wall project for a cemetery on rte. 44 (GL 031)
- will receive funding for the veteran's flag holder project.
- volunteers are still working at least once a week doing clean-ups.

Marjory:

- "Cleaning Days" in Little Compton restarted after COVID. Now spraying stones instead of scrubbing
- Remnants of Hurricane Ida caused major damage in the Union Cemetery in L.C.

Caroline:

- will be working with Judy.
- is concerned about a cemetery on the Kickemuit River.

Jim:

- there was a clean-up at Bay Spring Ave. cemetery in Barrington.
- GPR found anomalies that may be additional graves.
- plans for a new columbarium complex at the veterans cemetery to be installed in phases.
- found 1970s notes from historical society about cemetery commission meetings
- the notes will go to the state archives but in the meanwhile Pegee asked to view them.

Betty:

- mentioned that goats were used to clear vegetation along the stonewall perimeter of BU #002

Jeff:

- asked if the removal of a veteran from WY 052 to HP 018 can be reflected in a database change.

The next meeting will be held on Saturday November 20 at 11 am in Newport. (See above announcement)

Meeting adjourned at 8:04 pm after a motion made by Jim and seconded by Edna.

Respectfully Submitted by Maureen Buffi, Secretary