

Minutes of Meeting September 18, 2019

Location of Meeting: City Hall, Warwick RI

In attendance: Peg Malcolm, Alex La Force, Judy Fardig, Joe Jordan, Caroline Wells, Richard Ring, Russ DiNoto, Lew Keen, Jim Bessel, Charlotte Taylor, Christine MacWilliams, Walter Slocomb, Betty Mencucci, Bob Butler, Alan Clarke, Marjory O'Toole, Edna Kent

Also in attendance: David McCarthy, Charlene Butler, Carlo Mencucci, Colin Parkhurst, Bill Brown

The meeting was called to order by Peg Malcolm, chair, at 6:50.

- Peg introduced the new members – Marjory, who replaces David Bell, and Richard Ring, the Deputy Executive Director of the Rhode Island Historical Society, who replaces Jennifer Gilpern, and then all members introduced themselves.
- After noting that Alex was the member who discussed solar farm siting and its potential effect on historic cemeteries, a motion was made by Charlotte and seconded by Bob to accept the draft minutes with the correction. The minutes were unanimously accepted.
- Peg reported that she hadn't heard from Ken Orenstein since the last meeting about the sign she created, which cites three statutes, in an attempt to prevent vandalism in historic cemeteries
- It was reported that a Boy Scout in Cumberland may/may not have finished cleaning a Cumberland cemetery
- Christine and a Woonsocket group have been cleaning WO009 in Woonsocket and are making great progress. Henry C. Davis, who is buried there, was the first Rhode Island casualty of the Civil War
- Charlotte reported that a sign has been erected at the Nipsachuck Battlefield in North Smithfield and wondered if the Narragansetts had been notified. No one knew.
- Alex talked about the discovery of what she is referring to as RD094, a cemetery recently found in Richmond where 3 Nye children are buried
- Peg let the members know that she will be asking for orders for new signs at the November meeting
- DOT wants input from the Commission on a bridge repair on Route 37. Peg and Walter spent time with DOT officials talking about it; the repairs do not appear to have any impact on historical cemeteries nearby because most of the work will be vertical. Charlotte had already given her opinion that there would be "no effect". There is also a cemetery on the old Citizens Bank campus on Sockanosset Crossroad. A gold cart retailer has bought the property and is aware of the cemetery; no action is expected to affect the cemetery. Alex made a motion to accept DOT's plans for the bridge repair, titled BRIDGE GROUP 51A-RT 37 C-2, CONTRACT #2019-CB-027 dated June 3, 2019. Judy seconded the motion to accept, but there was discussion of adding an amendment to ensure that DOT understood that we were voting on the contract as it was. Charlotte voted that we accept the contract with the following wording: "We

reserve the right to revisit our finding should the design change or in case of unanticipated discoveries". Judy seconded the motion and the Commission voted unanimously to accept.

- Peg and Lew met with State Representative Lauren Carson about continuing complaints about bankrupt, unkempt, or neglected cemeteries. A meeting open to the public was scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on October 2nd at the Old State House on Benefit Street in Providence. Lew provided a general outline for the agenda and indicated that a vote was needed to approve the general concept of the meeting. Jim thought that we should concentrate on item 3.B and 3.C, which addressed accountability of private cemetery owners and funding, since he felt that 3.A, concerning vandalism, is just an enforcement issue. Peg stated that she had invited the owner of the cemetery where her father is buried; the owner is a member of a statewide group of cemetery owners, and thought that the meeting was a good idea. Alex was concerned that the agenda was too general, but Lew said that the three of them would be creating a more structured agenda. A motion to approve the agenda of the proposed meeting was made by Bob and seconded by Judy, with a unanimous vote to accept by the members.
- Charlotte wondered if Native American burial sites should have GPS locations available to the public and, if so, if the cemeteries should be numbered the way other historic cemeteries are numbered; she believes that there are about 45 such sites statewide. Jim asked what the tribe wants. Charlotte was going to be speaking to the tribe on the day after the meeting.
- Peg wondered if Commission members should be talking to Town Planners. Lew stated that he would like to have talking points before doing so.
- Alan provided pictures of 7-year-old signs that are delaminating, and wondered how long these new signs that we have been installing for the past few years will last.
- After settling on having the next meeting (on the third Wednesday in November) at The Little Compton Historical Society at 548 West Main Road in Little Compton, the meeting adjourned at 7:59 on a motion made by Bob and seconded by Charlotte.

Respectfully submitted by Alexandra La Force