

Minutes of Meeting September 16, 2023

Location: Newport Public Library

In attendance: Pegee Malcolm, Rick Ring, Larry Hunter, Lew Keen, Charlotte Taylor, Jim Bessel, Debbie Suggs, Caroline Wells, Lynne Rider

Excused absences Maureen Buffi, Christine McWilliams, Jeff Burns, Judy Fardig, Marjory O'Toole, Edna Kent, Betty Mencucci, and David Guiot

Meeting called to order at 1:16 pm by Pegee Malcolm, chair

- Introduction of June 21st 2023 Meeting Minutes

Larry made a motion to accept the minutes and Jim seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

- Welcome extended to Lynne Rider, new Cities and Towns representative.
- general discussion of the difficulty of gathering members of the Commission together—should the number of meetings be reduced? (from 4 to 3, perhaps; it was noted that 4 meetings are not specified in the bylaws). Which months are best? Should a centralized meeting place be established, or should the meetings continue to rotate? Caroline asked if we should allow for focus groups to meet outside of regular meetings to discuss particular issues? Pegee to send note.
- discussion-We talked about having locations of historical cemeteries on the RI State GIS maps. Where are they located, and how does one gain access to them? Would we report our findings to someone in some state agency and they add them? Should there be a working group for data issues? No conclusion reached.
- *Discussion—should all clean ups be posted on Facebook? No conclusion reached.

- 3 members need reappointing—Betty, Marueen and Debbie have been reappointed. Lew is leaving the commission, and will be replaced by Elliot Caldwell (sp?)
 - report from Pegee that signs are almost ready and anyone who needs posts should let her know.
 - group updates—Jim reported that the Indigenous Veterans memorial to be dedicated at the Veterans Cemetery. The Tyler Point Cemetery in Barrington is to be surveyed. Larry reported that the Lyons Club is donating funds to the restoration of the Abbott Cemetery, and that a headstone found in someone's front yard turned out to be one that was replaced; it was taken in by the South County Museum . Rick reported that RIHS has made arrangements with Ancestry to scan many records of interest to the Commission. Debbie reported that Theresa Stokes of the 1619 Project is researching the Gardiner/Stanton cemetery, which is a burial place of enslaved people. Bob and Charleene are working in West Greenwich. The Pawtuxet Valley Group is also doing cleanings in Coventry.
- Motion to adjourn by Charlotte at 2:46, seconded by Rick.
Next meeting Saturday November 18th in North Smithfield.