

Minutes of Meeting April 17, 2019

Location: Warren Armory

In attendance: Pegee Malcolm, Bob Butler, Charlotte Taylor, Judy Fardig, Alan Clarke, Caroline Wells, Lew Keen, Russell DiNoto, Jim Bessel, Christine MacWilliams, Alex LaForce, Joe Jordan, Edna Kent, and Betty Mencucci

Excused absences: Walter Slocomb and David Bell

Also in attendance: Carlo Mencucci, Bill Brown, Charlie C. Cavalconte (Bristol Cemetery Commission), Colin Parkhurst, Ken Orenstein (Temple Beth El), and Maureen Buffi

Meeting called to order at 6:34 pm by Pegee Malcolm, chair

- Introduction of New Commissioners Christine MacWilliams representing Providence County and Joe Jordan representing Washington County

- Introduction of November 14, 2018 Meeting Minutes

It was noted that the minutes should have included a request by Pegee during the November meeting for the commissioners to make a list of contact persons for “larger” cemeteries within their counties. Larger was defined as about 5 acres. A motion was made by Lew and seconded by Bob to accept the draft minutes with the correction. The minutes were unanimously accepted.

- Historical Cemeteries Restoration & Awareness Day

Christine reported that 36 of 39 cities/towns in RI hosted events. She requested that the contact list for cemetery groups be updated.

- Volunteers

Pegee was contacted by a parole officer to place two parolees in cemetery work, one in Warwick and one in Narragansett. Pegee was not contacted by her would-be volunteer and Alex only got an hour’s worth from her volunteer.

She noted there had been community service volunteers in Warwick, Westerly, Coventry, and Cranston.

If anyone in Washington County can use a community service volunteer needing 10 hours they should contact Pegee.

- Perpetual Care Funds

Pegee asked commissioners to report for the June meeting how perpetual care funds are handled in the various cities and towns after taking a call from Ed Robinson in Foster regarding perpetual care. Jim reminded the commission about the state law regarding perpetual care in active cemeteries.

- Cemetery Commissions

Pegee reported that East Providence is considering starting a cemetery commission and had called on her to advise them. West Warwick, which had a cemetery commission in the past, is looking to incorporate a new commission into its comprehensive plan.

- Flagging in Observance of Memorial Day

Jim reported that of the 600 cemeteries being flagged that there was some pushback by groups who are supposed to be supplying the names of the veterans when requesting flags.

Also, Pegee reminded everyone that even when flagging they need to get permission from property owners to access cemeteries to avoid trespassing.

- Interviews and Guest Talks

Pegee, Christine and a few other commissioners were interviewed by Brown University student, Andrew Baker, about Historical Cemetery Restoration & Awareness Day, the commission and its future goals.

Pegee and Lew plan to attend a genealogical meeting at the library in Portsmouth where they will give a talk and explain the website.

- Problem Cemeteries

Pegee is still getting calls regarding Oakland (CR 003). If anyone hears of someone having complaints they should direct the person to contact Pegee. Also, concerns regarding Oak Hill (WO 007) can be directed her way.

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

Charlotte noted that Richmond drafted its own regulations after it rejected the RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission's regulations. She also noted that the Grace Church cemetery (PV 005) is in need of help. She attended a meeting at the church about the cemetery in the past but it wasn't helpful.

Bob Butler reported that a scout was working in a cemetery across from the fire station in West Greenwich as an Eagle Scout project and will be taking care of the railings damaged by a storm.

Caroline said they were hosting a cleanup on Saturday and planning a workshop for the summer.

Betty noted that in a cemetery by Wilson's Reservoir a large tree blew down across all of the rows of graves but all the stones were okay.

Edna asked about a situation in Glocester in which a barbed wire fence separating properties was being installed inside a cemetery. Charlotte suggested that any digging for post holes would need approval from the town. Also Bill gave an update on a previously reported issue involving a cemetery where a wall was removed to make way for a driveway. He may have to return to the town council for a follow-up.

Pegee noted that RI Historical Society had not been sending their representative to commission meetings due to internal miscommunication.

Pegee also reported that Carol Anne Costa who was working in the governor's office of constituent affairs and talking with RIACHC about establishing a liaison for cemetery issues no longer works in that office.

Although Dory is no longer on the commission she is still interested in Richmond cemeteries and available to help.

The former Citizens Bank property off Sockanosset Cross Road has been sold. Pegee and the Cranston Planning Dept. visited the buyers to make sure that the right-of-way to the nearby state cemetery is kept accessible.

Ken Orenstein, a guest in attendance representing Temple Beth El and PV 006 (Sons of David & Israel Cemetery) in Providence, expressed concerns following recent vandalism in a Fall River cemetery. He asked about signage which specifically states the RI statutes regarding vandalism. He showed a copy of a similar sign seen in Massachusetts and requested to have a template made. It was agreed that it might make sense for certain problem cemeteries. Pegee planned to check with the DOT sign shop about this specific sign.

Upcoming Meetings:

June 19, at the Charlestown Museum on Post Road; September 18, at Warwick City Hall Council Chambers and November 20, is open.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:13 on a motion made by Charlotte and seconded by Jim.

Respectfully Submitted by Maureen Buffi, Secretary