

Minutes of Meeting September 20, 2017

Location: Newport Library

In attendance: Pegee Malcolm, Judy Fardig, Russ DiNoto, David Bell, Lew Keene, Bob Butler, Walter Slocomb, Alan Clarke, Charlotte Taylor, Betty Mencucci and Michael Laferriere

Excused absences: Alex LaForce, Dory Wagner, Edna Kent, and Jennifer Galpern

Also in attendance: Charlene Butler and Carlo Mencucci

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm by Pegee Malcolm, chair

- Introduction of Draft Meeting Minutes from June 21, 2017

Bob made a motion, seconded by Charlotte, to accept the Draft Minutes with a correction to the report on CR 062 which should have stated that all of the headstones were missing. The Draft Minutes with the correction were unanimously approved.

- Commission Vacancy for Veterans Cemetery

The seat for Veterans Cemetery representative on the commission is now open in Cara Condit's absence. The replacement should be announced by the November meeting. In the meanwhile the project for keeping track of flag distribution for Memorial day continues.

- Flag Distribution/Retirement

Michael had questions about the procedure for the removal and retirement of the flags being replaced due to a situation he encountered in Oak Hill Cemetery in Woonsocket where a truck full of flags was discovered. He also is looking for current contact information for the cemetery.

- Volunteer Assignments

Pegee routinely receives requests from people looking for cemetery work to complete community service hours. She asked that any commission members interested in receiving such volunteers notify her.

- Tax Abatement

Betty reported that after a lengthy process the town of Burrillville passed a tax abatement ordinance (in accordance with RIGL 44-3-63). The property owner will have to maintain the cemetery and provide a picture to the town. In return they will receive a tax abatement of \$100. There will be a limit of one tax abatement per property.

- Commission Re-appointments

Pegee reminded Michael, Bob, and Dave that they are up for re-appointment.

- Introduction of New Commission Member

Russ DiNoto was introduced as the new Washington County representative, replacing Evelyn Wheeler. He described his interest in cemeteries, veteran burials and other veteran's issues.

- Governor's Medallions

Judy is working on pricing the manufacture of bronze medallions. Pegee and Charlotte were looking into finding a quality 3-D printer at Brown, URI or NE Tech to see if the medallions could be reproduced with the look of bronze but without the expense.

- Warwick 090

Michael wanted to recognize Pegee's role along with that of other volunteers who worked together to bring dignity to the many unnamed individuals who were buried at the site of the Warwick City Home or old Warwick Poor Farm. Volunteers identified as many names as they could and raised funds to purchase an informational kiosk to name and describe the individuals buried there. The site was also cleaned by volunteers. On September 9 a ceremony was held to unveil the kiosk and recognize the project.

Additional Member Comments – Other Updates have been submitted to Pegee via email

Walter asked Charlene if there were any local efforts by DAR to identify cemeteries containing the graves of Revolutionary War veterans, as was done in a NY project. She was not aware of any but it was suggested that SAR may have more records. Charlotte asked if such records might be available at the Stephen Hopkins House.

Pegee noted that in the past Michael had mentioned Ralph Mohr's records collection at the Marion J. Mohr Library in Johnston. Pegee visited the library and viewed an interesting scrapbook. Ralph was the head of the Graves Registration Committee during the 1950s and devised the current cemetery numbering system.

Edna (via Pegee) requested that the local numbering system in Gloucester be cross-referenced to the current state numbering system. Michael said that in order for this to be done on the cemetery database John Sterling would have to give his approval.

Charlotte referred a Middletown man who was interested in fixing headstones to the Mencuccis for more information. Betty responded but he said that for physical reasons he was unable to pursue the work now.

Pegee received a call from Mary Grande from Fish & Wildlife about a Richmond cemetery near Plain Pond that she couldn't find in the database. Pegee asked Russ to look into this.

Pegee read a letter to the commission that she received from Ransom Consulting Co. notifying the commission of a survey they planned to conduct next to a cemetery on Great Rd. in North Smithfield.

Betty received a response from the Cranston Commission regarding the guidelines that were added to the website. They are interested in doing headstone work and had recently met with the Friends of Cemeteries group from Smithfield.

Michael reported that Grace Church Cemetery in Providence was able to raise the money to install a fence with a locked gate.

The November 15 meeting location will be determined later but Dory offered the Hopkinton Library and Bob suggested that the Loutit Library in West Greenwich may be available.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10pm on a motion by Alan, seconded by Bob.

Respectfully Submitted by Maureen Buffi, Secretary