

Minutes of Meeting September 19, 2018

Location: RI Veterans Cemetery, Exeter

In attendance: Pegee Malcolm, Jim Bessel, Edna Kent, Alex LaForce, Lew Keen, Charlotte Taylor, David Bell, Alan Clarke, Walter Slocomb, Caroline Wells, Judy Fardig and Betty Mencucci

Excused absences: Dory Wagner, Michael Laferriere, Bob Butler and Russell DiNoto

Also in attendance: Carol Anne Costa, Bill Brown, Robert, Dave McCarthy, Carlo Mencucci, and Colin Parkhurst

Meeting called to order at 6:33 pm by Pegee Malcolm, chair

Presentation by Carol Anne Costa from the Governor's Office of Constituent Services

Addressing issue that Pegee hears frequently from people that there is no place in the state to turn when they have concerns involving cemeteries

- She has had several conversations with Pegee about "problem" cemeteries
- The state office wants to support the commission to find solutions
- Some ways the state can help include recognizing volunteers, establishing communications for nuanced issues, passing along info to public as the commission would want
- Possibility of creating resolution to form an informal association to deal with issues of commercial working cemeteries
- Will provide a contact to the commission to address questions brought up in meeting concerning cemeteries on state owned land

Introduction of June 27 Draft Meeting Minutes

- Judy made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Alan. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Governor's Medallions Update

- Judy is researching the governors who need medallions and is considering asking people in those districts to help look for them. She has a question if the job will be put out to bids and will ask Carol Anne how to access the money that is now available.

"All Historical Cemeteries" Book

- Jim found an old book at the Veterans Cemetery containing a listing of cemeteries in RI. Commissioners made requests to Jim to receive copies for their prospective cities and towns.

State Farm Cemetery Annex, CR # 107

- Pegee is looking into getting a kiosk or directory for the names of those buried in the unnamed graves, similar to what was done at Buttonwoods. She is looking into options for raising funds for what she estimates to be approximately \$2,000.

Historic Cemetery Signs

- Pegee will be able to place a new sign order. Any commissioners requesting signs should bring their list to the November meeting.

Rhode Island Realtors Association

- Pegee received a letter notifying the commission that a new form was available for sellers which requires them to disclose if they are aware of a cemetery on the property.

November meeting date

- The next meeting date falls on November 21, the day before Thanksgiving. Pegee asked the commission if they wished to reschedule and whether they preferred the week before or after. The preferred date was divided but all agreed they were okay with either option. The meeting will be held at 150 Benefit St., Providence and the new date is to be determined.

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

- Edna reported a situation in Glocester where a cemetery stone wall was illegally removed by a property owner to make way for a driveway. The Building Inspector's office refused to issue a certificate of occupancy for the house until the stone wall is replaced. Edna is looking for advice on how to proceed before reporting him to the police. Charlotte suggested notifying the town council who is supposed to enforce cemetery laws. If that fails she suggested calling the Attorney General's office.
- Betty asked for advice on a fieldstone cemetery in Burrillville which was altered by a resident but since there were no eyewitnesses she was told by the police they couldn't do anything. The resident has been evicted and Betty hopes to re-enter to inspect the cemetery. What action can be taken?
- Pegee received an email from an attorney representing St. Mary Antiochian Church in Pawtucket looking for permission to pave the roads within their cemetery. Charlotte noted that if the town council has no objections then it would be okay.
- Walter asked about locked cemeteries. Is it okay to lock a cemetery, especially if it is not on your property?
- Alex reported that she and Dory discovered a veteran's marker for the American Indian Wars for sale in an antique shop. She told the owner that it was illegal and the Charlestown Historical Society asked about donating it to the society but he wanted to check tax laws first. As of this time he has taken it off his Facebook site. A recommendation was made that if the marker is returned it should be kept at a museum for security reasons.
- Pegee was contacted by a woman from Little Compton who owns a house with a cemetery on the property and wanted to know what she could do with it. Pegee explained that she wasn't paying tax on that portion of the property and if she wanted to maintain the cemetery that would be great.
- The state police had a headstone belonging in West Greenwich. Alan was able to pick it up for Bob Butler.
- Pegee was contacted by a woman looking for a relative who was buried in The Valley Country Club Cemetery (WK 099) without a headstone but she didn't know where. She wanted the commission to find the grave and then called the mayor's and governor's offices to complain.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm on a motion made by Lew and seconded by Alan.

The November meeting is scheduled for 150 Benefit St., Providence with the new date to be announced.

Respectfully Submitted by Maureen Buffi, Secretary