

**Provincetown Cemetery Commission
Public Meeting**

Date: August 6, 2021

Location: Alden Street Cemetery beside the DPW maintenance garage

Meeting Minutes

Call to order: Michael Harpie, Chair called the meeting to order at 12:59 P.

In attendance: Michael Harpie (MH), Sharon Bunn (SB), Jason Brown (JB) (Alternate), Chris Brooke (CB) (Alternate).

Excused absence: Michael Chute (MC) , Dawn Walsh (DW), Lynne Martin (LM)

Unexcused absence: N/A

Quorum: reached with Alternates taking the place of absent Regular members.

Also attending: N/A

Supporting materials: draft revision of Town of Provincetown Cemetery Rules and Regulations (8 6 2021); summary of Cemetery Funds; email requesting placement of bench at grave A128; draft signage.

Review of minutes of previous meeting: Motion by CB to approve the May 28, 2021 meeting minutes as reviewed and revised at this meeting; second: JB; vote: 4-0-0.

Cemetery plot sales: 8 Deeds were presented for signatures, of which 7 were signed. 1 not signed; to be returned for Town Clerk's signature.

Finalize proposed revisions of Cemetery Commission Rules and Regulations: Substantive discussions regarding the Buy-Back Program (Article 6.), Fees and Lot Specifications (Appendix A.), and Markers and Monuments (Appendix B.) were held and a vote taken.

- 1) Buy-Back Program (Article 6): MH proposed revising Article 6. by adding a sentence about the maximum buy-back amount of \$500.00, minus the perpetual care fee, if the purchaser(s) or heir(s), or research conducted by the Town Clerk's office, are unable to confirm the original purchase price. The members discussed the need for such a provision about which there was consensus.

Motion by MH to amend Article 6.: Add language to the effect that the Cemetery Commission will consider buying back a previously sold lot for a maximum of \$500.00 per lot if the purchaser(s) or heir(s) cannot produce supporting documentation, or the Town Clerk is unable to confirm the purchase price via research. The buy-back amount will be determined by the Clerk's office and subject to available funds; second: JB; vote: 4-0-0.

- 2) Schedule of Fees (Appendix A.): MH reported on a discussion he had with Emmett Cantanese, Town Clerk, regarding Mr. Cantanese's meeting with Brian Carlson, Cemetery Supervisor, about the current actual cost (labor and materials) for single cremation lots, single green burial lots, and single conventional lots. Given the actual costs of labor and materials and the current fee structure last revised in 2012, Town is losing money on opening and closing plots. The actual cost is currently \$542.42 per conventional burial. No current actual cost of opening and closing green burial lots provided to MH.

MH proposed increasing the lot prices as follows:

- \$100 for a single cremation lot;
- \$300 for all other single lots;
- \$600 for a two grave lot, and;
- \$1200 for a four grave lot.
- MH proposed no changes in the perpetual care fees.

Members discussed different methods for benchmarking fee changes and agreed that in the future, it will be important to know the actual costs to the DPW for opening and closing burial plots so that periodic reviews of the appropriateness of the plot fees can be done. Consensus was that the lot fee increases recommended by MH would be incorporated into the draft revision of the Rules and Revisions document.

- 3) Markers and Monuments (Appendix B.): MH presented a draft revised Appendix B to the Rules and Regulations on which maximum monument dimensions, all marker dimensions, and notes on installation requirements are depicted and described. The purpose of including diagrammatic illustrations is to make the maximum allowed sizes of monuments and markers unambiguous and as a substitute the proposed Appendix B document for the Table in the current Rules and Regulations.

Motion by CB to approve the above two (2) changes to Appendix A and Appendix B to the Rules and Regulations as discussed; second: JB; vote: 4-0-0.

Signage for Alden/Gifford/Hamilton Cemeteries: MH presented a draft sign listing the most important rules of public conduct. Once finalized the DPW can fabricate and install the signs in designated locations throughout the Alden/Gifford/Hamilton Cemeteries. A total of (7) identical signs, each on installed at the street entrances in obvious places for the public to see are needed.

MH also proposed asking the DPW to reinstall the formerly placed "Erosion" signs at the two locations (1 sign on either end of the path) where people continue to walk through an area that is not a designated path from Cemetery Road to get to town on the way to/from Duarte's parking lot.

Motion by MH to approve draft signage and re-installation of Erosion signs; second: SB; vote: 3-0-0.

Cemetery finances: Gift fund as of 7/8/21 increased to \$7812.63 thanks to donations obtained by JB.

Nomination(s) and election(s) of Officers: MH gave his resignation as Chair after serving for about 5 years. MH is interested in continuing as a regular member. MH nominated SB as Chair and JB as Vice-Chair. After discussion, SB and JB accepted their respective nominations.

Motion by MH to appoint SB as successor Chair; second: JB; vote: 3-0-0; SB recused self.

Motion by CB to appoint JB as Vice-Chair; second: MH; vote: 3-0-0; (JB recused self).

Other Business pursuant to the MA Open Meeting Law:

- JB did a Zoom interview with Ptownie media regarding the marker and monument cleaning that he (JB) has been doing at the Winthrop Street Cemetery. The interview is scheduled to air next week.
- JB would like to develop a strategy for next summer to get multiple volunteers he can train to help clean stones in the old part of the Gifford Cemetery. The members agreed that it is an excellent idea and further discussion was tabled for a future meeting.
- MH presented an email request from the co-buyer of plot A128 in the Alden Street Cemetery to place a 42"-48" long bench in lieu of a monument as requested by the co-buyer's deceased partner.

Motion by CB to approve request to place a bench in plot A128 in accordance with the written information provided; second: JB, vote: 4-0-0.

Date of next regular meeting: September date to be determined.

Adjournment: Motion by CB to adjourn; second: JB; vote: 4-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 2:34 PM.

Respectfully, Sharon Bunn