

# Provincetown Cemetery Commission

## Meeting Minutes

Date: September 14, 2022

Location: Alden Cemetery, 24 Cemetery Rd, Provincetown, MA 02657

**Call to Order:** 3:28 pm

**In attendance:**

Sharon Bunn (SB), Lynne Martin (LM), Robert Sweetman (RS) (Alternate) (via phone)

**Excused absence:** Michael Chute (MC), Michael Harpie (MH), Chris Brooke (CB)

**Unexcused absence:** Tim Famulare (TF) (Alternate)

**Also attending:** Brian Cowing, Cemetery Supervisor, DPW; Sherry Prada, Deputy Director, DPW (via phone)

**Supporting materials:** (List the documents, photographs, maps, and drawings)

- August 22, 2022, email Correspondence from Architect for the proposed 27 Winthrop St residential project.
- Headstone Cleaning Guide written by Jason Brown.

**1. Review and approval of minutes:** Minutes are not yet written.

Motion: by SB to postpone review and approval of the August 17 meeting minutes to the October 12 meeting. Second: LM. Vote: 3.0.0.

**2. Chair's report:**

- Community Preservation Act (CPA) Funds: Michelle Jarusiewicz (MJ), Housing Specialist, informed SB in a July meeting and later confirmed via email that she (MJ) is not responsible for writing CPA grant applications for the Cemetery Commission, or the bidding process, administrative support, or project management for approved CPA grants awarded to the Cemetery Commission. MJ stated that the Cemetery Commission always wrote its CPA grant applications in the past.
  - Questions also remain as to who on Town staff is responsible to put out bids for the previously approved CPA grants, and how much money is left from each of the approved CPA projects.
  - Numerous times in the past several years or more, the previous chair (MH) asked MJ to help move the newest CPA grant bid process forward, but no action was taken by MJ. We still need to get more information. A letter will go to the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager to ask them who on the Town staff is going to write grant applications, handle competitive bids and other administrative tasks, and oversee CPA-funded project management for the Cemetery Commission.
  - LM suggested that since Eric Larson, former Assistant Director of the DPW, was the overseer of the last Winthrop Street Project, and the DPW may have additional information in department files.
  - LM will investigate the available remaining CPA funds and old bid information.

- Winthrop Street/Court Street proposed residential project status update: There is no need for the project proponents to meet with us until there is a significant update or project start.
  - SB received an email on August 22, 2022, from Doug Dolezal, Architect, in answer to questions posed by the Commission and SB which SB summarized. (Email is attached to Minutes). Planning Committee is the next step, and proponents won't have a contractor and construction means and methods identified until money is secured.
  - LM suggested that the Building Commissioner be on-site, if possible, when the project work starts with regards to the hill support.
- Nickerson Funeral Home Outreach: SB doesn't know if TF ever received a reply after he contacted out to the funeral home several months ago. SB suggested contacting the funeral home again to say the Cemetery Commission is interested in talking to them about Green Burials, and other matters related to burials in Provincetown.

### 3. Public comments, if any: None

### 4. Cemetery Supervisor updates and discussion:

- Clarified that Nickerson Funeral Home is part of the Dignity Memorial corporation of funeral service providers.
- BC is looking into getting more D/2 for stone cleaning. He will have Melissa, DPW Administrative Assistant, look into ordering it from the company. Hamilton and Gifford will be a good place to start. He will also look into what supplies Jason Brown left when he moved away, and in getting a pull cart. RS and BC will meet on Sept 15 so BC can show RS the D/2 cleaning procedures with which BC feels he is very familiar.
- Fences were replaced in several spots in the cemetery.
- One cremation and two full burials were done last week and were the only burials since BC's report to the Commission in July.
- Looking into purchasing a few vaults and storing them on-site, like the Barnstable Cemetery Department does, to streamline the process when it's time to prepare for a burial. Sometimes there is a very tight timeline. Building & Grounds follows the same procedure to prepare plots for burials, no matter which funeral home is in charge. Space is available at Alden St Cemetery for vault storage. He has spoken to the local vault company. Undertakers have historically ordered vaults and had them delivered to the Provincetown, the total cost of which is charged the cost to the customer.
- Department has been busy filling in sink holes in cemeteries.
- Foot path has filled in with new grass growth and is not being used by people who used to cut through in the upper section of the Hamilton Cemetery. Barricades remain and have been effective in keeping people from walking on the seeded areas.
- They are working on resetting stones in the Alden/Hamilton/Gifford Cemeteries that have issues.
- Will clear brush away from stones in lower area of the Winthrop St Cemetery by Court St and remove all existing piles of wood debris in the cemetery.
- Will investigate repairing the timber stairway from the Court St entrance to the top of the cemetery.
- Suggested Cemetery Commission come to the cemeteries and show him what they'd like to have done, e.g., "nip and drip" treatments.
- Reported that he has a commemorative sign for the Revolutionary War Patriots left from a previous CPA project at the Winthrop Street Cemetery that needs to be installed. We will have the next meeting on site and designate a location for the sign installation.

## 5. Unfinished business:

- Green Burials:
  - Review/Revise 2nd draft of Green Burial FAQs: Motion: by SB to postpone to the October 12 meeting. Second: LM. Vote: 3-0-0.
  - SB inquired if the Commission is interested in asking Nickerson Funeral Home to send staff to attend an upcoming meeting to describe how it can assist customers with green burials. Interest was expressed and further discussion and planning to will be put on the October 12 meeting agenda.
- AmeriCorps: Define tasks and timeline for Fall, 2022 AmeriCorps volunteers/ Cemetery Supervisor/Cemetery Commission collaboration: BC stated that there are no tasks that AmeriCorps could help with at this time. No further action to be taken at this time.
- Monument and marker cleaning at Alden/Hamilton/Gifford by volunteer(s) (Cemetery Supervisor/Cemetery Commission collaboration):
  - BC watched and worked with Jason Brown numerous times while Jason cleaned monuments at the Winthrop St Cemetery, so BC believes that he is qualified to train RS in the process. BC and RS agreed to meet to begin training on the day after this meeting.
  - Confirmed that work must be during the DPW workdays and hours (M-Th 7-4. F 7-11) so volunteer(s) have access to tools, water, etc. at the Building & Grounds garage and can be informed of any burials that would prohibit short-term access to certain areas.
  - Cleaning can start this Fall while the temperatures remain warm enough.
  - Suggested starting in the Hamilton Cemetery. Which stones to clean in phase 1 will need to be identified.
  - Knows that Jason left some supplies in Town when he moved and where they're stored and will follow up to get them.
  - Will see if he can get a pull cart that's not being used from another Town location.
  - Plans to contact Melissa, Administrative Assistant at the DPW, about getting a reimbursement for previous purchase of D/2, and ordering supplies for the future.

## 6. New business:

- Review and revise the Cemetery Rules and Regulations definition of "Resident" and set target date to complete revision of current definition to address continued confusion regarding eligibility.  
Motion: by SB to postpone until October 12 meeting. Second: RS. Vote: 3-0-0.

## 7. Cemetery plot sale applications: None

## 8. Cemetery buy-back requests, if any: None

## 9. Other business that may come before the Cemetery Commission that could not have been reasonably anticipated pursuant to MA Open Meeting Law: None.

### **11. Review of action items (by whom, task)**

- SB: Write a letter to the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager about who on Town staff is designated as to write CPA grants, handle the bid process, and provide administrative supports and project management for approved grants.
- LM: Research the funds balances of approved CPA grants and grant application documents.
- RS and BC: begin training for D/2 stone cleaning and identify stones to clean in phase 1.
- BC: locate supplies that Jason Brown left in Provincetown, and a pull cart for RS to use.
- BC: Contact DPW Administrative Assistant re: reimbursement for a D/2 purchase receipt and purchasing D/2 in future.

**12. Date and location of next regular meeting:** Oct. 12, 2022, at the Winthrop St Cemetery pending the weather. Inclement weather location: Caucus Rm, Town Hall.

**13. Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn: SB Second: RS Vote: 4.0.0

Meeting adjourned at: 4:28 pm.

Submitted by: Lynne Martin

# Cemetery Headstone Cleaning Guide

by T. Jason Brown, May 2022

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## When to clean?

Headstones should only be cleaned in warm weather (generally Provincetown's "Season" but possibly through October). If the temperature is < 40 degrees, do not clean, as headstones can crack in cold temperatures. Generally, the sunnier and warmer the better for the D/2 cleaning solution to be its most effective.

## Supplies

- Soft-bristle brushes (no metal!)
- Toothbrushes (for cleaning the letters)
- Paint Stir Stick-shaped wood (for removal of larger clumps of moss and growth)
- Gallon jugs of water and spray bottle (w/ pump)
- D/2 Biological Solution (<https://bit.ly/2B503Xv>) and spray bottle (w/ pump)
- Gloves
- Reflective Safety Vest

A good video on cleaning with D/2:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8WdUSzKcmjs>

## Instructions

1. Using soft-bristle brushes and wooden stir sticks, gently brush down the headstone, remove vines, etc.
2. Spray the headstone completely with water, soaking it.
3. Spray the headstone with D/2, coating it on all sides.
4. Let the headstone sit with the D/2 on it for 12-15 minutes.  
(because of the wait time, consider cleaning 2-3 headstones in a row, in an assembly-line fashion)
5. Return to the headstone. If it's dried out, give it a light spritz of water or D/2.
6. Note if the stone is "sandstone" – this material was used in the 1800s and earlier and can be identified by how easily it "crumbles" in your hand. Approach the cleaning process with even more care than normal...
7. Starting at the top, gently but firmly begin cleaning the headstone with a brush. Consider holding the opposite side of the headstone to balance the pressure you are applying to the front.
8. Clean several inches tall at a time, then rinse with water and move down to the next section. (don't forget the sides!)
9. Give the headstone one more full spraying with water.
10. Give the headstone one more D/2 spraying.
11. Note when the headstone was cleaned, and return in 1-2 weeks and clean the headstone one more time.

## Doug Dolezal

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**To:** Sharon Bunn  
**Cc:** dougdolezal@outlook.com; Joey C; tiggem@aol.com  
**Subject:** RE: Proposed Residential Construction Project: 27 Winthrop St / 34 Court Street, Provincetown

Hi Sharon - Thank you for the email. Below are **my answers** to the various questions you listed below:

DOLEZAL + Architecture

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**From:** Sharon Bunn <sbunn7451@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 22, 2022 11:42 AM  
**To:** Doug Dolezal <DougD@dolezalarchitecture.com>  
**Cc:** dougdolezal@outlook.com; Joey C <monumentbarber@gmail.com>; tiggem@aol.com  
**Subject:** Re: Proposed Residential Construction Project: 27 Winthrop St / 34 Court Street, Provincetown

Hello,

After my August 17 email, I polled the Cemetery Commission members about the timing of when they'd prefer to add you to a meeting agenda to give us an update, and the unanimous preference was to wait until you have additional substantive information pertinent to the project's proximity to the Winthrop St Cemetery from your future meetings with the Town's regulatory boards, such as the Conservation Commission and Planning Board.

**OK – We are finalizing our HDC reviews now, and once we get through the Planning Board review the project will be fully permitted. Per your note, we are happy to return to your Commission after that point.**

In the meantime, until you come back to meet with us, you can email me with answers to the questions/concerns/points and I'll share your email(s) with the Commission members.

My comments at the August 3 HDC meeting:

- Mentioned that at the July 13 Cemetery Commission meeting, we didn't discuss the disposition of the existing retaining wall at the bottom of the hill.

**The retaining wall sits well within the property and varies in height from only 1-foot tall to about 4-feet. As mentioned to your Commission in July, the wall will be removed and partially replaced with segments of the new building foundations which will help reinforce the hill. There are no regulations that restrict removing the wall, and its removal will have no impact on the adjacent hill along the cemetery property line. I'm sure you are aware that any unsupported fill could have an adverse effect on the project, so we understand any concerns regarding the stability of the existing hill.**

- Stated that the meaning of a 14' topography line (as it relates to the grade of the hill) isn't clear to me. (I assume that Tim Famulare knows the meaning, but I don't know if the other Commission members all understand what it means).

**It was our goal, and not any regulatory requirement, that we try to stay below the 14-foot or 15-foot topography line (that's a contour line that's 14-feet above sea level). The "base" elevation contour line for most of the site will be around 9-feet (above sea level), so what this means is we are trying to minimize any cut into the hill that's greater than roughly 6-feet. Where this might occur we will use the foundations of the building as support, as mentioned above. This will be confirmed as we move forward with our engineering for the project.**

- Expressed appreciation that you agreed to consider proposing installation of naturalized fencing to keep trespassing onto/from the cemetery, and erosion of the hill, to a minimum. (I know you stated in the July 13 Cemetery Commission meeting that you'd return to show us your proposed material/design).

**We will continue to review and consider the fence as you described above, but please be aware that other regulatory boards have a legal decision in this too – like the HDC.**

- Noted there's a MA General Law, C. 38, Section 6). (The minutes of the July 13 Cemetery Commission meeting also state that if stones or remains are uncovered, they would need to be reported to the superintendent. The superintendent is Brian Cowing, Foreman on the DPW's Building and Grounds team. His phone number is 508-487-7008, and [Email Brian Cowing](mailto:Brian.Cowing@dpw.state.ma.us).

**Yes, thank you.**

I thought of a couple of other follow up questions that I have:

- What approvals would need to be in place in order for you to be ready to choose a contractor, and be able to update the Cemetery Commission on the construction means and methods?

**We can choose a contractor at any point, but we will not start that process until all local zoning and bylaw permits are in place. We will also have to secure all funding for the project as well. Once we have that complete we will file for a Building Permit, and at that point we will have a full construction schedule and a mean and methods for the work – but that's at least a year out from now.**

- When do you anticipate the building demolition will begin?

**Per above, not for a year or so.**

I will try to swing by the WinthropSt Cemetery this week to re-familiarize myself with the vegetation along the boundary of the cemetery and your property, and take a look at your retaining wall. I recently saw it from the Court St. side. I'll take you up on your invitation to go onto your property and say hello if I see Tom or Joey.

**Sounds great – they will be happy to walk you through the site. Thank you!**

Sincerely,

Sharon Bunn  
Chair, Cemetery Commission

On Wed, Aug 17, 2022 at 1:48 PM Doug Dolezal <[DougD@dolezalarchitecture.com](mailto:DougD@dolezalarchitecture.com)> wrote:

Thank you Sharon. We are happy to come to both September and October meetings just to keep the dialogue moving forward and to update your group. We feel that more communication is better, so we are