

# Provincetown Cemetery Commission

## Meeting Minutes

**Meeting date:** December 7, 2022

**Location:** Town Hall, Caucus Room, 260 Commercial St, Provincetown MA 02657

**Call to order:** 3:03 pm

**In attendance:** Sharon Bunn (SB) (Chair), Michael Chute (MC), Phone-Lynne Martin (LM) (Vice Chair) (left the meeting early), Michael Harpie (MH), Timothy Famulare (TF), Robert Sweetman (Alternate)

**Excused absence:** None.

**Unexcused absence:** None.

**Also attending:** No other attendees.

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

- 2023 Meeting Calendar Draft 1(12 7 22)
- Green Burial FAQs Draft 4 (11 10 22)
- Cemetery Rules and Regulations Approved Select Board on Jan 10, 2022
- Cemetery Commission Residency Requirements and Procedures to Purchase Cemetery Plot Final July 2022

**1. Public comments, if any:** None.

**2. Review and approval of minutes:** Motion to approve by: MC    Second by: RS    Vote: 6-0-0

**3. Chair's report:**

- September donation of \$150 in appreciation of the volunteers "who have done such an amazing job restoring headstones in the Winthrop St Cemetery". Discussion about whether the Finance Department is noting donations to the Cemetery Gift Fund in MUNIS with donor(s) names in the way that the previous Assistant Town Accountant used to.
- There was an e-mail inquiry from an attorney of buyer about 24 Conwell St, which is under a Purchase and Sale Agreement, about whether the Commission has any information concerning private burials on the property other than the ones that are located just over the boundary with the top of the Hamilton Cemetery (A. Roach, "Mother," A. Roach, Jr.). SB informed the attorney that she is not aware of whether there are additional burials on the private land, provided links to information on the Roach family from the Find a Grave website, and asked if ground-penetrating radar would be employed by her client.
- Dignity Memorial (a.k.a. Nickerson Funeral Home) sent a plot purchase application for a burial plot for the benefit of decedent Barbara R. to the attention of the Cemetery Commission. SB gave the paperwork to Ana Ruiz, Assistant Town Clerk, who will follow up with Dignity Memorial to inform that all applications to buy plots in the Provincetown Cemetery should be directed to the Office of the Town Clerk.

# Provincetown Cemetery Commission

## Meeting Minutes

**4. Cemetery Supervisor updates and discussion:** No Supervisor in attendance today.

**5. Unfinished business:**

- Green Burial FAQs: TF handed out draft 4 of the document. Commissioners agreed that the FAQs are close to being ready for publication. Discussion about whether 24-hour notice to the DPW or person in charge for the preparation of the burial plot for green burial is sufficient, about which TF will contact the Cemetery Supervisor to inquire.
- Cemetery Rules and Regulations:
  - Discussion of the origins of the current definition of “Resident” in the current regulations, which were: a) concern about the limited number of remaining plots available for sale; b) establishing criteria for current primary residency in Provincetown vs. former primary residency in Provincetown, and c) including criteria to allow a person who previously had a primary residence in Provincetown for a certain number of years but no longer resides in Town to buy a cemetery plot. Talked about the concept of allowing a non-resident property owner who pays property taxes to Provincetown to buy plots, which is not currently provided for in Provincetown, and limiting the number of plots a person may purchase. This was a wide-ranging dialogue, and the subject will require further exchange of ideas, and data.
  - RS will research definitions of “Resident” and other categories of persons eligible to buy cemetery plots in surrounding towns and any other pertinent information and compile the results for discussion at the Jan meeting.
  - Commissioners agreed it would be helpful to know how many plots per year, on average, have been sold in the past couple of years. MH estimated about 20 per year. SB will inquire at the Clerk’s Office and also inquire if it would be possible to get the current number of available plots for sale.
- Other proposed revisions of the Rules and Regulations: Postponed to the Jan 10, 2023, meeting.

**6. New business:**

- 2023 Calendar of meeting dates and minute-takers:
  - TF shared that he recently was promoted to a new position within the Town while he also temporarily continues to fulfill his previous job, thus he is unsure whether he will have the time to continue serving as an Alternate on the Cemetery Commission. The Commissioners expressed their congratulations, understanding of the big responsibilities TF will be carrying, and their hope that if possible, he will be able to remain on the Cemetery Commission. His contributions have been significant and appreciated.
  - MC brought up that a friend of his (TJ) is interested in applying to join the Cemetery Commission.
  - TF suggested changing the dates to the second Wednesday of each month as a rule to accommodate some members’ other commitments and establish a consistent routine. Suggestion made that SB email meeting agendas in Word so the person responsible for

# Provincetown Cemetery Commission

## Meeting Minutes

writing Minutes can copy and paste the content of the agenda into the Minutes template. RS generously offered to be responsible for writing Minutes six times per year.

- 2022 Annual Report – discussion of accomplishments and goals for 2023: Postponed to the Jan 11 meeting.

### **7. Other business that may come before the Cemetery Commission that could not have been reasonably anticipated pursuant to MA Open Meeting Law:**

- MC brought up a discussion point for a future meeting about composting burials and sent a link to an article about the process to the interested members. **Cemetery plot sales:**
- Patricia van Dijkhuizen: Plots A129 & A130. Motion to approve by: TF Second by: RS Vote: 4-0-1
- Leigh Burroughs: Plot B372. Motion to approve by: MC Second by: SB Vote: 5-0-0

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

### **9. Review of action items:**

- RS to research residency definitions and other relevant information for cemetery plot purchases of nearby Cape Cod towns, and the Islands.
- SB to update 2023 calendar and minute-taker assignments as discussed and agreed upon.

### **10. Date and location of next regular meeting:** January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at Town Hall, Caucus Room, 260 Commercial St, Provincetown MA 02657.

### **11. Adjournment:**

Motion to approve by: MC Second by: RS Vote: 5-0-0

Adjourned: 4:38 pm

Respectfully submitted by: MC