

Provincetown Cemetery Commission

Meeting Minutes

Meeting date: January 11, 2023

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

Call to order: 3:04 PM

In attendance: Sharon Bunn (SB) (Chair), Michael Harpie (MH), Robert Sweetman (RS) Thor Jensen (TJ) (Alternate)

Excused absence: Timothy Famulare (TF) (Alternate), Lynne Martin (LM) (Vice Chair)

Unexcused absence: Michael Chute (MC)

Also attending: Brian Cowing, Cemetery Supervisor, DPW

Supporting materials: Meeting Schedule (Draft 3) Jan 5, 2023; Survey of Cemetery Plot Purchase Eligibility in other Cape Cod Towns Dec 2022

1. Public comments, if any: none

2. Review and approval of minutes: not yet received; postponed to Feb 8 meeting

3. Chair's report:

- The Commission welcomed Thor Jensen as a new alternate member. Thor has been a year-rounder for the last few years preceded by years as a summer resident. In addition to being a yoga instructor and energy healer, he is also a sculpture artist influenced by marine life and human artifacts. He brings a wonderful energy to the commission.
- SB noted that she will be having an orthopedic procedure (timing TBD) that likely will require LM to assume some chair responsibilities during SB's recuperation.

4. Cemetery Supervisor updates and discussion:

- Most recent burial was Dec 10, 2022. There were no weather-related technical issues despite the winter (full) burial. Several members fondly reflected on the deceased as a tireless Provincetown advocate and cemetery champion.
- The sign for the Winthrop Street cemetery was received and installed. The height can be adjusted if needed. Members are encouraged to drive by. Original intent for sign was to depict the walking paths. Content of the sign will need to be confirmed in a future meeting and then the sign will need to be sent for printing.
- Tree removed on Hamilton Cemetery property near the Roach property line; stump remains but will be removed in the Spring 2023.
- 24 Conwell Street: BC probed area informally; unlikely to have full burials there but likely 4 or 5 cremations from prior owners. Property is being surveyed following recent sale. SB has not been contacted by the purchaser's attorney again after her informal query seeking information about possible additional burials on the property. SB noted that she learned from the attorney that a ground penetrating radar survey was going to be done, but SB does not know what the results were.
- MH has a headstone from Winthrop Cemetery that was discovered by 2 women associated with the Massachusetts Historical Commission in Boston who brought it to MH several years ago. Through much

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effort, the grave it is associated with has been determined and it will be placed in Spring 2023 and will remain in MH's possession until then. It has been separated from the base so this will require innovative installation considerations.

- Granite post on Court Street damaged by a car accident: will be replaced in the Spring.

5. Unfinished business:

- Review draft 3 (1-5-23) of minute-taker assignments for 2023 public meeting calendar and discuss any further requested changes.
 - No additional changes - finalized and approved.
- 2022 Annual Report due by Jan 20, 2023: suggestions for acknowledgements, accomplishments, and goals:
 - The report is due Jan 20 and members provided suggestion which included: reviewing prior Annual Reports (MH has several years' Annual Reports), Treasurer's Office will be able to provide lists of contributions, consider including number of burials and plot sales (Treasurer's Office and Brian can provide), consider including change in membership, accomplishment includes near finalization of natural burial FAQ and revision of Rules and Regulations Resident Definition for plot purchase. Goals for 2023: finalize Natural Burial FAQs and brochure, finalize Rules and Regs changes obtain a town liaison for requests for bids, ensure calendar is posted to town website, continued hybrid format, refill vacancies as they arrive, increase volunteer engagement while ensuring adequate DPW supervision and awareness.
- Natural Burials: Deferred until Feb 8, 2023, meeting.
 - Review formatting and graphics of (5th) draft of Green Burial FAQs approved at the Dec 7, 2022, meeting (TF): postponed to Feb 8 meeting.
- Further discussion of potential revisions of the definition of "Resident" in the Cemetery Rules and Regulations:
 - Current definition of "Resident" in the *Provincetown Cemetery Rules and Regulations* - reference the current Rules and Regulations approved by the Select Board on Jan 10, 2022.
 - The commission has been discussing changes to clarify and simplify the definition of "resident" eligibility to purchase cemetery plots accounting for the shrinking supply while considering equity between residents and non-resident taxpayers. To aid in this effort an informal survey was conducted by the RS of similar towns on the Cape. The commission acknowledged that while some towns have more land than others, in general the survey demonstrated that voting residents and residents listed on a town's census are not treated differently than non-resident taxpayers.
 - The commission discussed treating residents (i.e., registered voters and those listed on the most recent town census) and non-resident taxpayers equally but suggested to further discuss requiring a waiting period of 3 consecutive years. RS will create a draft with changes for broader discussion at February 2023 meeting.
 - The commission did acknowledge the need to explore alternatives to extend availability of cemetery plots to include, but not limited to, exploring a cemetery expansion onto the land adjacent to the Alden B area. BC encouraged the commission to prioritize such an expansion while machinery access is still possible given the relatively few graves along the perimeter of Alden B. Ecological considerations of the available parcel would also needs to be considered.
 - Alternatively, or in addition to expansion, an area where cremations only are permitted was also discussed.

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- Suggestions re: any other revisions to the Rules & Regulations: Postponed to Feb 8 meeting.

6. New business: None

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

8. Cemetery plot sales: None

9. Cemetery buy-back requests, if any: None

10. Review of action items:

- SB to send another email to town leadership requesting bid support to avoid further delay in utilization of grants to meet critical cemetery commission work.
- SB to send TF correct number for Cemetery Supervisor to incorporate into Natural Burial FAQ
- SB to finalize and submit Cemetery Commission report for Town Annual Report
- RS draft considered revisions to Rules and Regulations. SB to send to RS Rules and Regs in Word format if available.
- All to drive by Winthrop Cemetery (on corner of Court and Winthrop) to assess height (sign is blank now).
- TF and LM to complete formatting of Natural Burial FAQ for brochure

11. Date and location of next regular meeting: 8 FEB 2023 in the Caucus Room, Town Hall.

12. Adjournment: 4:46

Motion to approve by: SB Second by: MH Vote: 4-0-0

Respectfully submitted by: Robert Sweetman

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Supporting Materials

Provincetown Cemetery Commission 2023 Regular Monthly Meeting Schedule

Day/Time: 2nd Wednesday of the month
3:00 – 4:30 PM

Location: Town Hall Caucus Room, unless an alternate location is chosen

<u>Date</u>	<u>Person Responsible for Taking Minutes</u>
Jan 11	Rob
Feb 8	Rob
March 8	Lynne
April 12	Rob
May 10	Mike C
June 14	Rob
July 12	Mike H
Aug 9	Rob
Sept 13	TBD
Oct 11	Rob
Nov 8	TBD
Dec 13	Rob

(Final 12 Jan 2023)

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Survey Conducted by RS December 2022

TOWN	ELIGIBILITY	MISC	PLOT LIMITS	COSTS
Dennis	<p>Resident-included in most recent town census which requires principal domicile in Dennis for not less than 1 year.</p> <p>Former Resident-proof of former residency for a minimum of 2 years</p> <p>Non-resident Taxpayer-(owns residential or commercial that has an annual tax bill of at least \$350)</p> <p>Non-resident Immediate Family Member- (parent, spouse, child, sibling)</p>	<p>5 active cemeteries and 9 inactive</p> <p>A single lot can accommodate 6 cremations to 1 full burial and 2 cremations</p>	<p>Resident-or resident family may purchase up to 4 single grave spaces.</p> <p>Former Resident-up to 2 single grave spaces</p> <p>Non-resident Taxpayer-up to 2 single grave spaces</p> <p>Non-resident Immediate Family Member-who is buried within cemetery may purchase up to 2 single grave spaces</p>	
Chatham	<p>At the time of sale any resident listed on the voter registration list or listed as a real property owner for tax assessment.</p> <p>If a person was a continuous</p>		<p>No more than 4 single grave lots (a single lot can accommodate 4 cremations or 1 full burial and 1 cremation)</p> <p>Parents, spouse,</p>	

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	resident for at least 10 years and relocated for health reasons they may purchase a lot as an exemption.		children all at one address are considered one resident.	
Oak Bluffs	Resident or Taxpayers or those born to a resident or raised in the Town of Oak Bluffs		Not specified on-line	One grave lot (\$600). Cremation lot (\$300)
Edgartown	Only residents or taxpayers who are on voting list or taxpayer list at the time of purchase.		One lot per family.	Full lot is 4 burial plots (\$2800). Half lots for \$1400 and is 2 burial plots. Each plot is 1 casket or 6 cremations. Caskets not double stacked. Cremation lots \$250, allow 2 cremations.
Nantucket	Emailed for specifics which are not on-line	2 active cemeteries, 1 only allows cremations		
Wellfleet	No residency requirements			
Truro	Residents or property owners			
Eastham	No municipal cemetery			

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Orleans	No municipal cemetery			
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