

Provincetown Cemetery Commission

Meeting Minutes

Meeting date: February 8, 2023

Location: Provincetown Town Hall, Caucus Room

Call to order: 3:04 PM

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

Excused absence: Timothy Famulare (TF) (Alternate) Michael Harpie (MH)

Unexcused absence: Lynne Martin (LM) (Vice Chair),

Also attending: N/A

Supporting materials: Background document for proposed joint workshop on historic gravestone restoration.

1. Public comments, if any: None. Technical issues with teleconference call prohibited dial-in participation.

2. Review and approval of minutes:

- Dec 7, 2022 Minutes: Motion to approve by: SB with agreed upon correction of start time typo (3:30 to 3:03 P). Second by: RS Vote: 4-0-0
- Jan 11, 2023: Minutes Motion to approve by: SB Second by: RS Vote: 4-0-0

3. Chair's report:

- 2022 Annual Report: has been submitted to Clerk's office in January. Commission expressed thanks to SB for her efforts.
- Response from Town Administration re: Community Preservation Act (CPA) grants to the Cemetery Commission
 - A second email request was sent in late January to Town Manager. SB received an email response from Town Clerk (TC) who had a discussion with the Town Manager and will be Cemetery Commission's point of contact for bid submissions and other CPA grant activities. Details of process unclear to SB but SB will set up a meeting soon with TC and Assistant TC to get more details.

4. Cemetery Supervisor updates and discussion: Not present at meeting.

5. Old cemetery business:

- Natural Burial FAQs (formerly referred to as Green Burial FAQs):
 - Primarily deferred as TF not in attendance. Just a couple more technical questions for Cemetery Supervisor. Discussion on terminology of green vs. natural burial. Commission felt 4-0-0 that moving forward FAQs, Rules and Regulations and Town Cemetery Commission webpage references should be changed to the preferred term of "Natural".
 - MC queried if there was some alternative to requiring a vault for natural burials such as a trench boxes that could be removed after burial. Commission felt it to be an important question. Will discuss with Cemetery Supervisor at next meeting.
- Further discussion of potential revisions of the definition of "Resident" in the Cemetery Rules and Regulations:

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- Suggested revisions of the definition of “Resident” eligibility to purchase cemetery plot(s). At January 2023 meeting suggestion was made to revise eligibility to include registered voters or being listed on town census for 3 consecutive years or being a non-resident taxpayer for 3 consecutive years. Discussion today highlighted the limited supply, and unanimous support for concept of a waiting period and limitation to voters or those on the census only (non-resident taxpayers would be not eligible). A 2-year waiting period was favored. Despite unanimous support from attendees, it was felt important to defer a formal vote until full commission attendance. SB shared process overview (legal notice requirement, public comment hearing, select board vote of approval) to have changes implemented to Rules and Regulations.
- Additionally, there was broad support to limit the number of plots that can be purchased by an applicant to: 4 single-grave plots, or 4 single-grave cremation plots, or 1 four-grave plot, or 2 two-grave plots.
- SB has the current Rules and Regulations document in Word format and will forward to RS to make a tracked changes document for the commission to review next month.

6. New cemetery business:

- Year Rounder’s Festival on March 11, 2023
 - In 2022 The Cemetery Commission staffed a table and provided information, including distributing Historic Cemetery brochures and received some donations. Deadline to reserve 2023 table is 20 Feb. Discussion by Commission with consensus (4-0-0) to defer participation this year.
- Possible training on historic cemetery stone preservation techniques to be hosted by the Wellfleet Cemetery Commission
 - SB provided context that the first Lower and Outer Cape Cemetery Commissions group met for a joint roundtable meeting several years ago which was focused on green burials.
 - Wellfleet Cemetery Commission is soliciting interest in a 1- or 2-day workshop conducted by a third party (Historic Gravestone Services) focusing on headstone restoration in the Spring 2023. See supporting document for details. Cost would be \$1000 for 1-day workshop; \$2000 for 2-day workshop and would be cost-shared by the number of cemetery commissions sending participants. Commission supported SB responding to Wellfleet that Provincetown would be interested in supporting and sending representative(s) to a 1-day workshop contingent upon the ultimate cost to Provincetown per participant.
- MC shared that Wellfleet permits natural burials in open spaces land. Commission was interested to learn more, and this should be part of the larger looming discussion as capacity approaches. Other options include acquiring more cemetery land, and/or limiting to cremations only. Commission felt that obtaining the number of sold plots in the last several years would help inform when current capacity may be reached. SB to ask TC for last 3 years’ sales.

7. Cemetery plot purchases:

- David Michael Gagne: B4: Postponed
- Michelle Pepitone as Executrix of the Estate of Richard Pepitone: Plot # TBD: Postponed.

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

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

- Deeds were signed for plots A129 and A130 previously approved for sale to Patricia Van Dijkhuizen.

10. Review of action items:

- SB to schedule a meeting with TC and assistant TC re: 3-year sales data and specifics of support for bid submissions for CPA grants
- SB to send Rules and Regulations Word document to RS
- RS to make tracked changes to Rules and Regulations for March 8 meeting review
- SB to respond to Wellfleet re: gravestone restoration workshop

11. Date and location of next regular meeting: March 8, 2023, at 3 PM

12. Adjournment: 4:25 PM

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

Respectfully submitted by: Rob Sweetman

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Historic Gravestone Services

Saving history...one gravestone at a time

One Day Workshop for volunteer groups

Care of historic gravestones requires more than a shovel and a desire. However, with proper instruction, a small group of volunteers can accomplish great things. Each participant will learn how to document gravestones according to standards for historical and conservation purposes, including photography techniques for gravestones. Discussions will cover safety, conservation techniques according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, condition assessment of the gravestone, vegetation, landscaping, fencing, geology and history of cemeteries in America.

All participants should dress for work, including work gloves, for the hands-on portion of the workshop. Teams will form to work on stones pre-selected and approved for treatment. Beginning with documentation, condition assessment and photography, each stone will then be cleaned and reset. As individuals repeat the process working to conserve the gravestones, they will be able to explore different situations and learn the proper approach to the solution. Learning through doing, the group of volunteers will become a well-trained team by the end of the day and many stones will be preserved. Historic Gravestone Services will provide all the tools and supplies, as well as provide each participant with a conservation information packet. The host of the workshop is responsible for advertising, directing the participants to the location, collecting any fees, and drinking water for the volunteers. HGS is fully insured for the workshop. Workshops are completed in one day beginning at 10am and finishing work about 3pm followed by clean up and summary time. The cost for hosting a workshop at your cemetery is \$ 1,000.00 for the day. Number of reset & cleaned stones will be determined by the number of volunteers. Workshop may be cancelled two days before date due to weather or participation numbers.

Two day Advanced Conservation Workshop Summary

Care of historic gravestones requires more than a shovel and a desire. However, with proper instruction, a small group of trained volunteers can accomplish great things. Each participant will learn how to document gravestones according to accepted standards for historical conservation, including photography techniques for gravestones. Discussions will cover safety, conservation techniques according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, condition assessment of the gravestone, vegetation, landscaping, fencing, geology and history of cemeteries in America. All participants should dress for work, including work gloves, for the hands-on portion of the workshop. Teams will form to work on stones pre-selected and approved for treatment. Beginning with documentation of the selected stone, a condition assessment is created and photos taken before and during the process, then each stone will be cleaned and reset. As individuals repeat the process working to conserve the gravestones, they will be able to explore different situations and learn the proper approach to the solution. Learning through doing, the group of volunteers will become a well-trained team by the end of the day and many stones will be preserved.

On day two of the workshop more complex procedures to conserve broken stones and multi-pieced monuments will be demonstrated. Techniques and materials for adhesive repairs, creating new below ground bases, mortars and filling cracks will be covered. The use of a lifting device and rigging for stone work will be demonstrated to reset a basic die with a plinth and foundation stone. Common conditions and frequent problems found in graveyards and cemeteries will be discussed and reviewed.

Historic Gravestone Services will provide all the tools and supplies, as well as provide each participant with a conservation information packet. The host of the workshop is responsible for advertising, directing the participants to the location, collecting any fees, water for cleaning the stones and loam for back filling. Water can usually be supplied through your Public Works Department or Fire Department. HGS will carry the liability insurance for the workshop. Workshops are completed in two days beginning at 10am and finishing work about 3-4pm followed by clean up and summary time. Advanced workshops are \$2,000.00 for the two days.

Historic Gravestone Services