

Cemetery Committee Meeting Minutes

November 15, 2021

Present: Andy Tolman, Grace Keene, Pam Osborn, Marianne Perry, Warren Norris, Ben Rodriguez, Tom Molokie, Brenda Lake, Karen Peterson.

A pre-meeting took place at Readfield Corner Cemetery. The pre-meeting was to listen to a proposal from Dale Potter and the Readfield Historical Society. A donor/member of the historical society has given the society \$500 for use by Readfield to provide a historical plaque for a notable Readfield figure interred in one of the town's cemeteries.

Attending this meeting was Dale Potter, local author and historian. Ms. Potter recommended several historical figures for consideration for the plaque. These figures include former Governor Hunton, Mattie Hackett, and Seth Pitts.

Discussions at the cemetery site included location, annotation, design and specifications of possible signage. We also discussed appropriateness of having such a plaque.

We asked Dale to provide a design and some plaque wording for us to consider during our debate on worthiness and appropriateness of the project.

Meeting Minutes for Prior Meeting: Minutes for October were reviewed. Tom made motion to accept minutes with approved changes, Grace seconded, no further discussion and there was unanimous approval of October minutes with prior changes. Pam, acting secretary, will submit to Town Clerk.

Sexton's Report by Ben Rodriguez

Ben reported that leaf removal was nearly complete at all of the cemeteries with Kents Hill needing some further attention. Greater attention was given to Readfield Corner due to last Veterans' Day events. Eric Johnson, newly hired by town, helped with leaf clean up and small maintenance tasks.

Ben is reviewing preliminary estimates for wall repairs. He requested we review use of cemetery funds to complete groundskeeping tasks, namely, depression-filling. He is watching weather for freezing conditions which will preempt digging projects. Most of the flags from the cemeteries have been collected since Veterans' Day for potential reuse. Ben has asked that if the committee members do any review of the cemeteries that they specifically watch for broken grave markers (SAR, DAR, GAR, etc.) and report them for replacement. Brenda saw some markers that may have damage in Case Cemetery.

Recent Select Board workshop included the request by standing committees to make recommendations for future use of the fairgrounds. Ben gave a presentation on "green burial".

He reported that the Kennebec Land Trust has sold several green burial plots in the Fayette green burial project.

New Business

Andy led discussion on the upcoming budget season. He polled the committee on suggestions for budget items emphasizing.

Suggested additions include an under drain for the wall area by the Readfield Corner Cemetery wall. Engineering study showed that this may be a viable option to improve ditch drainage between the wall and the road.

Also, there is a perceived need for a 500-gallon water tank located on this large cemetery. This would serve not only the contractors who repair the damaged gravestones but also families who come to the property to service their loved ones' grave sites. Ben and others to investigate whether or not there is a source located at the ball field that can be tapped or extended somehow.

Committee thanked Marianne for cleaning up the Reflection Garden.

Ben picking up the holiday wreaths after Christmas. Discussion occurred around placement and attaching the wreaths to signage.

Discussion revolved around need to be fiscally conservative. Grace stipulated that the budget current needs and was conservative. Agreement among committee that the budget was reasonable.

Ben mentioned that he is obtaining preliminary estimates for the Case Cemetery wall repair. This estimate will give committee an idea of what large wall projects might cost. A town-acquired engineering study recommends fixing drainage prior to repair of walls.

Committee discussed the need to contact the Select Board and request the removal of Sandra Rourke from the committee roster. She has not been to a meeting since November 1, 2019. While attendance and committee membership is voluntary the committee needs members who are involved. Removing Sandra while regrettable will open the position to a town resident who is willing to contribute. Tom made a motion to have Andy contact the Select Board Chair, Dennis Price, and begin the process to remove Sandra. Marianne 2nd the motion and the committee voted unanimously. No discussion followed. Andy to address the matter with the Select Board Chair.

Next meeting set for Town Hall on December 20th at 10:30 AM with Christmas Cookies..

Andy asked for motion to adjourn. Motion made to adjourn (Warren); seconded (Tom). Unanimously agreed.

Respectfully submitted,

Warren Norris
Cemetery Committee