

Cemetery Committee Meeting Minutes

August 21, 2019

Present: Andy Tolman, Grace Keene, Brenda Lake, Pam Osborn, Marianne Perry, Warren Norris, Ben Rodriguez

Meeting Minutes for May and June, 2019 (July meeting canceled): Motion made to accept minutes with proposed changes and seconded, discussion pursuant and minutes were approved unanimously.

Report by Marianne Perry on the reflecting garden at the Readfield Corner with photo for all to review.

Sexton's Report: (Partial Document provided at meeting for discussion with follow up email to members at a later date)

Ben's report included.

- Report emphasized progress made in tree work, normal maintenance and stone work.
- Sexton to provide diagram in final report of the completed tree work at Kents Hill. Sexton was appreciative and complementary about the job performed by Stevenson Solutions.
- There will be a photographic record in the finished report of the completed stone work including cleaning of stones at East Readfield and Readfield Corner by the sexton's team; resetting of misplaced curbing and stones by Collette Monuments; crypt repair by Mann and associates.

Question raised by committee member, Grace re: which fund is used for the crypt work? Ben replied that the funds come from the capital improvement budget. Grace emphasized to Ben to ensure that we are billed and the crypt work vendor is paid. Ben said that there is \$5000 in the capital improvement budget and assented to make sure payment to vendor occurs.

New Business:

Discussion turned to the upcoming MOCA event. Readfield will be sponsoring the Maine Old Cemetery Association on September 21st at Giles Hall. During the day there will be talks, a Chili luncheon and a tour. 50 to 60 attendees are anticipated. Attendance is open to members and non-members.

Ben is hoping that a committee member or two may step forward and provide a short presentation.

Question raised by committee member, Pam re: Is there any town financial help? Ben remarked that the largest expense would be the general labor cost for him and Anne paid out of the town's budget with hours offset to avoid overtime.

Discussion then occurred about maintenance issues, namely, Marianne asked about overgrown trees surrounding headstones, and deteriorated items installed by plot owners. There is an overgrown arborvitae that has reverted to a wild variety that is unattractive and hides the stone. Also, there are still faded plastic flowers, dead wreaths and plants that need removal.

Ben agreed, but notification needed to be given to lot owners prior to removing anything or to obtain permission for him to attend to these issues. Committee requested Ben to make all the efforts he could to make these notifications and obtain these permissions.

Discussion began over the need for RFP's for tree work. Town minimum requirement for spending is \$5000. Above this amount and the bidding process has to be implemented. As tree work often is needed for less than this minimum, a committee member asked why an RFP is necessary. According to Ben because of prior issues of favoritism and vendor objection the town elected to request RFP's for amounts lower than the minimum. To understand this the committee has asked Ben to invite the Town Manager to our next meeting for clarification and discussion of the committee needs. The time for achieving our maintenance goals is shrinking due to weather. Andy recommended that work progress over the fall and winter months as weather permits. Ben agreed.

Other areas of discussion included plot damage by grave openings and closings. The vendor, Brandon Ellis, had been the contractor during a recent site opening that damaged an adjoining plot owned by another party. Discussion began on:

- Who bears the financial burden of the cost of repair?
- What is town responsibility regarding informing contractors of requirements and processes
- What were the processes and procedures?
- Is there paperwork that is given to funeral homes and plot owners about responsibilities of plot owners, funeral homes and contractors?

Ben recommended committee members witness an opening and closing. Andy referred committee to discussions about reimbursable fee assessed to funeral homes upon application for an opening to incentivize good practices by the hired openers and closers.

Recommendation made for committee members to accompany Ben to Readfield Corner to examine a recent opening, review the offending arborvitae mentioned by Marianne and to view the reflecting garden. Members who could agreed to go after the meeting.

Discussion on meeting times resulted in tabling of discussion.

Motion made to close meeting (M/S/V)

Next meeting is September 18th, 2019.

Sexton's complete report is attached including agenda for MOCA meeting.