TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
Cemetery Committee
Meeting Minutes
June 15, 2023
Municipal Office Building
Meeting room 3
Via Zoom and YouTube Live

In attendance:

Cemetery Committee Members

Karl Stofko
Alison Guinness
Deb Denette
Crary Brownell
Richard Pettinelli

Others

Donald Henson
Erik Badrick
Jim Leatherbee
Ricky Shea
Kenneth Beatrice

Call to Order

Dr. Stofko called the Cemetery Committee to order at 7:02 p.m.

Adoption of Minutes

Mrs. Guinness motioned to accept the minutes of the May 18, 2023 meeting as presented. Mrs. Denette seconded the motion to accept the minutes as presented. The minutes of the May 18, 2023 meeting carried unanimously with Mr. Brownell abstaining..

Correspondence

Mrs. Denette relayed that Lynette Fisher from Connecticut Landmarks has reached out regarding Landmarks hosting of five separate cemetery tours at the Warner Cemetery between the months of September and October. Mrs. Denette stated that she reached out to Mr. Angersola who felt that all parks and cemeteries are open to the public accordingly, no special riders or waivers were necessary. He also advised that staff will endeavor to have the properties maintained in top order prior to the events taking place. Dates for the event will be relayed by Mrs. Fisher as they are chosen. Dr. Stofko relayed concerns with the condition of the steps into the cemetery.

Veteran Update

Mr. Henson noted that almost 40 people attended the Cemetery workshop led by Jonathan Appel from Atlas Preservation. The program was very well received and most informative. The group surely worked up an appetite, nearly all of the pizza was consumed. The entire workshop was done with collaboration between the Veterans, the Cemetery Committee and Riverview Cemetery Association and all efforts were appreciated.

Mr. Henson noted that the veterans hope to begin putting the learned knowledge to work. He inquired whether any town permissions were required by those performing the work. Mrs. Denette responded that it was her understanding, that it is similar to when the garden club works to improve the town's green spaces; and that nothing is required. Obviously, the work would be to clean and reset headstones and not utilizing chainsaws, etc. Dr. Stofko stated that legally the families of the deceased own the stones. The Cemetery Committee also emphasized that it can only speak to the ten cemeteries that fall under the purview of the Town and not to any other cemetery.

Mr. Henson added that the purchase of the necessary supplies for cleaning the stones will be funded by the Riverview Cemetery Association and he thanked Jim Leatherbee for it's contribution to the preservation of cemeteries and the work being undertaken by the veterans. Responsive to inquiry from Mr. Henson, Mr. Shea stated that getting crushed stone should not be a problem.

Mr. Pettinelli noted that the State is forming a cemetery study group to look at legal issues regarding abandoned cemeteries.

Indian Stone

Mrs. Denette stated that the Indian Stone ordered from Crouch & Lagana in Portland has been cut and should be delivered shortly. Both Dr. Stofko and Mr. Leatherbee asserted that a poured concrete base is best.

Discussion was held regarding a dedication type ceremony for the Wagnunk marker. Ms. Guinness stated that she would speak with Gary O'Neil, who is the leader of the Wagnunk tribe in East Hampton for suggestions and potential dates.

Budget

Mrs. Denette noted that the next budget referendum is scheduled for July 11, 2023.

Website

Mrs. Denette requested that members take a look at the Cemetery Committee page on the Town's website page and advise of desired changes for the next meeting.

Other

Discussion was held relative to holding / planning additional work parties at a particular cemetery. Mr. Pettinelli suggested that after Labor Day would be a more appropriate time for such an event. He also stated that he would really like to engage the Boy Scouts.

Mrs. Denette stated that the Committee needs to map out next steps and prioritize a wish list. She noted that there are a plethora of projects and directions for the committee to go. Mr. Pettinelli suggested that we should start with the low hanging fruit. Mr. Brownell suggested that August or September be earmarked for making a list of projects to tackle.

Audience of Citizens

Mr. Beatrice stated that he very much enjoyed the cemetery workshop and he was interested in being of assistance to the cemetery committee if there were areas where he could help.

There being no further business to discuss, upon a motion made by Mrs. Guinness, seconded by Mr. Pettinelli the Committee adjourned at 7:42 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deb Denette