

TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
Cemetery Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 18, 2024
Municipal Office Building, Meeting room 3
Via Zoom and YouTube Live

In attendance:

Cemetery Committee Members:

Karl Stofko, Chairman
Crary Brownell
Alison Guinness
Richard Pettinelli
Debra Denette, Secretary
Don Angersola - Facilities
Rick Shea – Facilities
Don Henson – VFW
Irma Carpa-Miller-Cemetery Troopers

Call to Order

Dr. Stofko called the Cemetery Committee to order at 7:00 p.m.

Adoption of Minutes. Mrs. Guinness motioned to approve the minutes of June 20, 2024 with an amendment to replace “he” with Dr. Stofko on the last page under the parking lot item. Mrs. Denette seconded the motion. The motion adopting the minutes carried unanimously via voice vote, with Mr. Brownell abstaining.

Communications

Mrs. Denette stated that she spoke with First Selectman Irene Haines regarding the Three Bridges Cemetery. Mrs. Haines advised that the owners are amenable to conveying the cemetery to the town. It was emphasized that there is a process for conveyance, will require action by P&Z, the BOS, and town meeting, as well as needing legal and potentially survey work done.

Mr. Angersola stated that Land Use believed that the survey on file will be sufficient. He noted, however, that there is much tree work to be done at the cemetery. Quotes are being solicited. Another issue involves access via a road that has not been in use and a fence that would need to be relocated.

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Facilities also noted that they are working with public works at the Second Yard where significant erosion leading to the cemetery occurred.

Mrs. Denette also noted that she has spoken with Don Henson regarding the marker for Asa Havens. She summarized it briefly but noted that it can be discussed under Veteran's Update since Mr. Henson is present.

Veteran Update

Mr. Henson explained that the headstone for Mr. Asa Havens, who was killed in a mutiny at sea in 1859 (or so) was laying face down (and had been for years) approximately 30 feet from where it belonged. He also noted that the original location of the stone is clear as the broken piece fits perfectly, he also noted that there is a footstone. While it is understood that people erect headstones for family members whose bodies are not available, the use of a footstone seemed unusual. Ken Beatrice is arranging for ground penetrating radar to be done to see if there is a body buried below. Of note was that the cargo on the ship that the Mutiny occurred on was copper ore, which is a preservative. Dr. Stofko stated that he researched the matter thoroughly some 20+ years ago, and that a newspaper accounting of the mutiny reported that Asa was wrapped in a blanket and put at sea, following having been shot in the abdomen. It was also reported that Asa suffered greatly as his death was not immediate. Those responsible were hung in NY state, following a trial on the event. The details noted came out during said trial.

Mr. Henson noted that it remains curious as to how the stone became broken and moved. Dr. Stofko stated that he surmised that vandals may have attempted to take the stone but found it too heavy.

Mr. Henson noted that the Cemetery Troopers received a \$500 donation to which they purchased a Scissors type sling for resetting stones. Mr. Henson noted gratitude for donations received that helps purchase materials, particularly the epoxy which is very expensive. He noted that First Church sent a check for materials used there.

Mr. Henson noted that the Cemetery troopers put in approximately 190 hours at the North Moodus Cemetery. He stated that they are presently working at Parker Cemetery, he noted that the property owner there has been very gracious to let them use their equipment. Dr. Stofko noted that the Parker Cemetery is also known as the Chester Cemetery.

Mr. Henson stated that they are looking to recruit more help, adding that of the five main Troopers, the average age is 75 years old.

Discussion was held on table stones that are leaning against the stone wall at Parker Cemetery. Irma said that those tablets appear to have been removed when monuments were installed, as the information incorporated therein is duplicative. There is also a blank headstone. Dr. Stofko stated that Asa's Mom buried several children, and two husbands. The third husband outlived her and buried her in Chester. The WPA index would be a good resource.

Audience of Citizens –

Nothing noted.

Parking lot item

Portions of the headstone of Mark Phillips (Mount Parnassus) remain missing. The Spencer Stones require a paper trail or approval from a family member, which has not been located.

The next meeting will be August 15, 2024

There being no other business, upon a motion made by Mr. Brownell, seconded by Mr. Pettinelli the Committee adjourned at 7:38 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Deb Denette