

TOWN OF EAST HADDAM
Cemetery Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 21, 2024
Municipal Office Building, Meeting room 3
Via Zoom and YouTube Live

In attendance:

Cemetery Committee Members:

Karl Stofko, Chairman
Crary Brownell, Vice Chairman
Alison Guinness
Richard Pettinelli
Debra Denette, Secretary

Others: Rick Shea, Facilities
Don Henson, VFW

Call to Order

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

Adoption of Minutes.

Motion by Mr. Pettinelli to accept the minutes of July 18, 2024 as presented. Mr. Brownell seconded the motion. It was noted that these minutes were tabled when presented pending reappointment of three of the members. Said action was overlooked last meeting. The motion adopting the July 18, 2024 meeting minutes carried unanimously.

Motion by Mr. Brownell to accept the minutes of the October 17, 2024 meeting as presented. Mr. Pettinelli seconded the motion. The motion adopting the October 17, 2024 meeting minutes carried unanimously.

Communications

Mrs. Denette noted that Elaine Woods has contacted the First Selectman regarding being buried at Millington Cemetery on plots obtained by her father. Dr. Stofko advised that both he and Ms. Guinness have discussed this with Mrs. Woods in the past, and advised that she needed to produce the paperwork which would allow for said burial.

Other communication was received that Phil Barlow a retiring landscape architect was interested in participating with the cemetery committee. It was stated that he would be a wonderful addition to the committee, however, there are no vacancies presently.

Root trust

The next probate meeting is scheduled for December 10, 2024.

Veteran's Update

Mr. Henson stated that over 570 hours have been put in on town owned cemeteries this year. He noted that Parker and Tater Hill received considerable attention earlier this year, current focus is at Bashan Cemetery.

Mr. Henson advised that there are two very problematic large red oak trees that need to be removed as soon as possible. He stated that a strong wind will take them down and many more stones will suffer for it. It was estimated that the cost for removal of these trees is approximately \$9,000. Mrs. Denette stated that she will immediately notify Don Angersola. She stated that if there is not funding to remove these trees, she would be willing to address the Board of Finance to see if it could be funded through their contingency fund. The long history of neglect of all East Haddam cemeteries was discussed.

The publicity received pursuant to the Asa Havens stone was discussed. Following East Haddam News article on the mystery, it was published in the United Kingdom.

Three Bridges Cemetery

Mr. Brownell advised that Planning & Zoning Commission, pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 8-24, voted in favor of acquiring the Three Bridges Cemetery as it found that acquisition of said cemetery was a benefit for East Haddam. In other words, the process is moving forward.

Surveys

Mrs. Guinness noted that Riverview Cemetery paid \$8,000 for a drone survey. She also noted that the Spencer stones are temporarily being stored in the town garage on Town Street. When the bridge work is completed, the stones will be relocated to the 7 Main Street garage. The Riverview Cemetery is working with the Historical Society to have the historically significant stones on display.

Budget

Mrs. Denette noted that at the last meeting it was suggested that we establish a budget to pursue expansion at the Mount Parnassus cemetery for the 25/26FY. Starting costs would be for a

Cemetery Committee –November 21. 2024

survey and an appraisal. The cost of \$9,000 for a comprehensive survey (including soil samples) and \$4,000 for an appraisal and associated costs. (this could potentially leave funding for a drone survey at Ackley Cemetery as well).

Further dialog was held that with the neglected condition of current cemeteries, should we be having discussion about expanding or creating new space. It was emphasized that the charge of the cemetery committee is policy, procedure and identifying space, the maintenance of the cemeteries is under the facilities department.

The Committee concurred with the above request for capital costs. It would also like to retain an operating budget of \$2,000. It was noted that for FY24/25 to date nothing has been spent. Concern was raised to use it or lose it. Mrs. Denette stated that the Committee does not budget for a recording secretary (nor does the current secretary wish to be compensated) but at minimum that amount should remain for a budget. Potential costs could be clean up parties, workshops, advertising, etc. Mrs. Denette suggested that if the funding is not required for spring clean up, then cleaning/restoration materials should be purchased.

Old Business

Mark Phillips stone (still missing)

Audience of Citizens

Nothing noted.

Motion by Mr. Brownell, seconded by Mr. Pettinelli to cancel the December meeting. The secretary will file the schedule of meetings calendar with the Town Clerk.

The next meeting will be held the third Thursday in January.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Deb Denette