

Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 9:00 AM
Conference Room #1, Town Hall, Chilmark

Attendance:

Commissioners present: Judie Flanders (Chair), Laurisa Rich, Matt Tobin
Other: Susan Murphy (Superintendent), Carolyn Stoeber (Administrator)

The meeting was called to order by Judie at 9:05 am.

The minutes were reviewed with a clarification of a past map digitization project, formatting issue, and sentence clarification.

Action: A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from February 15, 2024 as amended. Passed unanimously.

Administration Report

- A request from the lessee to sell plot 26B Wildgrass Ave in the Midlands back to the town was approved. Carolyn will work with the accountant to mail a check to buy back this plot. Susan and Carolyn will ground-truth the Midlands map together. Plot 26B will be held until any issues discovered in the Midlands are resolved, but will be updated on the map to show that it is not sold.
Action: A motion was made and seconded to approve the buyback of plot 26B and hold the plot until any issues are resolved in the Midlands. Passed unanimously.
- There was one new plot application received, but with it being a green burial, plot 341 was assigned. Carolyn will prepare a lease to be signed by the commissioners at the April meeting.
Action: A motion was made and seconded to retroactively approve the lease of Plot #341. Passed unanimously.
- The current system is not efficient enough to accommodate green burials for people who do not own a plot at the time of death.
Action: A motion was made and seconded to allow the chair discretion in approving plot applications if a meeting of the entire commission is not feasible. Passed unanimously.
- Correspondence:
 - Susan gave Carolyn the email and cell phone for the abutter at Abel's Hill Cemetery with the stockade fence so that she can attempt to contact them again.
 - The new cemetery email address is cemetery@chilmarkma.gov. This email address currently forwards to Carolyn's town email address. Carolyn will update the cemetery website with this new contact information.
- Budget update included a bill from Crosswater Landscape, leaving about \$10,000 for the remaining budget in this category through June 30.

Superintendent Report

- Steve Yaffe did the tree clean up after a large limb came down. Having the tree work done this time of year, before all the landscapers are too busy, was good timing. The woodchip pile was tossed with dirt to start making compost. Most of the roads were fixed, but there are still potholes on Wildgrass Ave. If Crosswater is needed for a spring cleanup, the remaining potholes can be fixed at that time.
- There are sticks on the ground after the wind following the big cleanup.
- The highway department is aware of the need to plow the cemetery entrance and parking lot when there is a snow event.

- Don Sexton's work in the cemetery will include mowing, trimming, and may include brush cutting if he would like to propose an estimate. Susan will ask him for an estimate for brush cutting.
- Susan contacted the newspaper columnists to remind people to clean up graves, which seemed successful. There is still clean up needed.
- Susan spoke with Alan Gowell and will arrange a meeting with Warren Gowell and Judie for next week to continue the monument restoration.
 - Laurisa was in touch with the lichen remover who would like to work under the Gowells' supervision. Judie and Susan will discuss this with the Gowells.
 - Possible notification to the families of any restoration or lichen removal was discussed and whether a notice in the town column or a legal ad would be a good place to post. Judie and Susan will discuss this with the Gowells and the lichen remover.
 - Judie and Susan will ask the Gowells for ideas regarding the preservation and storage of grave markers that cannot be replaced, such as markers used in other cemeteries.
- Susan spoke with Lenny who has not yet located the Veterans List. Susan also called the Veterans Agent and left a message for the list. Susan will call Joanne. Memorial Day is coming up.
- The worn flags in the shed will be repurposed or burned.

Old Business

- Keith Emin confirmed that the cemetery driveway and parking lot at AHC, not the roads within the cemetery, will be plowed by the highway department.
- Matt will be developing phase I of the tree replacement program over the next few months so that any plantings can be done in the fall.
- There are 45 square and 1 round perpetual care stakes to be used in wreaths or to be incorporated into gates at AHC. Only the bottoms of the stake are not galvanized and can be welded. Susan will contact Bevin to remove the dilapidated gates and design new gates. Laurisa will work with Bevin to incorporate the stakes. The gates going into Founders could be replaced, if needed. When the autumn olive is removed from the far end, a gate could be installed to discourage egress through Kings Way at Tail End.
- Tim Rich would like a memo from the commission reflecting that he has been appointed to represent the commission in pursuing a visit to Nomans Land.

New Business

- Laurisa suggested having a map of the cemetery to refer to during the meetings. Susan will bring her maps to the next meeting.
- Signage marking the lanes in Founders and the avenue names in the Midlands and Kings Way was discussed as a project for next fiscal year. Matt suggested vertical wooden signs.
- Laurisa will find out if the artist's pallet at the Worthington plot is a temporary or permanent marker.
- The depth of burials was discussed. Green burials should be around 3.5 feet, rather than the casket depth to avoid the anaerobic process. Laurisa will speak with Lenny at the funeral home to clarify.

Documents reviewed: none

Next meeting: April 8, 2024, at 3pm is the next meeting. The meeting place will be determined closer to the date of the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 am.