

Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 26, 2023 at 9:00 AM

Abel's Hill Cemetery, Chilmark

Attendance:

Commissioners: Judie Flanders (Chair), Laurisa Rich, Matt Tobin

Other: Susan Murphy (Superintendent), Carolyn Stoeber (Administrator)

The meeting was called to order by Judie at 9:10am

- A. Approval of Minutes – September 14, 2023 minutes were discussed and approved unanimously
- B. Administration Report
 - Bill Payments and Budget Review – a printout of the budget was available to review. With budget season coming up, Laurisa will join Judie in the process to prepare to be chair in the future. Carolyn will work with the Town Accountant to remove #9092 (Basin Rd Walkway) as a cemetery line item. Susan will get a bill from Don Sexton.
 - Correspondence
 - Plot 315 planting inquiry – the commission approved the planting of a Japanese Maple
 - Inquiry about location of Plot 212 – Judie contacted the owners to meet
 - The abutter's letter regarding the stockade fence was approved to be sent.
 - Judie will contact the Historical Commission to refute that the Cemetery Commission was behind any suggestion of placing plaques on graves at the Abel's Hill Cemetery
- C. Superintendent Report
 - Burials – There were three cremation burials this month
 - Susan picked up garbage at John Belushi's grave site
 - Trimming is needed and may happen before Veteran's Day. The flags in the cemetery go up for Memorial Day and come down after Veteran's Day. Laurisa volunteered to pick up flags after Veteran's Day.
 - Winter project – Susan would like to update the veterans buried during her tenure
 - Susan will call Lenny Jason for the most up-to-date Veteran's list.
- D. New Business

The Chilmark Master Plan Survey Questions were discussed so that answers could be provided to the Planning Board. These answers are available in a separate document. In the course of the discussion, issues outside of the survey answers were discussed:

 - Susan described how the thinking has changed around the upkeep of the cemetery and how much work has been done to maintain it.
 - Judie informed the commission that a large tour bus pulled into the cemetery recently. Matt has seen big and small tour buses visiting the cemetery.
 - Laurisa volunteered to find out when the next hazardous waste disposal day is scheduled and alert the commission so the shed can be cleaned out.
 - During the meeting, Susan noticed that a tree had been backed into with a car and Matt repaired the damaged guy wires before leaving.
- E. Old Business
 - Update on Stockade fence - Carolyn will send out the abutter letter approved by the commission.
 - Veterans list - Susan will call Lenny Jason for the most up-to-date Veteran's list.

- Online search from the website - Do we hire someone to come in and scan and organize the documents or can it be handled in-house. There is \$250 to pay for an assistant in this project
- Matt's report from meeting with Tim Boland – They discussed the need for the plants in the cemetery to handle aerosol salt from the ocean. The plantings suggested were: American basswood, Stewartia, a very full-season tree with interest all year round, Chinese hazelnut. For pine tree replacement, the possibilities named were: cryptomeria, umbrella pine, white fir/Concolor fir - grows fairly large, resistant to salt. Judie asked if any trees need to be taken down now. Matt thought it best to wait until the trees are dead or dying or a storm damages the tree before removing it. The pitch pines are aging. Cedars can be transplanted. Matt continued that the scarlet oak is a good oak tree and the pin oak which is a more vertical oak. Other trees mentioned included the Dawn redwood, which is a deciduous conifer. Laurisa asked if there are signs of the Southern Pine Beetle in Chilmark, but it does not seem to have arrived yet.
- Judie passed the 3 pamphlets from Tim Boland to Matt.
- Susan will remind Warren Gowell to start the cemetery project and added that some of the old graves are lying on the ground and will ask Warren the best way to preserve and document, rather than fix as some of the slate markers are not fixable.
- An additional fence post to use between Wildgrass and Beetlebung avenues was dropped off by Matt Tobin and Susan will ask Steve to install this last section and repair the plots this fencing will protect.
- Susan will purchase snow stakes to keep the road from migrating over the plots 274 & 275 to use until the road area is established.

Documents reviewed: Cemetery Commission YTD Budget, Excel spreadsheet rendering of the newest section (Kings) in a reoriented format

Next meeting: November 9, 2023 9am in Conference Room #1 at the town hall. The December meeting is the budget meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:07 am.