

**Town of Concord
Cemetery Committee Meeting
May 5, 2021 via ZOOM**

Members Present: Mr. Paul Cooke – Chair
Ms. Andrea Solomon – Vice Chair
Mr. Leo Carroll
Mr. Brian Davidson
Mr. Jerry Soucy

Also Present: Mr. Aaron Miklosko - Highway & Grounds Superintendent
Ms. Patricia Hopkins – Cemetery Supervisor
Ms. Justine St. John – Administrative Assistant for Highway & Grounds
Ms. Susan Bates – Select Board Liaison

Additional Residents: Rebecca Purcell, Gerard “Rod” Riedel, Bryan Windmiller

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

A-1 The meeting was called to order at 4:06 pm. It was announced that the meeting was being video and audio recorded. By roll call vote, the following members were present: Paul Cooke, Andrea Solomon, Jerry Soucy, Brian Davidson and Leo Carroll

A-2 It was announced that the meeting was being video and audio recorded.

A-3 Three deeds for signing.

A-4 Next Meeting will be June 2, 2021 AT 4:00PM via ZOOM

A-5 Meeting Minutes from March 3, 2021 were approved as follows:

Brian Davidson moved to accept the March 3, 2021 minutes, Andrea Solomon seconded and it was voted as follows to approve:

Andrea Solomon – Aye
Jerry Soucy – Aye
Leo Carroll - Aye
Paul Cooke – Aye
Brian Davidson – Aye

Meeting Minutes from April 7, 2021 were approved as follows:

Paul Cooke moved to accept the April 7, 2021 minutes, Brian Davidson seconded and it was voted as follows to approve:

Andrea Solomon – Aye
Jerry Soucy – Aye
Leo Carroll - Aye
Paul Cooke – Aye
Brian Davidson – Aye

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

D-1: CHAIR COMMENTS:

Mr. Cooke didn't have a report this month, except to say he appreciates the work that Mr. Miklosko does.

D-2: STAFF REPORT:

Highway Superintendent Miklosko reported (1) full interments, (5) cremation interment and (10) lots sold in the month of April. Ms. Hopkins gave an update about spring cleanup—Einsteins has almost finished and then they will probably start their mowing program. Most of the loaming and seeding has been done. She is still fixing some plow damage and will continue to work on that. Mr. Miklosko reports one winter event in April as well.

D-3: PRESENTATION ON BLANDING'S TURTLES – BRYAN WINDMILLER

Mr. Windmiller was invited to the meeting to speak about Blanding's turtles in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. In 2012, the Great Meadows population of turtles was classified as one of the 15 most critical populations in the Northeast. This population uses some of the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery land for nesting and some live in Moore's Swamp. Over the years, Mr. Windmiller and his Zoo New England group have tried to increase the chances of their survival by tracking the adult turtles and raising the younger ones until about 9 months old, when they have a better survival rate. Committee members asked if there was anything that they could do to help under their purview, and Mr. Windmiller commented that maintaining the Cemetery the way it is makes it appealing for the turtles. Members were concerned about the effects if the Reformatory Branch Trail is eventually paved. Mr. Windmiller didn't seem to think the paving/pavement was a problem, but the increased speed on that path while young turtles are trying to cross may be. Mr. Windmiller brought up concerns about the bicycle use on the trail through the swamp, that parallels the Reformatory Branch Trail because it goes right through the turtle's habitat. There was a suggestion to consider walking bicycles on that path in the future. Mr. Windmiller asked if there was a way they could get parking access during nesting season. Mr. Miklosko suggested he reach out to him via email and they would identify some parking, most likely in the area on the access road at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Members thanked Mr. Windmiller for coming to the meeting.

D-4: FILMING REQUEST (PBS)—OLD HILL BURYING GROUND

Ms. Hopkins spoke to the request included in the packet. This request is from PBS, and it is a Ken Burns series on the American Revolution. They would like to use a drone to take some flyover pictures of the entire cemetery and then close ups of the gravestones of Colonel John Buttrick and Roger Brown, particularly any engravings on the stones. Mr. Davidson asked if the Committee had ever asked for donations for these types of permits. Ms. Hopkins stated that was only done one time, and it was because Town Staff time was utilized to make sure there was no damage to the property. Her presence won't be required at this filming. Mr. Miklosko advised that MGL prohibits the filming/photography of cemeteries unless it is approved by the Cemetery, which is why the Town has this application in place. Rod Riedel asked Ms. Hopkins if there are any considerations to make sure none of the headstones are damaged? She advised that this request is to use a drone and a handheld camera, so that doesn't seem to be a concern. The company is also advised to blur the names on any of the gravestones that are not included in this request.

Brian Davidson moved to approve the filming request in the Old Hill Burying Ground. Andrea Solomon seconded and it was voted as follows to approve:

Andrea Solomon – Aye
Jerry Soucy – Aye
Leo Carroll - Aye
Paul Cooke – Aye
Brian Davidson – Aye

D-5: BICYCLES IN CEMETERIES DISCUSSION

Mr. Cooke started the discussion, inquiring if there needs to be signage that includes wording regarding bicycles, such as “*please keep bicycles on paved surfaces*” for the new signs that will be installed along the trail side, right off the Reformatory Branch Trail. Mr. Soucy suggested bicycle riding not be allowed in the cemetery at all. Mr. Cooke was concerned about who would enforce the bicycle rules. Mr. Davidson wanted to see if the signs would work. Mr. Miklosko advised he was member of transportation advisory committee and they have a bicycle subcommittee to address bicycle related issues throughout town. He suggested the committee have a liaison that reaches out to that committee to discuss prior to restricting bicycles altogether. Mr. Carroll doesn’t think most people read/pay attention those signs and they may need something more than sign. Possibly a physical barrier, however that could be a problem during the winter with snow removal. Mr. Soucy stated that maybe we should make our concerns known through the bicycle committee. Mr. Cooke summarized and suggested one member to become liaison to the bicycle subcommittee. Mr. Davidson volunteered to be the liaison to the bicycle subcommittee. He also suggested Mr. Miklosko send the current language proposal to Mr. Davidson and then Mr. Davidson can develop three different suggestions to present at the next meeting for discussion and approval.

D-6: MELVIN MEMORIAL-MAINTENANCE DISCUSSION

Mr. Cooke spoke about the cleaning and maintaining the Melvin Memorial by Daedalus. After it was installed, they recommended a regular maintenance schedule to preserve the memorial as long as possible. Committee members agreed this was a good idea. Mr. Miklosko was asked to reach out to get pricing and schedule the maintenance.

D-7: UPDATE ON PRIORITY PROJECTS:

Records Scanning: Mr. Miklosko reported the scanning of the records is still continuing. They are working to finalize the mapping, but it is taking some time. Mr. Miklosko wants to ensure it is accurate before it is released for regular public use.

Headstone Restoration: Mr. Miklosko advised they are pausing this project for a few months. However, it’s anticipated to get two years of headstones restored over the summer (after July 1).

D-8: MASTER PLAN CONTINUED DISCUSSION:

Tree Planting/Erosion Control: Mr. Carroll reported the plans continue to move forward with Mr. Miklosko to try loaming and different seeding to try to learn what might survive. It will be done this coming month and hopefully there will be more to report. They are trying to drill down why

this seems to be a continuous problem, and what can be done about it. He is open to any suggestions to help with this challenge.

Columbaria: Mr. Soucy presented an overview about the columbarium project that he and Ms. Solomon have been working on. He included examples of different columbarium projects and the proposed location/space for a columbarium for Sleepy Hollow in the Knoll. There are many options to have stone and grass interact, whether it is something like the Vietnam Memorial, built into the landscape, or another option. Next step is to get ball park estimates from some vendors. Ms. Solomon advised they should get advice from Town Engineers and Natural Resources reference the elevations for that property. Mr. Miklosko will speak to them. Mr. Carroll is concerned about how wet the ground is. Ms. Hopkins stated there will be a foundation as well, and she doesn't foresee a problem with this.

Undeveloped Land Use: Mr. Davidson reported he learned about the Nashoba Regional Greenway Project which is in the very early stages of looking to connect all of the old trailways, which would include the Reformatory Branch. Nothing further to report at the moment.

Mausoleum Sites for New Area of Sleepy Hollow: Mr. Cooke stated the Mausoleum Sites can be taken off the agenda, as it is moving forward.

A Review of the History of the New Area of Sleepy Hollow: Mr. Cooke reviewed the last meeting where a past alternate plan for the New Area of Sleepy Hollow had been discussed. Mr. Cooke felt it would be helpful to incorporate the history of how that came to be into the Master Plan, so the idea isn't lost. Mr. Cooke proposed some language regarding this, adding to Article VI:

"6.4 Acres North of the Presently Developed New Area (The Knoll) Current Status: This area is completely forested and contains trails, hillocks and other sloping topographical features. A plan created in the 1980s called for its development (and all of the presently-utilized area south of it) with sections of trees, winding roadways and retention of original topography, much resembling the design of the older part of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. Though already greatly defined, that plan was put aside because of concerns about maximizing space available to use for graves.

Goal: The original design plans which included development ideas for these acres still exists. In keeping with the wish to sustain Sleepy Hollow Cemetery as a unique "garden cemetery" consonant with its original plan, and to provide a basis and ideas for the future development of this part of the cemetery, the 1980s plan should be rehabilitated for future reference. New plans, perhaps prompted by this well-developed older one, should be periodically considered with the view of eventually continuing the "garden cemetery" theme in these acres."

Mr. Cooke explained the history of why the design changed, as the Committee at the time was advised of the concern that they might run out of space, and they went with a different option. Mr. Soucy suggested maybe can use the Columbarium area as a start to creating a garden-type atmosphere. Mr. Cooke would like this in the Master Plan so it isn't forgotten. Mr. Davidson suggested including it in the appendix. Mr. Cooke said he would like it included as section 6.4 for the Master Plan. Ms. Solomon agreed to look at it and consider any wording changes.

D-9: COMMITTEE COMMENTS:

Mr. Cooke wanted to welcome Rod Riedel and Rebecca Purcell for attending the meeting, as Mr. Cooke and Ms. Solomon’s terms will expire in June.

D-10: PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No public comments.

D-11: SUMMARY OF FOLLOW UP ITEMS

For the June meeting, Mr. Cooke wants to review the website and continue discussion about section 6.4 of the Master Plan. Mr. Davidson will be providing three different options for the Cemetery Committee to consider reference signage in the Cemetery and he will also reach out to the Bicycle Subcommittee.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Carroll made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 17:43 P.M. Mr. Soucy seconded. (5-0)

- Andrea Solomon – Aye
- Brian Davidson – Aye
- Jerry Soucy – Aye
- Paul Cooke – Aye
- Leo Carroll - Aye

Respectfully Submitted,

Approved,

Justine St. John
Administrative Assistant, Highway & Grounds Division

Paul Cooke, Chairperson
Cemetery Committee