

**Town of Concord  
Cemetery Committee Meeting  
May 11, 2022  
In Person and Via Zoom**

Members Present: Mr. Leo Carroll  
Mr. Brian Davidson  
Mr. Rod Riedel  
Mr. Jerry Soucy (arrived about 16:20)  
Ms. Rebecca Purcell

Also Present: Mr. Aaron Miklosko – Highway and Grounds Superintendent  
Ms. Patricia Hopkins – Cemetery Supervisor  
Ms. Justine St. John – Administrative Assistant for Highway & Grounds  
Ms. Beth van Duzer  
Mr. David and Mrs. Sandy Nolan, Westminster MA

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

- A-1** The meeting was called to order at 4:06 pm
- A-2** It was announced that the meeting was being audio/video recorded.
- A-3** Three deeds submitted for signing.
- A-4** Next Meeting will be June 1, 2022 at 4:00PM
- A-5** Meeting Minutes from April 6, 2022 were still being reviewed by Town staff and were not presented for acceptance. They will be presented at the June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

**D-1: STAFF REPORT:**

Mr. Miklosko reported that the Veteran grave flag installations would be this Saturday at 10:00am, completed with assistance from the Maynard-Clinton Lodge of Elks, in preparation for Memorial Day. He also advised Einsteins had completed spring cleanup and is now on their regular mowing schedule for the season. Staff expects a lot of visitors to the cemeteries this month due to Memorial Day and staff are working hard to make sure it looks nice. Ms. Hopkins worked hard to clean up Old Hill and the Main Street Burial Ground for Patriots' Day.

CPW staff expects to have completed the plantings for the Tyler Lot by the end of the week. Money was donated by the family to provide natural screening from abutting properties.

The purchase of the mausoleum lot is still being considered. There is an MOU that is being worked on between the prospective owners and the Town. For the next meeting (June), the Committee will need to decide on a name for that path so it can be indicated on the deed.

Mr. Miklosko reported that CPW staff is working to resolicit bids for the headstone restoration project and is working to get it completed before mid-June.

He also advised there were 2 full burials and 5 cremations in April, and 1 single grave lot and one cremation lot sold.

**D-2: LOT REPURCHASE REQUEST-STOW FAMILY:**

Ms. Hopkins spoke to this request. The children of the original purchasers want to sell back three of the unused graves, and just retain the one grave that has been occupied. They would be selling them back at half of the current rate, \$1100, so total of \$3300.

Mr. Davidson moved to accept the lot repurchase request for the Stow Family for three lots. Ms. Purcell seconded the motion, and it was voted as follows to approve (4-0)

Rod Riedel – Aye  
Leo Carroll - Aye  
Jerry Soucy – Absent  
Brian Davidson – Aye  
Rebecca Purcell – Aye

**D-3: PERMISSION FOR USE OF PHOTOS:**

Ms. van Duzer attended the Committee meeting to ask permission to use photos of twenty-one gravestones for two activities: the Breakfast Fundraiser Talk for the Friends of Sleepy Hollow on September 17, 2022 and an in-person presentation at the American Gravestone Studies Annual Conference in June of 2022. Committee viewed the photos Ms. van Duzer was proposing using.

Mr. Riedel moved to accept both permit applications, for Friends of Sleepy Hollow fundraising event and for use of the photographs reviewed at the meeting. Mr. Davidson seconded the motion, and it was voted as follows to approve (5-0)

Rod Riedel – Aye  
Leo Carroll - Aye  
Jerry Soucy – Aye  
Brian Davidson – Aye  
Rebecca Purcell – Aye

**D-4: CEMETERYFIND PREVIEW:**

Mr. Miklosko gave a brief presentation of the CemeteryFind scanning project that staff has been working on with DocuFree (formerly Boston Computer Scanning) for over a year. They have been working to digitize files to make sure they are preserved. There continues to be a thorough review of the information that has been entered and he thanks Ms. Hopkins for all of her hard work throughout this process, working to ensure the information is correct and easy to access. There will be a landing page that is easily edited and will contain links to Rules and Regulations and other information, along with a link “Search Cemetery Records” which will bring the user to the CemeteryFind database. From there, they will be able to search by last name for burials in Sleepy Hollow. For internal use, the staff will be able to easily locate the lot card that is attached to the grave information. Users will also be able to locate the lot using either the lot map or the navigation tool (which will navigate from the first gate by the Assessor’s Office).

CPW staff continues to work with Docufree to finalize the project before releasing it for public use. Mr. Carroll inquired if there was a mechanism to correct mistakes. Mr. Miklosko advised there is a contact in place with the vendor and CPW staff also has the ability to edit parts of the site as well. Mr. Davidson asked if this software reflects open lots—Ms. Hopkins advised the unsold lots display in green.

#### **D-5: PERPETUAL CARE ABATEMENT-NOLAN FAMILY:**

Ms. Hopkins gave an overview of perpetual care. Annual care was paid for on an annual basis until the mid-late 1970's. The Town then issued bills to the current lot owners at that time, for \$200, to cover the cost of perpetual care moving forward (as opposed to an annual fee). There were still roughly 300 lots that owed this money, but the Town would still allow interments to happen. In the 1980's, the Cemetery Committee decided that in order for an interment to happen or a stone to be placed on the lot, the perpetual care fees that were due needed to be paid. The Committee decided that the lot owner could pay the perpetual care fee just on the grave that is being used. At one point the Committee ruled that perpetual care fees due on the entire lot needed to be paid, not just the usable graves, but people just bought new lots as opposed to paying what was owed because it was cheaper. The Committee decided to change it back to requiring the payments owed for perpetual care on the graves that were still usable.

The Nolan lot was purchased in 1928. Perpetual care fees were paid until 1934. At the time it was \$2/year and the last payment was made in October of 1934. Interments were allowed in 1957, 1971 and 1974 in a 6 grave lot. Two lots are still available. The money owed on the lot is the current rate, which is \$1,000/grave, or \$2,000 total. She stated this has happened approximately 20-25 times since she has been involved in the Cemetery, and each time the family has paid the past due amount.

Ms. Hopkins then introduced Dave and Sandy Nolan, previous Concord residents who currently live in Westminster. Mr. Nolan stated his father was a police officer in Concord who retired in 1965 from the Town. Ms. Nolan said she believes the billing for these services had to have been done at Town Hall, and the police station was at the Town Hall. She is wondering why, if people knew who he was, why someone in billing didn't let him know that the bill hadn't been paid in years. Ms. Nolan provided a timeline for the Committee to review. He had bought the lot for his first wife, who had passed away during childbirth. Her research shows bills were being sent to 499 Main Street, which was the address of his wife who had passed away. He did get some of the bills, and some were paid. After 1934, the bills stopped being paid. Ms. Nolan said burials did happen and nothing was said to the family about the outstanding charges. She said they didn't know anything about the new fees that were instituted in 1986, and this situation came to light when they decided to fix up the family plot and install footstones for the mother and father.

Mr. Carroll clarified that he believed the Nolans were present to ask to have the fee waived.

The Nolans thought it may have been waived because his father served on the police force for 32 years, but it is clear that it hasn't been.

Ms. Purcell wondered what may have happened at the Post Office if these bills weren't delivered. It's unclear what happened.

Mr. Soucy inquired if the Nolans had a specific request. Mr. Nolan suggested a compromise due to the lack of effort to locate him and let him know this bill was outstanding. Mr. Carroll inquired if

there was a statute of limitations for this type of thing. Ms. Hopkins advised Mr. Nolan may have not been getting the bills, but the lot did get the care.

The Nolans asked if it could be reduced to \$1,000.

Mr. Soucy made motion to accept the offer. Rebecca Purcell seconded. Mr. Riedel asked for further discussion. He respects the request but also wants to think about the impact and perhaps unintended consequences of this decision. He reiterated that it has nothing to do with the merits of their argument, but he would like to have more of a discussion.

Mr. Miklosko advised the reason this is before the committee at this point is that staff members will not make a decision to waive a fee.

Mr. Riedel asked if there has been any instance where a discount or waiver has been provided and Ms. Hopkins advised she was not aware of any. He clarified that would mean that if it was waived, they would be establishing a precedent. Ms. Hopkins advised there are over 300 lots that are in this similar situation. This issue has been raised about 25 times since 1987. Ms. Hopkins advised that authorizing one compromise would open the door for others.

Mr. Riedel advised he is going to vote no, but requests it be taken under advisement so there can be a further discussion. It was voted as follows and was not approved. (1-3-1)

Rod Riedel – Nay  
Leo Carroll - Aye  
Jerry Soucy –Nay  
Brian Davidson – Nay  
Rebecca Purcell – Abstain

Mr. Carroll requested the committee review the rules and regulations for the next meeting.

**D-6: COMMITTEE COMMENTS:**

None.

**D-7: PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Rebecca Purcell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:22 P.M. Rod Riedel seconded the motion and it was voted as follows. (5-0)

Rebecca Purcell-Aye  
Rod Riedel – Aye  
Leo Carroll - Aye  
Jerry Soucy – Aye  
Brian Davidson – Aye

Respectfully Submitted,

Justine St. John  
Administrative Assistant, Highway & Grounds Division

Approved,

Leo Carroll, Chairperson  
Cemetery Committee