

**Town of Concord
Cemetery Committee Meeting
June 2, 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

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

A-1 The meeting was called to order at 4:02pm. 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 Eight deeds submitted for signing.

A-4 Next Meeting will be August 4, 2021 AT 4:00PM

A-5 Meeting Minutes from May 5, 2021 were approved with minor spelling edits:

Paul Cooke moved to accept the May 5, 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 spoke for the last time as Chair of this committee. He has enjoyed working with these members, and thinks they contribute to a pool of talent that has been able to get things done. He appreciates Mr. Riedel and Ms. Purcell for stepping up to join the group, and Ms. Bates who has acted as the Select Board Liaison. He has also appreciated working with Mr. Miklosko and Ms. Hopkins. He would like to tell the members that it is important to have vision for the Cemetery for its protection and its future. He spoke about the path to acceptance of mausoleums, and how it may take time and effort to achieve a goal but it will be worth it. He would like to leave seven points to the outgoing chair:

- The agenda

- The charge-the Town's Commission to you as a committee
- It is great if every member can be involved.
- Use the Master Plan
- Meet with the Superintendent prior to the next meeting
- Appreciate Ms. Hopkins
- Annually take a tour of the cemetery on foot together

D-2: STAFF REPORT:

Highway Superintendent Miklosko reported (3) full interments, (5) cremation interments and (12) lots sold in the month of May. There was a flag installation ceremony with members of the Maynard-Clinton Lodge of Elks and Ms. Hopkins. Approximately 50 people helped install over 1600 flags on veteran graves ahead of Memorial Day. Ms. Hopkins gave her update-it was a successful Memorial Day. Mr. Cooke asked about cleaning the Melvin Memorial and Mr. Miklosko advised they had reached out to Daedalus but needed additional information. He also advised Highway & Grounds will be loaming and seeding a couple of areas as previously discussed.

D-3: OVERSIZED FLAT MARKER REQUEST-CHIHA FAMILY

Ms. Hopkins explained the request. Cemetery regulations allow a two foot by one foot flat marker. The Chiha family is requesting a stone that is 6 inches wider, thirty inches by 12 inches, still a flat marker. Mr. Riedel asked whether these types of requests are common. Ms. Hopkins advised this was a unique case because they already have an upright stone that is 30" wide (within the restrictions allowed for an upright headstone). Another family member passed away that they had not anticipated would be interred at this location, and they now want to include the additional last name on an upright stone. There is already artwork on the current stone they want to preserve, so they are having the monument company cut it into a flat stone. There is no concern about encroaching on other lots. Mr. Carroll asked why the restrictions are set to the current standard and Ms. Hopkins explained it allows for some planting space and keeps them centered on the graves.

Jerry Soucy made a motion to accept and approve the request, Leo Carroll 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-4: LOT REPURCHASES (2)-ASHER FAMILY

Ms. Hopkins spoke to this request. Robert and Joanna Asher purchased (3) separate two grave lots many years ago for their family. Since then, family has moved away. They want to keep (1) two grave lot for themselves, but their kids do not want to be interred there so they want to sell back the remaining (2) two grave lots. They want to sell back J39 and J40 in Chestnut Hollow for the price of \$2200 each/\$4400 total. Mr. Cooke asked what Ms. Hopkins would do with those lots. She explained there is a waiting list for the Old Section of Sleepy Hollow, and she would offer to sell them to those on that list.

Andrea Solomon moved to accept the request and Paul Cooke 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: WEBSITE REVIEW

Mr. Cooke gave an overview of the Concord Cemetery webpage for the new members. Mr. Cooke navigated through the Town of Concord Cemeteries-Cemetery Committee, Operations Cemeteries in the News, Master Plan, Rules and Regulations, Fee Schedule & Rates, the Headstone restoration report and the Melvin Memorial Dedication. Ms. Purcell asked who the webmaster is-it is Anna Trout in Concord Public Works. Mr. Davidson asked how one would add items to the website and Mr. Cooke suggested they go through the Committee.

D-6: UPDATE ON PRIORITY PROJECTS:

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

Headstone Restoration: Mr. Miklosko advised he is anticipating having two years of headstones restored over the summer (after July 1) and he is hoping to have more updates at the next meeting.

D-7: MASTER PLAN CONTINUED DISCUSSION:

Master Plan Update along with language reference point 6.4: “Development of the Northern Section of the Knoll Area”: Mr. Cooke asked Andrea Solomon to speak to a possible edit to the Master Plan and her thoughts. Ms. Solomon spoke to Mr. Cooke’s proposed language regarding 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.”*

Ms. Solomon, Mr. Cooke and Mr. Soucy discussed long term planning incorporating or updating the Master Plan. They discussed priorities that are close to being accomplished, like records scanning and the Melvin Memorial restoration and whether the new committee wants to consider new priorities. Ms. Purcell asked if the concept of green burials had ever been considered. Mr. Soucy said he is in favor of them, and a columbarium is a good first step to that. He is not sure there is a suitable site in the Cemetery, but it could be included in the Master Plan. Mr. Davidson suggested a review of the Master Plan every five years, starting in 2025.

Paul Cooke moved to accept the updated text Andrea Solomon provided to the Master Plan as presented. 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

Mr. Cooke reviewed the appendices of the Master Plan. He reviewed the Cemetery Committee Charge, map of the cemeteries, Envision statement, lot supply and public works suggested priorities.

Tree Planting/Erosion Control: Mr. Carroll reported he continues to look at a couple of areas in the Cemetery to learn what might survive in the current conditions of the average temperature increasing and drought. He is also still trying to determine areas where trees can be planted and hopefully shade some of the areas. He mentioned that the Friends of Sleepy Hollow will be donating some money for tree plantings as well. Mr. Riedel asked about the possibility of test plots to help determine what may thrive. Mr. Miklosko advised they have determined some areas to try different plantings. Mr. Carroll is going to contact the Garden in the Woods to see if they have any suggestions for non-invasive native species.

Columbaria: Mr. Soucy reported they are waiting on Engineering so they can give information to prospective vendors. Mr. Miklosko reported Engineering hasn't been able to address this yet, but it is on their radar.

Undeveloped Land Use: Mr. Davidson gave an overview of his focus regarding undeveloped land use in the Cemetery, including bicycle use and trails. He also spoke of the signage that is being considered to encourage visitors to be respectful and aware while riding through the Cemetery. The proposed language on the sign was discussed. Mr. Davidson proposed changing the last line from keeping dogs leashed to keeping on paved paths. Mr. Carroll suggested trying to install a barrier near the little bridge to encourage bicyclists to walk that part of the trail. Mr. Miklosko expressed concern with installing anything that may inadvertently cause bicycles to crash. Mr. Soucy suggested asking bicyclists to dismount and walk bicycles on Cemetery property. Mr. Cooke asked Mr. Davidson to work with Mr. Miklosko to develop text for the signs.

Repair and Restoration of Cemetery Stone Walls: Mr. Carroll reported they are waiting for FY22 to begin and then can start with the repair of stone walls. Mr. Miklosko advised they are still identifying the priorities of which stone walls to work on-he is working with Engineering on that as well. Mr. Carroll spoke to his understanding that the \$10,000 that has been earmarked will be used for repairs of walls around the Melvin Memorial.

D-8: COMMITTEE COMMENTS:

Mr. Carroll thanked Mr. Cooke and Ms. Solomon for their work on the committee. Ms. Solomon spoke to how much she enjoyed serving on and working on this committee, and Mr. Cooke agreed. Mr. Davidson asked about the possibility of meeting live. Mr. Miklosko said they are going month to month in town, but as soon as he knows he will let the rest of the committee know. Mr. Davidson thanked Mr. Cooke and Ms. Solomon for their work on the committee.

D-9: PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No public comments.

D-10: SUMMARY OF FOLLOW UP ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Solomon made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 17:57 P.M. Mr. Cooke 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