Wellfleet Cemetery Commission
Meeting Minutes
December 29, 2021
Attended by Bonnie Robicheau, Nancy Vail, David Agger

Agenda

Reviewed and accepted September 10, 2021 meeting minutes

1. Animal control by-law regarding dogs in the cemeteries

   Discussed how to integrate and reflect the new Commonwealth and Town Animal Control laws and guidelines into the Town of Wellfleet Cemetery Rules and Regulations.

   Bonnie suggested a simple sentence incorporating the new text. We agreed to ask the Town DPW to post new signage at the Oakdale/Pleasant Hill Cemetery entrance stating “all dogs in Town Cemeteries must be on leash and owners are responsible for the proper disposal of animal waste.”

2. New vendor payment procedures

   Nancy explained that we can no longer pay vendors as we have in the past, per Interim Town Administrator Charlie Sumner, as our "Sale of Plots" account is considered a revenue account and bills cannot be paid out of that. Starting with the FY23 budget, we will create an expenditure line in either the DPW budget or the Cemetery Commission's, to be funded by our "Sale of Plots" account and bills will be paid out of that. It's a 2-step process, income gets deposited in one account and bills get paid out of another account. We need clarification that any monies remaining in the expenditure account at the end of the fiscal year will not revert to the General Fund.

   In the meantime, to pay our most recent bill for installation of corner markers, Nancy submitted paperwork to the Finance Committee to pay the bill out of their Reserve Fund. She contacted the vendor to explain the delay in payment of his invoice.

   We were advised by Mr. Sumner that the removal of the 3 diseased trees in Oakdale, for which we have already solicited bids, will have to wait until July 1, 2022, when the FY23 budget and the new revenue/expenditure accounts will be in effect.
3. Discussion of DRAFT for green burial guidelines.

David reviewed the process he used for creating the draft using current Wellfleet Rules and Regulations and cutting/pasting language from Provincetown and Brewster rules/regulations pertaining to green burial practices where appropriate. He stressed again that the concept of green burials is a continuum and we get to decide what Wellfleet’s definition/understanding/provisions will be. Future Town Cemetery Commissions may increase/decrease our guidelines if they so choose.

David reminded the Commission of his conversation with John Fougere who digs graves for the Town and his willingness to consider digging green graves if the Town limited green burials to 10x10 plots that are accessible without crossing over any plots not having concrete vaults, due to his concern with collapsing walls/plots or migrating bodies.

The Commission went through the DRAFT for “green burials rules and regulations.” It was agreed that the Town of Wellfleet Cemetery Commission’s definition for the time being will be to allow bodies to be interred in specific sections of the Pleasant Hill cemetery following the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’s definition of “an appropriate burial container,” and without the requirement of embalming or the use of a concrete vault.

It was decided to not establish a separate section of the cemetery for “green burials but rather to integrate them within the existing sections. Keeping in mind John Fougere’s concerns, we will initially offer green burial plots in Section DEF, plots 2, 9, 16, 72, 79. The minimum size plots for green burials will be 10 feet x 10 feet; with up to two bodies and with one vault interment permissible if requested. All other other existing Cemetery rules and regulations will be followed. Interments will continue to be coordinated and completed by funeral homes and other contracted vendors.

It was decided to create a second set of Cemetery Rules and Regulations for Green Burials. We will then compare the two and decide the benefits of a separate set of Green Burial Rules and Regulation or the incorporation of these green burial guidelines into the existing Rules and Regulations. Bonnie will create these drafts for review at our next meeting.

We discussed a process for enacting these changes including public review on the Town website, announcement of proposed changes at an upcoming Select Board meeting, informing the Town Health Department, and requesting final review by Town Counsel.

Unfinished Business

1. People are requesting more than one vertical monument per deeded plot. Some are
installing them without asking permission from the Cemetery Commission. One option for people is to pay more and subdivide the larger plots upon initially buying the plot pay more for smaller plots. After a discussion of different ways to accommodate these requests, the commission has decided to postpone any decision until next meeting. If we decide to allow a discount, the current family requesting to buy a 20x20 plot in Section DEF might get a refund.

2. A review of published “maximum dimensions for any upright or vertical monument in Town cemeteries.”

3. Discuss laying out more 5 x 10 plots in Section DEF
   Currently we are limiting 5x10 plots to the north/south border with West Road. Discussed adding additional two 5x10 plots in each 20x20 plot along the east or west side of Grove Street
   Starting with 74, 67, 60, 53, 46, 39, 32, 25, 18, 11, 4
   Commissioners will each go out and visit the DEF site to assist with decision.

4. Status of diseased tree removal in Oakdale
   In the Summer 2021, we requested bids from vendors to remove diseased or other trees in danger of falling and damaging headstones. Discussed the issue of selecting a vendor using “the prevailing wage” requirement. We will have to request new bids from vendors, providing them with prevailing wage requirement. Nancy has been in discussion with the DPW in order to move forward. We will continue this discussion after receiving more information and guidance from the Town and State.

   See #2 under New Business

Meeting Adjourned at 3:23pm
Next meeting TBD through Zoom unless otherwise indicated.
Minutes taken by David Agger