



## City Owned Cemeteries Advisory Committee Minutes

December 8, 2020  
Remote Meeting  
Zoom Meeting facilitated by the City  
Gloucester, MA  
5:30-7:00

2021 JAN 25 AM 10:22  
CITY CLERK  
GLOUCESTER, MA

Consistent with the Governor's orders suspending certain provisions of the open meeting law and banning gatherings of more than 25 people, this meeting was conducted by remote participation and was available for the public to view and listen to in real time.

Present: Committee Members -- Sandy Barry, Christine Maney, Carol Kelly, Director of the DPW -- Mike Hale. Meeting facilitated by Vickie Stringfellow.  
Guest: Maureen Vallis

Carol introduced our guest, Maureen Vallis as a prospective member of the Committee. Maureen has submitted all her documents and is waiting to hear from the City.

1. March, 2020 minutes accepted. Chris will submit them to the City website.
2. Summary of the Sons of the American Revolution plaque unveiling: Saturday, October 10, following state guidelines to keep the event to under 50 participants, all participants were masked and distanced as much as possible. Each gravesite that was part of the commemoration was marked with a flag, flowers and a short biography of the person for attendees to visit. Attending were the SAR members, members of the Committee, Senator Bruce Tarr, and City Councilors. Sandy Barry's work over two years that made this possible was cited.

For the future we hope to get all bios of soldiers up on the city cemetery site. Soldiers, sailors, supporters, even one minister who was driven out of his original parish as a result of his Revolutionary fervor, these were all eligible. A special thank you to the DPW for all the work at preparing and installing the plaque.

3. Review and continued discussion on signage: Some basic information on each cemetery which will then be part of a template prepared for all city cemeteries. (1.) Name and established date of the cemetery (2.) map (3.) brief history (4.) Photos (5.) city of Gloucester QR code. We also want this information available digitally for people that want to connect from a distance. Sandy works to do this through the use of Find-A-Grave. We need to liaison with the archives.....and the library.....to make sure we're not duplicating information and are connecting to all the work that has already been done.

Mike Hale thought that there was no problem moving forward on signage using Greenbelt format as a possible template. Mike suggests – large sign with name and established date of cemetery made out of metal, followed by informational sign within the space. He used the metalwork arch of Oak Hill as an example. He would also like the metalwork piece to reflect the historic period of each particular cemetery. Mike will send some ideas through Sandy and we need to get back to him with our wishes. Archives may have some information for us about what old signs may have been. Metal piece, name, date established. The various cemeteries were split up among Committee members.

4. Task for each of us – split up the cemeteries – and get the information assembled, templates for signage developed by February meeting. Chris will send an email to Mike about it.

5. Cemetery Adopters -- What does it mean to be adopted? Mike Hale noted that in the past, when the city could no longer take care of something, they asked volunteers to help. Expectations have changed, effort has changed, maybe looking for more? Carol offered to contact each listed “adopter” to see if there was still a commitment and report January meetings. We already know Walter and Joyce McGrath (Cove Hill) have retired but wish to continue to honor them with our signage for their many years of work.

6. Storage area at the DPW. Mike said it is ready and still has room for additional orphan stones. Carol will follow up on the connection passed on to her by Beverly McKean to locate an additional stone that needs moving to this storage space.

7. Supply order through the DPW. Order submitted Oct 20 and it's being worked on. Chris will send a copy to Mike. The CAC appreciates being included in the DPW budget.

8. 2<sup>nd</sup> Parish/Thompson Street – a tree was reported as having crashed into the sign near the road. The DPW went in there and recovered the sign.

9. Mowing quality continues to be a concern. Mike noted that due mostly to the weather this year, there was a lot of weed growth and even with the same number of cuts as last year, the space just didn't look as good. Scheduled this year were bi-monthly May-September 10 cuts per historic cemetery by the contractor. The DPW does the active cemeteries. The DPW expects to do a good deal of work in the cemeteries during the winter including dealing with brush clearing and rutted areas which should make mowing easier next year. Question re: knotweed in Clark, DPW has assigned someone to deal with it.

10. Prospect Street cemetery was brought to our attention but, as it turns out, it is not one of our Gloucester public cemeteries. Despite that, the DPW has been mowing it once a month in view of the fact that otherwise it would be neglected. The original "trust" which was taking care of it seems to have evaporated. Mike brought up the city's process of taking over neglected properties and believes that Prospect St. Cemetery may soon fall into that category. Carol will attempt to contact the AmVets (who took care of it for years) and/or the "trust" to see if anyone now takes responsibility for it. Report at our January meeting.

11. Loan Form with West Parish is still in process and Chris is managing it and following up. Right now it's undergoing a final legal check with the City and the form, when completed will be filed at the DPW. Chris will continue working on this.

12. Chris and Sandy as members of the 400<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee attended the January 2020 meeting. Two main topics shared with CAC were the availability for purchase of the 400<sup>th</sup> commemorative coin and that Laura Ventimiglia is the project manager of the Gloucester 400 Stories Project. This project is collecting personal Gloucester stories (for example, stories about Cape Ann Finns in Lanesville and Gloucester fishermen) that will be highlighted and 400 of these stories will be chosen for a 400<sup>th</sup> commemorative book. <https://www.gloucesterma400.org/>

Since the 400<sup>th</sup> Cemetery Committee (Sandy, Richard and Kathy Clark, Chris) is a private entity separate from CAC, it was decided that the business of the 400<sup>th</sup> Cemetery Committee will not be discussed at a CAC meeting but a summary of the activities of the 400<sup>th</sup> Cemetery Committee will be presented to CAC when warranted. Carol and Maureen Vallis were asked if they would like to be members of the 400<sup>th</sup> Cemetery Committee. Both Carol and Maureen said yes. Maureen notified Chris in an email due to the lack of her audio at the CAC Zoom meeting.

13. GPS coordinates: In our continuing effort to get GPS information (for example, for the newly memorialized Revolutionary War grave sites) we discussed options. Mike Hale offered to loan GPS gadgets to us. Chris will follow up on this. Chris and Carol will meet with the City IT to continue discussions re: a layer on the official city maps that denote gravesites.

14. Summary of meeting in Salem at the Harmony Grove Cemetery: Sandy and Chris visited Margie Lavender at Harmony Grove Cemetery in Salem. She shared examples of publications, biographies and other exemplary materials that may serve as models for our future work. She very generously offered to be a resource at any time in the future. Mike Hale mentioned that he has some PR related services available and the Committee agreed to meet with his consultant.

15. With the resignation of both Patti Amaral and Beverly McKean, the CAC has room for the addition of another permanent member. The CAC is delighted that Christine Maney is willing to step into this position (she had been an alternate) and welcomes her to the Committee in this new role.

16. The Committee members expressed their appreciation for the service of Beverly McKean and regret at her resignation. She was a positive force for the cemeteries preservation and a respected and hard-working colleague.

17. Carol presented a talk to the Daughters of the American Revolution on the CAC's Dolliver project and will donate the \$100 honorarium to CAC's purchasing budget

Adjourned at 6:50

**The listing of matters is those reasonably anticipated by the chair, which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.**