

Cemetery Advisory Committee Minutes 8/8/2017

Present: Committee Members -- Sandy Barry, Patti Amarault, Carol Kelly
Guests -- Kathy Hurlburt, Richard Clark, Kathy Clark

Meeting came to order at 5:30 PM at the Veteran's Building, 12 Emerson Way, Gloucester

1. Review June 26 meeting minutes (no July meeting): Minutes have been reviewed and accepted.
2. DPW July 5 meeting review: Committee members met with Mike Hale to go over some questions and concerns. We were happy to note that Clark Cemetery has been added to the DPW mowing rotation. Reviewing the notes from the meeting brought up concerns about mowing and so the Committee intends to run our notes past Mike Hale to double check the schedule for mowing. In addition, we'll follow up on the funds which are obtained through cemetery plot purchase.
3. Classroom connection discussion: All members of the Committee want to continue to work on reaching out to schools to possibly develop some project-based connections. Letters to the secondary principals/history/science teachers will be drafted.
4. SHRAB Phase 1 grant work was conducted July 6, 7, by Fannin-Lehner Preservation Consultants. Location – First Parish Burial Ground and Clark's Cemetery. Because of rain delays, other commitments interfered but they'll continue until they finish the work on the designated stones.
5. As agreed in the DPW meeting, the Committee proposes raising the normal prices for both grave and cremation sites to bring it closer to that of surrounding towns. Mike Hale had supported this and the letter will be sent first to him and then submitted officially to the City. Letter draft approved by the Committee.
6. It has become clear that the efforts to contain Japanese Knotweed in First Parish and Clark need a more sustained and organized effort – according to reliable sources, eliminating knotweed requires a five-year commitment. Richard and Kathy Clark mentioned that a survey as to whether Clark is part of a wetland area will be done within the week. They questioned if a herbicide was used on the Japanese Knotweed – which is important if Clark is officially wetlands. The Clarks are personally paying for Wetlands and Lands Management Inc. to ascertain where the demarcation of the land is. National Grid owns the abutting property.

The Committee plans to request a city-backed program be put into place with annual sustained efforts – the only way this can be dealt with. Other towns on Cape Ann, with a sustained anti-knotweed program have been able to eliminate or control the spread. Gloucester needs the same sort of program. A letter requesting the establishment of such a program is addressed to Ken Whittaker, Conservation Agent, as the first step, Letter draft approved by the Committee.

7. New Business

Kathy Hurlburt was deeply concerned about both the lack of clarity in charges for burial in Seaside Cemetery and at the manner with which the official digger interacted with her family. After listening, the Committee strongly suggested that she write a letter specifying the difficulties she had and send it to the DPW and to City Hall. She agreed to write a note to Mark Cole with copies to the Committee.

Kathy Clark, who has made a personal commitment and works several days a week at Clark Cemetery, asked about attempting to revive volunteerism. In the past there was steady group of cemetery volunteers but it has gradually fallen off. The Committee is in agreement that this would be ideal and will add it to next month's agenda to consider.

Kathy also proposed using some landscaping fabric/stone around the white marble tablets in Clark to help them remain clean (presently extensive mud splashing during rain). She proposed doing a couple to see if it helps and the Committee was grateful for her effort.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:55. Next meeting scheduled for September 12 at the Veteran's Building.

Respectfully submitted by Carol A. Kelly