

## STOCKBRIDGE CEMETERY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Friday, July 2, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

### IN PERSON MEETING -TOWN OFFICES, 50 MAIN STREET

Present: Karen Marshall (chair), Candace Currie (clerk pro tem), Chris Marsden, Roxanne McCaffrey, Patrick White, Mike Canales, Hugh Page (Highway Dept) and Peter Williams (Historic Preservation Commission)

Absent: Lionel Delevingne, LHA representative; Chuck Cardillo, Select Board

**Call to Order:** Karen called the meeting to order.

**Review, discuss changes in cemetery management** – Due to an anticipated increase of project management, the current cemetery consultant Joe Gardino, will be completing his term in terms; he will work with Chris Marsden on all record keeping over his final two months as consultant ensuring all burial records are up-to-date. A motion by Karen was made to hire Chris Marsden as the new cemetery consultant and seconded by Roxanne. Only paper records are held in the town offices. There no digital records.

**Review, discuss changes in relationship of Town to St. Joseph's Cemetery** – At the church's request, as of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the town will no longer serve families who have or need burial plots at St. Joseph's Cemetery. The Stockbridge cemetery department mowed the lawn at St. Joseph's Cemetery during the final week of June; the Church is now responsible for all maintenance, burials and burial records.

**Review, discuss maintenance plans, any issues for this season or next** – Hugh reported on the two buildings in the cemetery currently used to store tools. The Commission brainstormed on renovations and uses for both the historic hearse building and the newer shed that exists on cemetery grounds. Mike will meet with Hugh soon to look over both buildings and evaluate the tool shed.

The commission also discussed possible public uses of the hearse shed: information about the cemetery and some of the people within, maps, and other potential exhibits. McCaffrey and White expressed interest in exploring whether to convert the hearse building to a small museum.

Hedges around cemetery and around some private lots need to be cut back and / replaced. No decisions were made, but it was suggested that if plants get replaced, they should be replaced with shrubs, not trees (hemlock), which surround the cemetery. The group agreed to revisit this subject again later.

Water spigots need to be added to the newer sections of the cemetery where people are leaving flowers. Starting this year, leaves will be vacuumed instead of raked onto tarps. Using

this equipment will save money and time. String trimmers, especially around the older stones, even with a lighter gauge string, are damaging the stones in the historic sections. A suggestion to switch from lawn that requires mowing to something like thyme that is already growing there would reduce labor and potential damage to stones. The newer stones made of granite do not get damaged by string trimmers.

The cemetery roads are not plowed in the winter except for access for and during a burial, and everyone agreed that approach is appropriate for the town cemetery. Walking in the cemetery at all seasons is still possible. There may be a need for a sign related to winter conditions.

**Discuss update of burial records** – The Commission conducted a lively discussion related to burial records, and articulated a goal of maintaining both physical and digital records. Currie mentioned she has extensive experience in this field (she was part of the leadership team at Mt. Auburn Cemetery for a number of years). White suggested that any database include photos, descriptions, audio clips, QR codes and related fields to allow the town to repurpose the data for a virtual cemetery tour website/mobile app.

**Discuss potential role of highway department in burials** – It was decided to table that for a later discussion. For now, burials will continue to be done by Rich Atwood.

**Discuss getting bids for condition analysis of headstones in oldest section** – The Commission discussed candidates for the role of the consultant to develop a road map for the repair of broken and damaged headstones in the old portion of the cemetery. Karen and Chris will meet to outline the scope and requirements and we will then request proposals from at least three companies to do the work later this summer and fall. We want a final assessment report by February 2022, so that we have time to budget repair work in that year.

**Discuss mapping of rest of remaining space in Cemetery, to determine best use of current space and anticipate any needed expansion in the future.** Karen and Chris will follow up on this later this year.

There was also discussion about a new driveway and parking lot being potentially being proposed by The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR) on property adjacent to the cemetery. Karen will follow up with the Conservation Commission and with TTOR.

**Review, discuss repair to Richard Bowker headstone and Rich Bradway's offer** – Pictures of a missing bronze plaque on the Bowker headstone were shared. The damage was reported by Rich Bradway, who had offered to raise funds to repair the headstone. The commission felt the money in the highway department's budget for headstone repair would cover the needed repair. Chris will get cost estimate from Rich Atwood for re-affixing the plaque and cleaning the boulder.

Adjournment at 11:00am.

Respectfully submitted,

Candace Currie, *clerk pro tem*