

Town of Charleston
Cemetery Commission Meeting 05/14/21

MINUTES

A meeting of the town Cemetery Commission was held May 14, 2021. Attending: Commission Members Sherman Allen Jr., Dean Bennett, Maurice Cerutti, Martin Davis, and Darald Moulton; Sexton Brad Peters; Town Clerk & Treasurer Teri Gray; and Asst. Clerk Colleen Kellogg.

THESE MINUTES ARE UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED AT THE NEXT MEETING

Chairperson Sherman Allen called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. There was no public comment. Mr. Allen welcomed new Commissioner Maurice Cerutti and Commissioner Darald Moulton who started a new term.

Dean Bennett nominated Sherman Allen as Chairperson for 2021, seconded by Mr. Moulton. There were no other nominations. Mr. Allen was elected for the year.

Minutes of the October 18, 2019 meeting were reviewed. Mr. Bennett moved to accept the minutes as written, seconded by Martin Davis. There was no further discussion, and minutes were approved unanimously.

Martin Davis moved to officially accept Nancy Rice's 2020 resignation from the Commission, seconded by Mr. Bennett and approved unanimously without discussion.

Mr. Allen sent a few thank you and condolence cards this year, including to the family of Wayne Bowen. He also thanked Nancy Rice for her service and continuing to keep an eye on West Village Cemetery as a neighbor, and Ryan and Robert Buck for contributing a stone monument sign for the Buck Cemetery.

Regarding items needed for cemeteries, Mr. Moulton said the lawn tractor purchased last year is running well, and he has weed trimers in the shed and a small one kept at home. Mr. Davis is set for trimmers as he uses his own. Mr. Allen asked Commissioners/Laborers to think about what might go into next year's budget. Urgent needs will be taken care of this year, but anything that can be budgeted ahead of time is helpful. Mr. Cerutti suggested the Commission consider a fund each year to clean stones. Mr. Moulton mentioned a Bly Cemetery stone is in four pieces. There was concern that stone cleaning without family permission is not always well received. The matter of budgeting for stone cleaning and repair will be taken up in the fall.

Charleston Elementary students will place flags on Veterans' graves next week, with Mr. Cerutti participating along with Mrs. O'Keefe and Mrs. Maxwell. Mr. Cerutti said he would take a box of flags that evening, and others should be brought to the school. Faded or ripped flags will be burned or handed over to an appropriate local agency. It was suggested that new flags could be purchased every year, and this will be considered at budget time.

Cemetery labor needs are covered for the year, but Mr. Moulton said he may need help next year.

The current labor rate is \$15 per hour. Laborers Mr. Davis, Mr. Moulton and Bradley Peters agreed the rate was fine with them. The Chair thanked workers for providing service at the same

rate. Ms. Gray asked if monthly Cemetery payroll could be processed for all workers at one time because she now has to process a federal tax payment each time payroll checks are issued. Mr. Allen asked workers to send timesheets at the same time each month.

Current lot prices are: \$1000 for a full lot (4 graves); \$800 for a half lot; and \$500 for a cremation lot. It was noted that it has been quite some time since prices increased, and these may be low compared to area towns. Ms. Gray said that if the Commission considers a price increase, that might be a good time to consider establishing a fund for cleaning and repair. No change in lot prices for now.

The question has come up of how many cremations are permitted in a certain lot—some other cemeteries permit only four cremations in a 4-person lot. There are important considerations such as respect for the individual as well as sufficient room for stones. Mr. Allen asked if Commissioners were interested in setting a limit. Examples were discussed, including designating certain dimensions for each cremation burial or central stones for cremation burial areas. The matter was tabled for now.

The question of who is permitted to be buried in a lot when the original purchaser is deceased has come up at the town office, and the Commission could consider setting policy. Mr. Peters offered the example of Albany, which includes a section for heirs in their cemetery deeds. It was suggested that the chain of ownership easily breaks down over time, making it difficult to set a good policy. The matter was tabled for now.

Under Other Business, Mr. Moulton said he purchased ten fence posts, and he may need more. Two were installed at Hillside, and six at Crawford Hill. Mr. Cerutti said plastic chain between posts is an option for fence replacement.

There is an old dead tree beside the road at Hillside Cemetery. Mr. Allen spoke with the Road Foreman a while back because it's in the road right-of-way. Duane Moulton is willing to help.

Seeing no other business, Mr. Bennett moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Moulton, and the meeting adjourned at 6:59 pm.

The next Cemetery Commission meeting will be in October or November 2021. The Clerk will work with the Chair in the fall to schedule this.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sherman Allen

Sherman Allen, Jr. Chairperson

Approved this _____ day of _____, 20_____

Cemetery Commissioners, Town of Charleston

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