

Town of Charleston
Cemetery Commission Meeting 05/11/23

MINUTES

A meeting of the town Cemetery Commission was held May 11, 2023. Attending: Commission Members Sherman Allen Jr., Grace Frizzell, Janice Bowen, and Martin Davis; Sexton/Laborer Brad Peters; Residents Audrey Frizzell and Diane Colburn; 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 5:00 pm and welcomed all attendees.

The first item of business was to elect a chairperson. Janice Bowen nominated Sherm Allen as Chairperson for 2023, and the motion was seconded by Grace Frizzell. Seeing no other nominations, Mr. Allen was elected for the year.

Minutes of the November 15, 2022, meeting were reviewed. Janice Bowen moved to accept the minutes as printed, and Martin Davis seconded the motion. There was no further discussion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Seeing no objections, the Chair opened the floor to Audrey Frizzell who has concerns about erosion in Hillside Cemetery. Mrs. Frizzell said the location is on the right as you drive in. There is no grass in some places—just dry moss—and she is concerned about further erosion. She asked if individual lot owners are allowed to sprinkle lime or fertilizer on their own lot. Diane Colburn said her lot is in the same area. She sees dirt coming away from a small stone and is concerned the stone will fall.

Sherm Allen requested that Sexton Brad Peters be allowed to speak about cemetery matters during the meeting, and there were no objections. Mr. Peters said that area of Hillside has been washing out since he started, and he's stopped driving the mower there because it tears up the ground. Vault delivery worsened ruts in one area, and he has filled in twice with available soil. Much more topsoil would get washed away by rain. He mentioned erosion control blanket and seed as an option, but that can take three years and is visible in the meantime. He put down some grass seed, but any more should wait until after the frost. A greater mix of clover seed might grow more readily. He said it will be difficult to find a place to dump any quantity of soil without doing damage, but perhaps he could use the wagon from West Village. Sherm Allen wondered if grass tiles could be cut to fit exposed areas. Sherm Allen and Brad Peters acknowledged road and grounds work done by the town crew and Scott Bianchi of Heritage Memorials.

Under items needed for cemeteries, Brad Peters said he will need shingles for the shed this year but plans to wait until after the meeting and Memorial Day weekend to start the work. He said lawn tractors are maintained and ready to go.

Regarding cemetery flags, Mr. Peters said the VFW put out flags today. He recommends the smaller size, which fits into the flag holders. He said the Charleston school will put out flags on May 15th, with a rain date of the following Monday. There was discussion of how many flags are needed each year and how to properly dispose of worn flags.

Under Labor needs, Darald Moulton is not able to help this year. Martin Davis said he could do Hillside. Brad Peters will handle weeding and mowing West Village but could use help with weed trimming in Bly and Buck cemeteries, especially if other work comes up. Sherm Allen confirmed that a new section of Hillside closer to the Moultons gets mowed every year.

The Chair asked what information was found regarding the use of perpetual care funds. Janice Bowen said she spoke with a VLCT attorney and was told that if no stated purpose can be found in town records, then the funds can be used for cleaning, upkeep, or whatever is needed. She also spoke with Westmore, and they have used perpetual care funds to clean stones. Teri Gray said her office has found information indicating that only the interest income from perpetual care funds can be used and not the principal. Sherm Allen said that if some perpetual care funds can be used, he would like to propose that the town match the amount. Teri Gray said the perpetual care fund earned about \$1,800 in CD interest income last year. She will contact VLCT to get questions answered about spending principal. Commission members agreed to table the matter until the November meeting so more information can be found.

There was no further discussion of Reserve Funds.

Under New Business, the Chair asked if there was any further discussion of how to deal with erosion issues. Fish fertilizer was suggested for the grass, as well as the possibility of asking Heritage Memorials to tamp down applied soil with their excavator bucket.

Janice Bowen asked the location of a cemetery on Ten Mile Square Rd and was given directions. The Chair said he has heard from someone that Buck Cemetery was locked, but Mr. Peters said the gate is now unlocked. Sherm Allen acknowledged the Buck family's recent donation of cemetery signage and flowers for many graves.

The Chair proposed a next meeting on November 9th, at 5:00 pm. The Town Clerk's Office will contact Mr. Allen to set an agenda and notify Commission members a few weeks prior. Mr. Peters suggested holding the first meeting of the year in April. This will be discussed in November. Mr. Allen asked Ms. Kellogg to distribute meeting minutes to all Commissioners, including absent members.

Seeing no other business, Janice Bowen moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Martin Davis, and the meeting adjourned at 5:52 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sherman Allen, Jr. Chairperson

Approved this _____ day of _____, 20_____
