

Stowe Cemetery Commission Meeting

Tuesday, September 17, 2024

Approved: _____

A meeting of the Stowe Cemetery Commission was held on Tuesday, September 17, 2024 via Zoom hybrid starting at 8:30 am . Members present: Donna Adams, Claire "Skeeter" Austin, Nancy Lavanway, Judy Smith, Gail Kaiser, Christine Kaiser, Janet Godin

Minutes

Minutes of the August 20, 2024 meeting were approved with minor changes made on a motion by Janet, seconded by Nancy.

Bridge/Cemetery Road Update

Donna reported that she spoke with PW Director Harry Shepard who had no further updates to report and that the road will continue to be one way through the winter.

Cemetery Easement Update

Donna said that there was an existing easement created a while ago which the town is now pursuing.

Work Orders

Request for Cleaning – **Chase, Von Trapp, Walker** – on a motion by Gail, seconded by Christine, the Work Orders were approved.

Foundation – **Carol Breuer** – On a motion by Nancy, seconded by Janet the WO was approved with a condition that Woodman has current insurance.

Flush Marker – **Joanna Culver** – on a motion by Nancy, seconded by Gail, the WO was approved.

Base Replacement – **Fred Sears** – on a motion by Judy, seconded by Nancy, the WO for a base replacement was approved with a condition to waive the corner post requirement at this time.

Discussion with staff regarding office procedures for the sale of burial rights; communication policies with Parks Department regarding interments and contractors –

Donna introduced Town Manager Charles Safford, Town Clerk Penny Davis, Asst. Town Clerk Lindsay Turiello, Parks Superintendent David Danforth and Parks and Rec Director Matt Frazee.

Donna said the recent burial of Sam Kaiser had prompted the discussion due to the unfortunate mistakes that occurred leading up to and during the burial. She said the purpose of the discussion was to look into the process for interment, work orders, etc and how these items are handled by each department. She referred to her memo of September 5, 2024 in which she outlined a process and ideas to help with the discussion and talk about what works and what has not been working.

Penny began the discussion with a review of the Town Clerk's office responsibilities and the steps they follow. She noted that staff is working on cross training on all aspects of interments, work orders and coordinating with the Parks Department. Penny reviewed some of the difficulties they incur with the amount of emails and paperwork they receive and process.

David reviewed the Parks Department's responsibilities and also indicated that his staff was cross trained in handling interments, work orders, etc. He described how he and the Town Clerk's office work together on processing the interments with the use of a calendar and maps as an example of coordination.

Charles said it may be necessary to reinstate a person to focus and assist on cemetery matters and paperwork to help out the Clerk's office. He also said it may be necessary as it has been done in other departments to automate the process where information and payments etc are input automatically which can take out the risk of human error. Charles said that Matt has been exploring these programs with the Town's new IT person to understand the capabilities of these systems.

Matt discussed how he has been contacting software firms and gathering information on the types of services they offer and the expense involved. He said he has also been in touch with other municipalities and NECA to get a sense of how these programs are working for them. He discussed the processes the software firms offer for mapping and ultimately the decision will be based on cost and the type of implementation process to be used.

Charles discussed how the proposed project would fit into the FY 26 budget process.

During further discussion, Donna said as an immediate requirement staff needs to utilize the calendar more and update the map. Donna added that everyone needs to have copies of all work orders and at some point they can be automated but now they need to rely on copies and get a better streamlined process going.

Donna thanked everyone for their input in the discussion.

Superintendent's Report

David said that memorial work and full burials can continue and that the 24,000 lb bridge restriction did not limit this work. He said tree planting will continue in the Spring and updated the Commission on some of the other projects they were working on now.

Treasurer's Report

Skeeter reported a small amount of income of \$2600 and said funds were up in the Edward Jones account. Judy made a motion, seconded by Nancy to approve the Treasurer's Report.

Remembrance Program

The Committee decided to purchase \$1000 of trees and shrubs for Riverbank for planting now and in the Spring. The amount was approved by the Selectboard.

Memorial Wall Project

After discussion, the consensus of the Commission was to make a recommendation to make repairs to the existing timber wall. A motion was made by Janet, seconded by Gail. Motion carried. Donna opposed.

There being no further business to conduct, Donna adjourned the meeting.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, October 15, 2024. Minutes respectively submitted by Susan Moeck.