

**Minutes of Meeting
Nelson Cemetery Board
Tuesday, August 24, 2021, 4:00 PM**

Members Present: Elaine Giacomo, Linda Cates, Al Stoops, Laurie Smith

Guests Present: Gary Robinson

Elaine called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM at the new picnic table behind Town Hall.

Review/Approve Minutes of the Last Meeting:

Minutes of the July meeting were reviewed and approved as presented and signed by the members present. The minutes were drafted by Linda with additions and corrections by Laurie, Al and Elaine.

Not an Official Meeting:

Elaine advised us that the Notice of Meeting was not posted 24 hours prior to the meeting and so this is not an official meeting. We can't vote to take action, but we are free to discuss and plan.

Erosion at Munsonville Cemetery:

Elaine reported that Mike Tarr made temporary repairs to the erosion at Munsonville Cemetery and he asked if we wanted to put hard pack on the road inside the cemetery. Elaine and Mike agreed that the sandy soil encourages erosion there and we need to come up with a permanent repair, especially in light of so much rain recently.

One of the ideas was to add some gravel 12 to 15 inches down, but the whole hillside needs it. Elaine asked Gary to have a look at it. He agreed to do that.

Laurie reminded us that we can't spend any money on the Munsonville Cemetery this year. We have to wait until after Town Meeting next spring.

Bert Wingerson tried to deal with this issue years ago. Erosion and drought resistant plants were planted there but didn't hold the soil. Gary suggested deep rooted grasses that are not mowable and work well in sand.

Laurie suggested that our next meeting take place at the Munsonville Cemetery and we all agreed that was a good idea.

Overhanging Tree Limbs in Cemetery 1, the Old Cemetery:

Elaine reported her conversation with Mike Tarr regarding the overhanging trees. He said that a tree company truck cannot get into the area where the dead limb is hanging, but he recommended Noah Washburn in Marlborough to do the job. Noah climbs trees to remove dead limbs. Mike suggested that we look around and have all potentially dangerous limbs removed at one time to save money. Noah's phone number is 313-2215. Mike said that Noah would be reasonable and would like to do the job.

Al will identify tree limbs in Cemetery 1 to be taken down and will contact Noah. Al will also be in contact with Owen Iselin who owns the abutting land. Linda mentioned a large dead tree at the cemetery edge that could fall and take out several headstones, including May Sarton's.

The Mausoleum:

Elaine also discussed the mausoleum with Mike Tarr. He suggested that we fill the entire lower area with soil in addition to the part above that has sunken. Mike suspects that all the stone around the mausoleum is granite and would be very difficult to remove, so filling around it might be better. He can't do the hauling of the dirt, but would be willing to dump the dirt there if Michael Shawver is willing to get it in place around the mausoleum.

Laurie reminded us that there are head stones below/in front of the mausoleum. The burials are in the mausoleum, but the headstones are outside. We all thought it would be a better idea to leave the mausoleum intact and just fill it in from the top. Laurie told us that decades ago the cemetery caretaker told her that the hill is sliding wet, down the hill at the mausoleum. Elaine confirmed that is the case.

We will try to contact descendants of the owners of the Mausoleum, the Osgoods, to advise them of the situation. Linda will try to locate descendants. Elaine recommended Parke Hardy Struthers' book, *A History of Nelson*, which is available in the Library.

Test Pits in the New Cemetery:

Elaine reported that Mike Tarr will dig the test pits if we give him two days' notice. Elaine will contact Tom Daly to ask how many test pits we should dig and if they should be in a particular location.

Discussion of the Handbook for Cemetery Trustees:

Linda passed out copies of the relevant pages of the New Hampshire *Handbook for Trustees of Trust Funds, Cemetery Trustees and Library Trustees*. She reported that she contacted the Attorney General's office to see if the 2017 version was the latest one available and was told that not only is it the latest it is the last. Apparently, the person who ran the programs to train new Trustees has retired and that program had been discontinued. The question arose as to whether there have been new laws since 2017 that we should be aware of. There seems to be no mechanism in place to advise Cemetery Boards of any changes. The woman in the Attorney General's office suggested contacting the New Hampshire Municipal Association, of which Nelson is a member. Linda will look into that.

We went over the first few pages of the Handbook. In the job description of Cemetery Trustees it says that we must have bylaws. Elaine said that our Rules and Regulations, which we recently updated, serve this purpose.

We discussed Section 289:2 regarding where the funds go when a cemetery "right of interment" is sold. Elaine said that the funds go into the Town's General Fund.

Section 289:3:I, regarding cemetery location, states that a cemetery can't be within 100 feet of a building or within 50 feet of a known water source or right of way of any classification of state highway. Al asked about the road running in front of the cemeteries. We don't believe they are classified as "state highways." Al reminded us that the property for the new cemetery runs down to the Nelson Road, which is a state highway. However, that section is extremely steep and we won't be using it for the cemetery. Laurie said that if we removed a few trees we would get a very nice view of Hurd Hill towards the east from the new cemetery. We all thought that was a great idea.

Elaine recalled that at one point years ago there was talk of using that land for a new firehouse. She remembers that Maury was on the facilities committee then. Elaine wondered if that part of the property may have been designated for that purpose at that time. She will look into it.

Section 289:3:II, says that "no new construction, excavation, or building shall be conducted within 25 feet of a known burial site or within 25 feet of the boundaries of an established...cemetery. Given that the land abutting the new cemetery is for sale, we need to advise the seller of this restriction and we need to make sure that our property deed says "cemetery" on it. Elaine will take care of this at the upcoming Select Board meeting and she will be in touch with Betsy Street about it.

Linda said that a stone wall marking that edge of the new cemetery would be great. Everyone agreed, but it would be expensive. Maybe we could get volunteers to do it.

Cemetery Maintenance:

Linda and Al walked through Cemetery 1 and noticed many small landscaping issues that should be taken care of such as new trees growing where they have not been planted, including very near stone walls and head stones. There are dead bushes that should be removed and the brush is encroaching from the sides of the cemetery. Gary said that removing that chaotic mix of shrubs, weeds and small trees would improve the serenity of the space. At our September meeting, we will set a workday for October to work on these things.

Two Foot Contours of New Cemetery:

We learned from consultant, Tom Daly, that we will need Auto CAD files that show two-foot contours of the land in order to design a layout for the new cemetery. We have been wondering how to get this done. Gary Robinson kindly offered to do this for us. He will use a laser and said that the result would be 90% accurate, is acceptable for design purposes. Gary said that enjoys doing this kind of work. He will not be able to do it immediately, but will get started.

Other:

Someone asked who the abutters to the Munsonville Cemetery are. Elaine said they are the State of New Hampshire and John Bunce.

Elaine will call Tom Daly regarding cemeteries he has designed. We will take a field trip to visit one. She will also speak with the guy in Groton who is using Daly's consulting services.

Linda will invite Leslie Downing to speak to us about the Harrisville Cemetery at our October meeting.

Harry reported via email that he had sent emails to town clerks asking about the costs of burials in nearby towns. He hasn't received any responses yet.

Elaine will send us a link to a chat group for New Hampshire Cemetery Trustees which she finds useful

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be Tuesday, September 28, 4:00 PM in the Munsonville Cemetery.