

Minutes of Meeting Nelson Cemetery Board Tuesday, February 15, 2022, 4:00 PM

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

Elaine called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM in the lower level of the library.

Minutes of the January meeting were reviewed and approved as presented. The minutes were drafted by Linda with small revisions by Elaine. The approved minutes were signed by those present at the January meeting.

General Update:

Elaine told us that she has been informed by the Town that voting is not necessary on the Henry Fuller gift of the land for the new cemetery as the gift stipulated that it was for a new cemetery.

Linda recalled that there was some problem with the deed not saying it was for a cemetery, perhaps consultant, Tom Daly mentioned this. A later review shows this note from our meeting with Tom Daly "When the Town accepted the gift of the property for the new cemetery, the deed transferred the property to the town but does not designate it for Cemetery use." Laurie will follow up with Edie.

Elaine said that the problem with the Munsonville Cemetery and trust funds has been kicked down the road. The lawyer is not ready to have the issue on the warrant at this year's Town Meeting. The town lawyer is busy dealing with a law suit.

Update on Contact with Other Towns:

Harry reported that he has given up as he is getting no response from the other towns.

Update on Sale of Allison Smith's Plot:

Al is corresponding with Allison via email and hopes to see her in Maine next month. Some of the questions for Allison are: Does she have her deed? Does she know exactly which plot it is, which one was hers and which one was Byron's? Linda suggested that Al might want to look at the spot before discussing it with Allison. (Al stopped at the cemetery on his way home after the meeting, found the location of the plots and is prepared for his discussion with Allison.)

Update on Town Elections:

Harry has filed for reelection. Laurie is running for Town Treasurer as a write-in. Bill Dunn is running for Zoning Board as a write-in.

Update on Elevation Map for New Cemetery:

Linda reported that she spoke with Gary Robinson and that he is still willing to do the elevation map for us. However, he will need to borrow or rent the equipment. He will need a laser level and target for a couple of weeks. Elaine will phone Hamshaw's to inquire about the rental cost. Linda will ask Gordon to put a request in the Nelson-in-Common weekly newsletter. Gary said that many builders have laser levels.

Update on Fencing Options for the New Cemetery:

Laurie got a quote from Creations in Stone for granite posts. The price is \$145 per post, with a 5% discount for more than thirty posts. Laurie wasn't sure how high the posts are. We are thinking 6 feet, with 2 feet below ground. The price did not include installation and we would also need to drill holes and install the chain. We are also unsure how many posts we need. Someone suggested that Laurie also check with Peterborough Granite and Ground Up Landscaping Company. Elaine suggested a black aluminum chain that doesn't rust. (Later Al reported that he walked the length across the field and it is 340 feet.)

Discussion of a Forest Scattering Garden:

Linda had forwarded to everyone an article about a forest scattering garden. We have the woods and would just need to build a path and a place for plaques to mark whose ashes had been scattered there. Laurie said this seemed preferable to a "scattering garden." There would be less upkeep and it is an idea that many people in Nelson might like. We wondered if there are state regulations about scattering ashes in a cemetery wooded area. Elaine will check on this. We talked about how a deed would need to be specialized to read "the right to scatter."

Discussion of Who Can Be Buried in Nelson Cemeteries:

After discussion, the consensus was that it could be limited to residents and former residents, long time summer residents or others with a long-standing link to Nelson. We also thought that we could allow anyone's ashes to be scattered, as there is no limit on that, but purchase of plots would be limited to the aforementioned groups. Linda will draft some language for further consideration.

Cemetery Trees - Risk and Responsibility:

Linda shared her notes from a presentation at the New England Cemetery Conference by Doak Marasco of the Davey Tree Expert Company. In brief – trees are an asset and trees can be a liability. There are 38,000 auto deaths a year, while 100 people are killed by falling trees.

It varies state by state, but legally the major responsibilities and risks are:

- Duty of Care
- Standard of Care
- Negligence
- Act of God

One question is: Does the tree have a history of past failure, i.e., have branches been falling?

The following actions are recommended:

- Assessment by a Certified Arborist - periodically, every 3 to 5 years
- Maintenance Plan – a prioritized list of trees to be dealt with
- Documentation – document everything
- Budget – include in your annual budget
- Monitoring/Inspection – self inspect trees annually
- Policies – outlining the above

Assess:

- Likelihood of Failure
- Likelihood of Striking a Target
- Consequence of Failure

Oak trees tend to stand a long time, even dead.

Dead ash trees are very expensive to remove as you can't put climbers in them. Mr. Marasco recommended removing ash trees at the first signs of disease.

Obvious signs of tree distress include leaning and ground heaving. Obvious defects include splitting, bark coming off, and dead branches. Less obvious signs are fungus, dieback and emerald ash borer damage.

AI will contact the New Hampshire Extension Office to see if they will send out an arborist or if they can recommend one. We will try to get this done this summer.

Other Items:

Elaine talked to Michael Shaver about getting his bills in by December 1. Linda suggested including that in the next contract.

Elaine said that plots in St. Denis Cemetery in Harrisville are \$600.

Elaine reminded us that after we get the new cemetery under way, we need to focus on a new record keeping system. We need a data base. We are meeting the letter of the law but our system needs an upgrade, albeit not a \$5,000 one.

Next Meeting:

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, March 15, 7:00 PM in the Lower Level of the Library. The Board voted to change the time to accommodate Al's new work schedule.

Having no further business, Elaine adjourned the meeting at 5:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Cates for the Nelson Cemetery Board