

Minutes of Meeting Nelson Cemetery Board Monday, July 15, 2024, 3:00 PM

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

Elaine called the meeting to order at 3:06 PM.

Next Meeting

Monday, August 19, 3:00 PM, in the lower level of the Library. Linda will be away.

Review of Minutes

Minutes of the June meeting were approved. The minutes were signed by the Board members, and Laurie will deliver them to Karen. Elaine will email Edie a copy of the minutes.

Task Reports by Members

Elaine:

- Emailed June minutes to Edie.
- Consulted Edie about the need for a separate warrant article for headstone repair. We do not require a separate warrant article.
- Asked John Bunce if he would be willing to take down the old maple tree in the Munsonville Cemetery in exchange for the wood. He does not need the wood.
- Followed-up on the Munsonville Cemetery issue. See update below.
- Prepared and circulated agenda prior to July meeting.

Harry:

- With Elaine, marked the location for the Iselin cornerstones.

Linda:

- Did the June minutes.
- Requested a one-month extension on Grever and Ward proposal. See discussion below.
- Continued to follow-up regarding Nan Le Sourd green burial. See discussion below.

Al:

- Contacted arborist. See full report below.
- Contacted Duane Schillemat about a ground water source for the new cemetery, but did not get a response.

Laurie:

- Deliver signed June minutes to Karen.
- Followed-up with Edie regarding what is necessary to execute the Grever and Ward proposal, including sorting out the insurance requirement.
- Posted official notice of July meeting.
- Reported that there were no Cemetery expenses this month.

Everyone:

- Harry, Linda, Al and Laurie walked the new cemetery on Monday, June 24, at 2:00 PM, and considered design options. Linda used that input to draft a list of specifications to go with the Grever and Ward contract. See discussion below.

Update on Munsonville Cemetery Issue

Elaine reported that Gary Kinyon is ready to set up a new Munsonville Cemetery Association consisting of Elaine, Harry, Al and Laurie. Once set up, that group will meet, transfer ownership of the cemetery and trust funds to the Town of Nelson, and then disband. At the moment, it is in Gary Kinyon's ballpark.

Le Sourd Green Burial

Elaine has done a lot of research trying to establish whether or not there is space for a green burial as requested by Nan Le Sourd. There are three Le Sourd plots. The top one (running parallel to and closest to the stone wall - Plot C - belongs to Nan Le Sourd and has the family headstone on it. The one directly in front of that one (Plot A) belongs to the mother and her cremains are there. The third plot, in front of Plot A (Plot B) belongs to Harriet Wise, Nan Le Sourd's sister. Unless the headstone is removed, there is no space on Nan's plot for a green burial, but there is space on Harriet's plot for a green burial. Perhaps Harriet and Nan can exchange plots. There may still be rocks and tree roots to deal with.

We agreed that a green burial may be done as long as there is a concrete crypt over the body.

Cemetery 3 Design

We reviewed and revised the specific written design requests to go with the Grever and Ward contract which Linda drafted following the walk around the new Cemetery by the Board on June 24. Revision incorporated here:

Nelson, New Hampshire, Cemetery Board

Specific written design requests and/or elements provided to Grever & Ward prior to planning

July 15, 2024

We plan to develop only about half the available space now and leave the second half to be developed by a future generation. The design should cover our entire field area but should focus on the north end of the property, through the gate and to the left.

The design should include a scattering garden, perhaps directly in front of the gate, maybe 50 feet after you walk or drive in. It would serve as an attractive entrance to the cemetery and would include plantings and benches. We thought it should be perhaps 30 by 30 feet, not necessarily square, but perhaps that is too large. We expect the scattering garden to have paths and to be planted primarily with native shrubs and perhaps a few small flowering trees of the type that will remain small. Accommodation should be made for granite cobblestones engraved with the details of those whose ashes are scattered in the garden, or perhaps you can recommend another way to commemorate the details of those whose ashes have been scattered.

We will not plant any large trees in the cemetery.

The design should include space for green burials. We thought that might be a row of 5 by 10 plots on the outside edge along the tree line. This space would not be mowed during the season but would be mowed once a year to keep bushes and trees from growing up. The thought is that this partially wild area could provide a good visual lead in to the undeveloped forested area abutting the cemetery.

The design should include 5 by 10 feet plots which can be used for full burials, including green burials, or up to four cremation interments.

The design should also include 5 by 5 feet plots for up to two cremations interments.

Perhaps 80 percent of the plots should be 5 by 10 feet since those plots can be used in several ways, and 20 percent should be 5 by 5 feet cremation plots.

We want single plots; we do not want any "family" groups of plots. If anyone wants a family grouping, they can buy a number of plots together. We do not allow fences to cordon off a family group of plots.

The design should include a road system that allows access to grave sites. We wonder whether the roads should run along the outside edge to function as a barrier to encroachment by the forest or whether they should run inside to provide access to more graves, or both.

Perhaps space should be left to accommodate a monument to serve future needs.

The existing shed will be removed.

We are looking into the possibility of a surface well somewhere on the property.

Please note the entrance gate on the plans provided by Envirespect Land Services. This will serve as the entrance to the new cemetery.

The design should reflect the nature of the traditional New England village, which Nelson is. Photos are being forwarded which illustrate this.

The cemetery should be easy to maintain on a limited municipal budget.

We are also including photos of the entrance gate to the new cemetery and some photos of our existing cemeteries for reference.

A link to a scattering garden that we particularly like is being forwarded.

We would appreciate advice on the sequence in which the cemetery might be filled, i.e. which areas of plots do we make available first, second, etc.

Linda did a final revision of the document based on the Board's input. We added that we might want roads around the outside and inside. We mentioned that 30 feet by 30 feet might be too large for the scattering garden. We added that the new Cemetery should be easy to maintain on a limited municipal budget. We will include a link to the image of scattering garden that Laurie found online that we particularly like. (After the fact, we added a request for a recommendation regarding the order in which we should make plots available in the new Cemetery.)

Report on Arborist

We reviewed Al's written report on his meeting with the arborist, which is incorporated here.

I met 9 am Friday July 12 with John Sandri of King Pine Tree Service in Harrisville, and his arborist, Jayo Carr. At the outset I told them that the most immediate concern was to keep the trees from damaging our old and fragile gravestones. We walked the perimeters and interior of Cemeteries 1 and 2, and along the wall across the road (Cemetery 3).

John's main recommendation was that we apply high-calcium lime to the whole grounds of Cemeteries 1 and 2. Not dolomite lime, which is high in magnesium rather than calcium, and would be less helpful. This would improve the health of the maples and decrease the likelihood of those maples dropping branches—also would help the health of lawn and other plant growth. Probably around one pallet applied annually for the whole area. He will come up with estimates for cost, depending on whether he applies it or we buy and apply it ourselves.

I noted as I walked both cemeteries the previous day – Thursday - that every mature tree within the maintained part of Cemetery 1 and along the wall between Cemeteries 1 and 2 is a sugar maple. Along the stone wall by Lead Mine Road are other sugar maples and one young elm, but all other mature trees along that wall are sugar maples.

We discussed how to help the basswoods on the back left corner, as they are desirable trees. John discovered a very large mature basswood that I had not noticed before, in the woods below the Melville plot. There might have been two of them. Basswood could be a desirable tree for the new cemetery. Jayo (who got his arborist training in Germany) said that Tilia (which includes the American basswood and the European linden) respond well to pollarding – which is a pruning technique used a lot more in Europe. It would keep those trees at a desirable height and be visually appealing.

A few trees might best be removed – at least one sugar maple along the roadside wall by Cemetery 3; a few trees in the back of Cemetery 1, and culling a few trees along the south side at the back of Cemetery 2. Some trees would benefit from judicious pruning that would make them less likely to fall or drop limbs on gravestones.

I noticed the other day that one of the large pines along the north side of Cemetery 2 had been struck by lightning fairly recently. They could take that one down — some of the other pines might best be taken down, or could be pruned some in a way that would make them less likely to drop large branches (I mentioned that there were some large pine branches that fell earlier this year). Some of them appear to be on or over the property line with Coughlin. I got the impression that these pines might be the only trees that would need a ladder truck to work on.

I asked about the hemlocks that make a hedge on the north property line at the front of Cemetery 2. I wondered if they should be pruned to keep it as a hedge. John said that could be done, and might be a good idea. It's something they could do. I asked what the future for sugar maples might be with our warming climate. Jayo suggested we consider planting black maples, which are a more southern version of the sugar maple.

When John noticed the condition of the Melville crypt in the back, he mentioned that he has a stonemason on staff, in case we wanted someone to do some repair on that. I didn't think to ask him about the tilting stone gatepost at the entrance of Cemetery 2. (I noticed that John has three companies, including Sandri Stone. <https://www.sandricompanies.com/>)

John will make some estimates for us, with options depending on what we might do ourselves or which things are higher priorities. I initially asked if he could get us something by Monday's meeting, but then changed my mind after we'd talked about that —he'll get us the estimates before our August meeting.

Al highlighted several points. Almost every tree is a sugar maple. The arborist pointed out that the leaves are not very green which means the trees are not as healthy as they

could be. A high lime calcium should be applied. Improved tree health would mean less tree removal.

A complicating factor is that some of the trees, as well as the hemlock hedge, are on Coughlin property.

The arborist will come back to us with recommendations and estimates in time for our August meeting.

Upcoming Burials

Elaine reported that Gwyneth Tolman's mother, Rose Lape, will be interred in the plot with her parents on Sunday afternoon, August 11. Elaine will advise Michael Shawver to dig the hole that Saturday. Elaine will attend the service. If she is unable to do so, Harry and Laurie volunteered to attend.

Elaine also reported that Vangie McCormick sold two of her plots to her son. Elaine is working with the family to transfer ownership of the plots.

Other Business

Elaine said that she is going to spray the Civil War monument in front of the church with D2 on Wednesday, then follow up next week when it is cooler.

Elaine reported that Pamela White asked if we could clean her mother's stone. Elaine explained that this wasn't really our responsibility and suggested Pamela get some D2 to take care of it. Pamela was happy to do that.

Laurie reported that due to an illness, the Harris family will be visiting the area later in the year.

Al mentioned in his arborist report that they noticed the condition of the Melville tomb and offered a stone mason that could repair it. We will need to locate Melville family members whose responsibility that is.

Elaine reported that work was done on the big Revolutionary War Monument in the 1990's. Jack and Bess Bradshaw paid to have it done. The repair has not aged well. There is lime leaching out - it looks like white paint dripping.

Having no further business, Elaine adjourned the meeting at 4:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Cates for the Nelson Cemetery Board

AUGUST 2024 TO-DO LIST

Elaine:

- Email June minutes to Edie.
- Ask Jeffrey Walter if he would be interested in the wood from old maple tree in the Munsonville Cemetery.
- Spray the monument in front of the church with D2.
- Represent the Cemetery Board at Rose Lape interment.
- Prepare and circulate agenda prior to August meeting.

Harry:

- Attend burial of Rose Lape if Elaine is unable to do so.

Linda:

- Do July minutes.
- Revise Grever and Ward specific requests document and pass it to Laurie.
- Send signed contract, specifications, photos and link to Grever and Ward.
- Follow-up regarding Nan LaSourd green burial.

Al:

- Get estimates from arborist.
- Follow-up with Duane Schillemat about a ground water source for the new cemetery.

Laurie:

- Deliver signed June minutes to Karen.
- Coordinate with Edie regarding execution of the Grever and Ward proposal.
- Post official notice of August meeting.
- Get the monthly report of Cemetery expenses from Edie for the August meeting.
- Attend burial of Rose Lape if Elaine is unable to do so.