

Minutes of Meeting Nelson Cemetery Board Tuesday, November 16, 2021, 4:00 PM

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

Guest Present: Leslie Downing, Chair of the Harrisville Cemetery Board

Elaine called the meeting to order just after 4:00 PM in the lower level of the library. She thanked Linda for chairing the October meeting in her absence, and Laurie for taking the meeting minutes.

Review/Approve Minutes of the Last Meeting:

Minutes of the October meeting were reviewed and approved as presented. The minutes were drafted by Laurie with additions by Linda. The approved minutes were signed by those present at last month's meeting.

The September minutes which were approved at the October meeting have not been signed and delivered to Edie. Linda will email a copy to Edie now and will bring a copy to the December meeting to be signed and delivered to Edie then.

Leslie Downing – Information from the Harrisville Cemetery Board:

Elaine welcomed Leslie to our meeting and thanked her for coming.

Leslie told us that Harrisville has three cemeteries, the Island Cemetery in the center of town, the Riverside Cemetery near Chesham Depot and the Willard Hill Cemetery on Meadow Road. They do not have responsibility for St. Denis Catholic Cemetery.

They are adding a scattering garden in the Island Cemetery. It was in this year's budget, but the work has not been done yet. The original design, which they did themselves, was 10 by 10 feet, but is being enlarged to 15 by 15 feet. There will be stones around it and benches at the top.

Leslie said that it is recommended to have sand in the scattering garden and that ashes have to be filtered before they are scattered. The scattering has to be done low, at the base of the plantings. Their scattering garden is in a sunny spot, they will use perennials that don't spread. There will have to be a Trustee nearby while ashes are scattered.

There will be some kind of sign, yet to be drafted, something like "Here are Your Departed Friends." There will be a stone walk to and perhaps around the scattering garden. Instead of markers or monuments, people can engrave their loved one's name and details on a stone in the stone walk. They will start with about 40 stones, but could add more, if needed. There is no limit on the number of cremains that could be scattered in the scattering garden.

In response to questions, Leslie said they do not have a sexton in Harrisville. Residents and blood relatives can be buried in the Harrisville cemeteries.

The price of a full burial plot is \$350, which includes the corner pins and maintenance. A full burial costs \$400. A cremation costs \$80. The price for scattering has not yet been set. For a green burial the plot costs \$200 and the cost to dig the hole is \$200.

The Willard Hill Cemetery has five green burial plots, two of which have been sold, but not yet used. They have developed rules for green burials. The body has to be buried within two to four days and must be wrapped in linen or cotton. The hole must be four feet deep and can be dug by the family. There has to be sand at the bottom of the hole and extra soil on top. There must be a death certificate. There can be no monuments for a green burial, so the area can just be

mowed. The green burial area is at the bottom of Willard Hill where it is a little wetter. Eventually a scattering garden may also be added at that cemetery.

Leslie said that Catherine Boyd, an undertaker at Foley Funeral Home in Keene, is a good person to talk to about these things. Elaine knows her and will be in touch.

Leslie left us a packet of information on green burials and scattering gardens.

We thanked Leslie for her time and the excellent information.

Status of Munsonville Cemetery:

Harry passed around a copy of a deed for the Munsonville Cemetery dated March 11, 1828. He felt the deed was transferred to Nelson at that time. He got the deed with the help of Rick Church. Elaine offered to try to read Harry's copy of the faded document so that the board could have a better sense of its contents.

Linda updated the group on her talks with Edie, Ron Ferguson, the Secretary of State's office and the Attorney General's office. The Attorney General's office said that they cannot give advice and that the issue should be reviewed by the town's attorney. After a discussion of the amount of time that Edie has spent on this issue, plus the amount of time that we are spending on it and in light of the suggestion from the Attorney General's office, Linda made the following motion, which was seconded by Harry and approved unanimously:

That the Cemetery Board ask the Select Board to have the Town Attorney review the situation and outline the steps necessary to complete the transfer of the Munsonville Cemetery and trust funds to the Town of Nelson.

We also felt that a title search should be done to establish who holds the current title to the property.

It was decided that we would like to meet with the Selectmen to discuss the Munsonville Cemetery. Linda will ask Edie to put us on the agenda for Wednesday, December 1.

Sexton Discussion:

We discussed at the last meeting that it might be a good idea to add the routine work that we need to have done at the cemeteries to the job that the town is currently recruiting for. We will discuss this with the Selectment when we meet with them.

Warrant Article:

Elaine reported that there will be a warrant article accepting the Henry Fuller piece of land that was donated for the new cemetery.

New Cemetery - Test Pits and Other:

Elaine is waiting to hear back from Mike Tarr about digging the test pits in the new cemetery.

Bill Dunn has done some metal detection and found metal underground in the area. There may be old fencing.

Linda commented on how great it is to have the property line marked in the new cemetery. Thank you, Harry and Al.

Gravestone Repair:

Elaine was happy to report that Peterborough Marble and Granite repaired 29 stones for a total of \$4,885.00. We were concerned that they might not get the work done this year and were considering switching to another company.

Update on Tree Trimming:

Al and Laurie reported that they had an appointment with John Driscoll of Phil's Tree Service last Sunday at 2:00, but the guy never showed up and didn't return Al's phone call. Al has

identified trees that are a threat to grave stones. He was wondering what people's reaction would be to some of those trees coming down and being replaced with smaller trees, like crabapples.

Al was wondering what an arborist is and what they might do for us. He will look into it.

While they were there, Al and Laurie found the back property line, a stone wall about 260 feet back. That area is too steep for graves. There used to be a view of Center Pond from the cemetery and Al and Laurie were wondering whether restoring a bit of that view might be nice.

Mausoleum Update:

Elaine reported that she had tested the top of the mausoleum in numerous places with a metal pole and that it seems to be granite and therefore not at risk of collapse. Linda will not need to do any more to identify the descendants related to the mausoleum.

Recap of November Work Day:

All agreed that this was another successful work day. We cleared around the monument and the mausoleum, among other things.

Information from Other Towns:

Harry will continue working on this.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be Tuesday, December 14 at 3:00 in the lower level of the library. Laurie will arrange the posting of the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Cates