

Minutes of Meeting Nelson Cemetery Board Tuesday, July 27, 2021, 4:00 PM

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

Elaine called the meeting to order just after 4:07 PM at the new picnic table behind Town Hall.

Review/Approve Minutes of the Last Meeting

Minutes of the June 2021 meeting with Consultant, Tom Daly, were reviewed and approved as written and signed by the members present. The minutes were drafted by Linda and finalized by Elaine.

Welcome Laurie Smith to the Board

Elaine welcomed Laurie Smith to the Board. Laurie was elected as a write-in candidate with 70 votes. Elaine also noted that Al and Linda had been reelected and thanked them for agreeing to remain on the Board.

Bill Dunn

Bill Dunn arrived and asked to be added to the agenda. He said that he had heard about the plans for the new cemetery and was seeking our permission to metal detect that area before any work is done on it. He said that anything that he finds will be turned over to the Town. He didn't want to miss this opportunity to find any artifacts in that area that may be part of Town history. We told Bill that we are planning to have a couple of test pits dug and he said he would be interested in sifting through that soil when the pits are dug. Permission was enthusiastically granted and we look forward to seeing what he finds.

Discussion of Letter from Consultant, Tom Daly of Cemetery Helpful Solutions

Elaine reported that Mr. Daly charged \$395.00 for his visit, plus travel and tolls which came to \$236.80 for a total cost of \$631.80. We all agreed that his visit was well worth the cost.

We reviewed Mr. Daly's letter including his observations in the areas of Office/Administration and Cemetery Grounds and Maintenance. He asked us to provide the "scope of services" that we want so that he can make a proposal. He said that a very rough estimate of cost may be between five and six thousand dollars. Elaine was generally in favor of hiring Mr. Daly and felt his experience and expertise had a lot to offer us. Linda was generally opposed to hiring him and wondered about his design expertise, which is our immediate concern. However, we all agreed that if we could get the new cemetery designed and update our administrative procedures for five or six thousand dollars, it would be a bargain. Elaine mentioned that she received an email from Gary also recommending that we need to determine a "scope of services." Gary is the new chair of the Selectboard.

After much discussion we decided to defer judgment on this issue for a month. Linda suggested that we focus on the design of the new cemetery first and then follow-up on the administrative issues. Elaine will ask Mr. Daly if we can visit a cemetery that he designed and also what the cost would be if we removed the administrative piece for now.

Linda suggested that we review the three liabilities that Mr. Daly pointed out to us during the walk around Cemeteries 1 and 2.

The mausoleum – Elaine and Al will speak with Mike Tarr about what can be done about this, perhaps filling it in. It has already been sealed.

The bench – We will remove the seat for now and have Peterborough Granite and Marble fix this in the fall when they are in the cemetery doing repair work. (Later Al reported that the seat is heavy and he will need help to remove it and there might be pins holding it in place.)

The dead trees – Two dead trees in the middle of the cemetery have been removed. One dead limb on a large sugar maple near the mausoleum still needs to be removed. Elaine will speak to Mike Tarr about having a tree service do it. Al will be in touch with Mike Tarr to point out which tree it is. Al is also worried about another tree across the street. If it is cost effective, we will have that one taken down at the same time.

Elaine will ask Mike Tarr about digging the test pits in the new cemetery. She can speak to Michael Shawver as a backup. The field has been mowed.

One of the other issues that Mr. Daly raised was that 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. Elaine will ask the Selectmen to correct that.

Cemetery Burials

Elaine reported that two cremated remains were interred during the last month. She also reported that Michael Shawver now knows not to leave cremains open for 24 hours following interment.

Cemetery Maintenance Update

Elaine reported that there has been a semi cave-in on the road at Munsonville Cemetery due to all the rain. She said that one more major rain event and it will go. There is a hole 4 feet wide. We need to have it repaired sooner rather than later. Harry suggested that we plant grass on the repaired road. Elaine will speak to Mike Tarr about it. Harry will put up police tape over the road. There will be no driving through the Cemetery, but walking is still okay.

The road in the Cemetery 2 also has a big drop in it that Elaine will speak to Mike Tarr about. (Update - Mike Tarr had already taken care of it.)

The drainage project that we wanted to do in Cemetery 2 was not done last year. Phil Hamilton, who was going to do it, has died. Laurie said that his son, Jeremy, is also very good. Elaine said that she is not comfortable asking Marty to do anything because he is so busy now. The matter was left unresolved.

Munsonville Cemetery and Trust Fund Update

Harry has flagged the 14 stones in the Munsonville Cemetery that are in need of repair. He received a very reasonable estimate of about \$2,000 from Keene Monument to have them repaired.

Unfortunately, we are not able to have that work done at this time because, as Elaine explained to us, the Munsonville Cemetery was never officially turned over to the Town. The decision was made in 2004 and accepted by the Selectboard, but was never brought to the Town for a vote. Therefore, the Munsonville Cemetery still technically belongs to an association that no longer exists. Everyone involved in that association has died. Vangie McCormick was the intermediary between the Munsonville Cemetery Association and the Town. We did not find the original deed dated about 1838. We did find the 1996 deed for the piece of land behind the Munsonville Cemetery that also belongs to the Munsonville Cemetery Association.

Elaine says that Edie knows about this problem and will include it as a Warrant Article for the next Town Meeting. Elaine and Edie have been working on this. There are some minutes from the Munsonville Cemetery Association in the Nelson Archives.

Because of the above issue, the funds in the Munsonville Cemetery Trust Fund are now in limbo and we are unable to use them. We are also unable to spend our budget on the Munsonville Cemetery as it is not Town property, and our 2021 Warrant Article requesting funds for headstone repairs specified Nelson cemeteries.

Cemetery Administration Projects

In thinking about the new cemetery, we wondered about our prices for burials and Harry suggested that we ask nearby towns what they charge for burials. Harry will contact Stoddard, Sullivan and Hancock. He will inquire about prices as well as whether they have used anyone for cemetery design. Linda will speak to Leslie Downing, chair of the Harrisville Cemetery Board, about the same issues. We will also invite Leslie to come and talk to us about green burials and the Harrisville Cemeteries in general at some point in the future.

Linda will look at the New Hampshire cemetery regulations and print out the sections relevant to us. Elaine said that would be Sections 289.1 through 290.

Next Meeting

Elaine adjourned the meeting after 5:30. The next meeting will be Tuesday, August 24, at 4:00 PM in the Library Basement.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Cates