

# **PEMBROKE CEMETERY COMMISSION MEETING**

**April 13, 2017**

## **Minutes**

Present: James Garvin, Ellen Paulsen, V. J. Ranfos, Fleda Young. Town administrator David Jodoin joined the meeting briefly at 7:30 p.m.

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Pembroke Town Hall.
2. On a motion by Fleda Young, seconded by Ellen Paulsen, the minutes of the meeting of November 17, 2016, were unanimously approved.
3. The Commission discussed the possibility of recruiting new members and will develop a list of suggested candidates.
4. The Commission will elect officers when we have as many members present as possible.
5. V. J. Ranfos reported that the regular 2017 cemetery budget will be essentially unchanged from that of 2016.
6. V. J. Ranfos reported that the Commission's letter of November 22, 2016, to Joann Johnson regarding the removal of tributes from the Ryan Mihill lot in Evergreen Cemetery, was returned to the town, "addressee unknown."
7. Following the year-end removal of the white pine and Norway spruce trees from the front wall of Pembroke Street Cemetery, the remaining unexpended balances of three 2016 cemetery project accounts totaled about \$15,000. To encumber this money, town administrator David Jodoin authorized V. J. Ranfos to seek bids for loaming and seeding Evergreen Cemetery following the removal of trees and the grinding of stumps. Among the two or three bids that were received, that of Advanced Excavating of Allentown was approximately \$15,010, so the funds were encumbered. The work in Evergreen Cemetery should begin soon.
8. Article 5 of the 2017 Town Meeting appropriated \$21,000 for repairs and survey at Evergreen Cemetery and Old North Pembroke Cemetery. The Commission noted that necessary work in other cemeteries, some of it unanticipated, could be excluded by the specific wording of this warrant article. Town Administrator David Jodoin joined the meeting and explained that Warrant Article 10 of the 2017 Town Meeting authorized "the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend [funds] from the Cemetery Improvement Capital Reserve Fund established in 1960." The appropriation under Warrant Article 5 must be applied toward necessary projects in Evergreen Cemetery and Old North Pembroke Cemetery, but if a balance remains after those authorized projects are completed, the Commission may ask the Board of Selectmen for permission to apply the unexpended balance to other cemetery needs.

9. Since the loaming and seeding of Evergreen Cemetery appears to be funded largely through the encumbered funds described in Item 7, above, a portion of the funds appropriated by Article 5 of the 2017 Town Meeting can be expended on further surveying and landscaping at Evergreen Cemetery. Jim Garvin noted that an early blueprinted plan of Evergreen Cemetery is stored at the Public Works office, and suggested that we retrieve and examine the plan as a means of locating the northeastern corner marker of the cemetery. The plan may also indicate whether grave lots were formerly laid out in the northern portion of the cemetery that was cleared of trees in 2016.

The Commission discussed the possibility of hiring a land surveyor, or perhaps a landscaping firm that specializes in cemetery design, to consult on lot layout in the northern area of Evergreen Cemetery, the planting of low-growing shrubs or trees to compensate for the removal of the pine trees, and perhaps the design and placement of a columbarium in the cemetery. All Commission members are urged to suggest names of appropriate firms.

10. Among our unanticipated needs for 2017 is the breakage of four gravestones (one of them broken into three pieces) by the falling of a large dead elm tree at the rear wall of Pembroke Street Cemetery in a March windstorm.
11. V. J. Ranfos reported that the Public Works office had received a telephone call inquiring about the permissibility of placing an “eternal light” or vigil light at a grave in an unnamed cemetery where a cremation burial will occur. The Commission noted that Chapter 155 (Cemeteries) the Pembroke Town Code does not mention such lights. The Commission may want to address this subject as we suggest revisions to Chapter 155. Secretary James Garvin will attempt to contact the caller and learn more. He noted that he had seen such lights in Buck Street Cemetery.
12. A stated task for 2017 is GIS data entry for Pembroke Hill Cemetery. This will serve as a pilot project for eventual use in all town cemeteries. The data would include burial plots, names, dates of birth and death, and headstone photography. The firm of Wright-Pierce estimated this pilot project at a total cost of \$1,800. If we need to add a supplementary GIS platform to the town website for full public access to this information, we would need an additional \$2,500. V. J. Ranfos reported that town administrator David Jodoin has recommended creating such a supplementary platform for cemetery data to avoid overburdening the existing GIS data on the town’s website. The Commission should look into contractors who perform such work in addition to Wright-Pierce.
13. The next regular meeting of the Commission will be held on Thursday, May 11, 2017, at 7:00 p.m. at the Pembroke Town Hall.
14. On a motion by Fleda Young, seconded by Ellen Paulsen, the meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
James L. Garvin, Secretary