

PEMBROKE CEMETERY COMMISSION MEETING

August 13, 2020

Minutes

Present: Dan Chase, James Garvin, Ellen Paulsen (chair), Fleda Young, V. J. Ranfos.

1. Chair Ellen Paulsen called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Pembroke Public Works office.
2. On a motion by Dan Chase, seconded by Fleda Young, the minutes of the meeting of July 9, 2020, were unanimously approved.
3. V. J. Ranfos summarized the status of a request by Kristie Kulik of Florida to transfer the burial permit that had been purchased by her mother, Shirley May Kulik, to Shirley May Kulik's boyfriend, Joel Elber of Concord. Shirley May Kulik died on June 2, 2020, and was interred in a lot in Evergreen Cemetery that had previously been purchased for her late son, leaving the burial permit for the second lot available for transfer. Although Kristie Kulik had requested by notarized letter that "ownership of the plot that she [Shirley May Kulik] had originally purchased" be transferred to Mr. Elber, the Commission noted that the current Pembroke Town Code does not provide for ownership of lots in the public cemeteries, but rather conveys the right to use a lot for burial.

After discussion, the Commission agreed that it would authorize the Public Works Department to transfer the burial permit for the lot, identified on the current plan of Evergreen Cemetery as Lot 4-B, to Joel Elber, contingent upon Mr. Elber's expressing his willingness to accept the burial permit for the lot. Commission members authorized secretary James Garvin to contact Mr. Elber, explain the circumstances to him, and ask for his acquiescence in receiving the burial permit for Lot 4-B.

4. The Commission discussed proposals for replacement of the gates at the three driveway entrances to Evergreen Cemetery. The Commission observed that the old, damaged gates were recently removed when the roadways in Evergreen Cemetery were repaved and that the entrances are now in attractive condition. If desired, security against unauthorized wintertime access to the cemetery could be provided by chains at the entrances rather than by hinged gates.

On that subject, V. J. Ranfos reported that the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Committee met on the evening of August 12th to discuss the Cemetery Commission's current CIP request, which includes \$4,800 to replace the gates at Evergreen Cemetery. CIP Committee members had observed that RSA 289, the state statute governing cemeteries, was amended some years ago to remove the former requirement that public cemeteries be provided with perimeter walls and gates.

After further discussion, the Commission voted to contact the CIP Committee and request that the line item of \$4,800 for new gates at Evergreen Cemetery be removed from the Commission's funding request to the Capital Improvement Program for 2021.

Old business:

5. The Commission received a request from Jennifer Scofield to remove a cedar tree from the Merritt family lot in Pembroke Hill Cemetery, which encroaches on a burial plot in the Scofield lots. In response, the Commission authorized Dan Chase to attempt to identify and contact appropriate members of the Merritt family through Ancestry.com. Dan Chase reported that no response has been received so far. The Commission will continue to work on this issue. Secretary Garvin will contact the Scofields to inform them that we are continuing to try to deal with their request.
6. Jim Garvin reported that he had inspected the Old French Cemetery off Borough Road to determine whether Mr. Gary Foster had carried out any cleanup of the cemetery. No work has been done on the cemetery thus far.
7. At their meeting of June 15, 2020, the Board of Selectmen approved the recommended new rates for burials that were reported in the Cemetery Commission minutes of May 20, 2020. These fees have been posted in Chapter 160 ("Fees") of the Town Code under §160-5, "Cemetery fees," and do not need to be added to Chapter 155, "Cemeteries."
8. As noted above under "4.," the roads in Evergreen Cemetery have been re-paved by GMI Asphalt LLC of Belmont, N. H. with a bid of \$16,888.00. The Commission is pleased with the result and has decided to rescind its request to the Capital Improvement Program for funding for new gates at the three driveways.

The Commission discussed the possibility of replacing a pavilion or gazebo that may once have stood near the summit of the hill in Evergreen Cemetery. Dan Chase suggested that a new pavilion might make an ideal Eagle Scout project.

9. The Commission reviewed Pembroke Hill Cemetery. The tipped monument near the front still requires straightening. Chair Ellen Paulsen inquired whether Commission members could assist V. J. Ranfos in measuring and marking new ranges of grave sites at the rear of the cemetery. V. J. and the Commission will suggest a date in September.

The asphalt-paved driveway of Pembroke Hill Cemetery is being broken up by surface roots of white pine trees growing on adjacent property.

10. Ellen Paulsen passed around a note of thanks from Donna Lewis of Concord, who expressed her appreciation for the repair of formerly damaged monuments that mark the graves of Josiah and Ruth Bailey, Charlotte Bailey, and Mary Bailey and her husband, Samuel Gould. A transcription of Ms. Lewis' note is attached to these minutes.
11. The next meeting of the Pembroke Cemetery Commission will be at the call of the chair.

12. On a motion by Jim Garvin, seconded by Fleda Young, the meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James L. Garvin, Secretary

TRANSCRIPTION OF A NOTE, DATED AUGUST 10, 2020, TO VICTOR J. RANFOS III AND THE PEMBROKE CEMETERY COMMISSION

Dear V. J. Ranfos and team,

Last summer I was connected to V. J. Ranfos about a gravestone that needed repair at the Pembroke Street Cemetery, and he kindly said it was on the list. I recently stopped in to the cemetery, and am so impressed with the beautiful work that was done! I am a RN who is used to being able to keep my emotions in check, but seeing these white gravestones polished and straight for these people who lived in the 1700-1800's made me surprisingly emotional.

My Mom's family grew up in the Pembroke area, but she and her siblings lost both parents at a young age, and I know they were unaware of this gravesite. Only a few years ago did the line from the arrival of the first settler in 1635 become important to us in finding Josiah.

My Mom's family were good, strong, honest and hard working people, and I'm sure these people at Pembroke Street Cemetery had these good traits as well.

Please extend a big thank you to your team. Your follow through on a broken gravestone is to be commended, and reflects in a very positive way for the town of Pembroke, N. H.

Thank you for all the exceptional work for Josiah Bailey, wife Ruth, daughter Charlotte, Mary Bailey and husband, Samuel Gould.

With appreciation and respect for all you do,

Donna Lewis

(daughter of Mary Bailey Lewis and niece of Ruth Bailey McRay, C. Benjamin Bailey & Richard Bailey)