

PEMBROKE CEMETERY COMMISSION MEETING

September 9, 2021

Minutes

Present: Daniel Chase, James Garvin, Ellen Paulsen (chair), Zachary Sawyer, Fleda Young, Adam Mendoza.

1. Chair Ellen Paulsen called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. at the Pembroke Public Works garage.
2. On a motion by Daniel Chase, seconded by Zachary Sawyer, the minutes of the meeting of August 12, 2021, were unanimously approved.

New business:

3. Chair Ellen Paulsen reviewed an email message of August 30 from Public Works secretary Chris Addington. Richard MacMillan had contacted Public Works regarding military grave markers for his father, Robert A. MacMillan (1921-2001) and his brother, Gordon R. MacMillan (1947-2018) in Evergreen Cemetery.

It appears that Robert A. MacMillan has a flat military marker, although there is a possibility that as an aviation cadet in the U. S. Army Air Corps, Robert MacMillan was not considered to be a veteran and that his marker is a facsimile of a government-issued veteran's marker.

Richard MacMillan indicated that his brother, Gordon, was a veteran and that a request for a government-issued veteran's marker ordered through Goodwin Funeral Home in Manchester may have been lost due to the bankruptcy of that funeral home.

Dan Chase will inquire further into the matter.

Old business:

4. Chair Ellen Paulsen reported that she had presented the Commission's requests to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Committee on July 29th following our discussions at the Commission meeting of July 8th. Ellen noted two items that the CIP Committee mentioned during her presentation:
 - a. Review Chapter 155 (Cemeteries) of the Town Code and be sure that our practice in removing overgrown plants or woody shrubs complies with this policy. Chapter 155 includes the following section regarding plants that impede the maintenance of a cemetery:

§155-18 Plants and decorations.

"Temporary or permanent plants or decorations which are unsightly or impede the maintenance of the cemetery are not allowed. Authorized decorations may occupy a space of not more than twelve (12) inches in front of the monument and no more than the width of the monument.

Winter decorations (wreaths, etc.) shall be removed before April 1. Placement of permanent decorations (urns, etc.) is subject to the approval of the Superintendent.”

The Commission has always regarded this section as giving the Superintendent of Cemeteries authority to remove overgrown plants.

§155-18 does not specifically deal with trees in or at the borders of cemeteries. The Cemetery Commission’s request to the CIP Committee for capital reserve funding for the removal of maple trees in front of New North Pembroke Cemetery may in fact not be addressed in Chapter 155 (Cemeteries) but should be within the general authority of the Public Works Department. The director of Public Works is designated under Chapter 155 as the Superintendent of Cemeteries.

- b. When the Commission requests funds for the repair of damaged monuments, we need to determine whether any of the damaged stones have Perpetual Care endowments. When a lot is under Perpetual Care, the town may use accumulated Perpetual Care funds for a portion of the costs of repair.

Commission chair Ellen Paulsen asked Zachary Sawyer to check the list of proposed monument repairs in Pembroke Street Cemetery against the list of Perpetual Care Lots that is published in the annual Pembroke Town Report.

Former Commission chair David Richards attempted to compile a definitive list of all recorded Perpetual Care endowments. Fleda Young offered to ask for a copy of Mr. Richards’ list for our future use in determining which damaged monuments may have Perpetual Care funds and thus be eligible for support from the accumulated Cemetery Perpetual Care Trust Funds.

5. Secretary Jim Garvin distributed copies of a letter that he had sent on August 16 to Mr. and Mrs. Gary Foster of 743 Borough Road informing them that the Pembroke Cemetery Commission had determined that it had no authority to use public funds to pay for stump grinding in the private Old French-Dearborn Cemetery, which lies within the Fosters’ property. The letter had enclosed a copy of RSA 289:19-21, which explains how a private cemetery may be converted to a municipal cemetery and thereafter be maintained by a town. The Fosters have not responded to this letter.
6. Secretary Jim Garvin distributed copies of a letter that he had sent on August 16th to Jackie and Stephanie Wylie of 490 Fourth Range Road to inform them that the Public Works Department wishes to cut the lower branches of a row of pine trees that are on Wylie land and that overhang the driveway of Pembroke Hill Cemetery. The letter invited the Wylies to contact Superintendent of Cemeteries V. J. Ranfos if they had questions or concerns about the pruning. Adam Mendoza reported that there had been no known communication from the Wylies to Public Works.
7. Chair Ellen Paulsen reminded the Commission that we currently have six dozen new flags and two metal flag holders in stock. When we remove the flags after Veterans’ Day (November 11th), we will bundle and count the flags from each cemetery and store them in the hearse house at Pembroke Street Cemetery, adding up the total number needed for all the municipal cemeteries. After we have a total count of flags for all cemeteries and know our budget balance, we can decide on the number of flags and flag holders that we need to order for use over the next period of years.

Zachary Sawyer will provide plastic buckets for wintertime storage of the flags that are removed from the cemeteries.

8. Adam Mendoza reported that due to the wet and variable weather Public Works crews had not been able to return to attend to areas where grass had died in some cemeteries.
9. The next regular meeting of the Pembroke Cemetery Commission will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 14, 2021, at the Public Works headquarters at 8 Exchange Street in Suncook Village.
10. There being no other business to be brought before the meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James L. Garvin, Secretary