

# **PEMBROKE CEMETERY COMMISSION MEETING**

**August 10, 2023**

## **Minutes**

Present: Daniel Chase, James Garvin, Adam Mendoza, Ellen Paulsen (chair), V. J. Ranfos, Zachary Sawyer.

1. Chair Ellen Paulsen called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. On a motion by Zachary Sawyer, seconded by Dan Chase, the draft minutes of the meeting of July 13, 2023, were approved.

### **New Business**

3. The Commission discussed the status of the proposal to investigate areas of Buck Street Cemetery and Evergreen Cemetery with ground-penetrating radar. V. J. Ranfos pointed out that the town voted to add \$11,000 to the Cemetery Capital Reserve at the Town Meeting held on March 18, 2023. V. J. believes that this addition included \$2,500 for GPR scanning as requested by the Cemetery Commission in 2022. The Commission needs to verify this. If the town has authorized an expenditure of \$2,500 for GPR scanning, we should work toward contracting to have the work done this year.

### **Old Business**

4. Chair Ellen Paulsen reported that she had attended the CIP Committee review on July 20, 2023 and had presented the request of the Cemetery Commission for \$9,600 in funding to widen the driveway entrances of Evergreen Cemetery. She felt that the proposal was well received.
5. Ellen Paulsen and Zachary Sawyer reported on their walkover of Pembroke Street Cemetery to review damage and other issues identified earlier by Zachary. The inspection verified that the mowing contractor is not being careful to avoid damaging monuments. V. J. Ranfos will discuss this problem with the contractor, but the consensus of the Commission is that we should recommend another contractor when the current mowing contract expires.

The Public Works Department staff will address some of the pruning and trimming issues around some headstones at Pembroke Street Cemetery.

6. Public Works Secretary Chris Addington has researched the status of burial lots adjacent to the grave of Ryan Mihill. Chris learned that Joanne Johnson, Ryan Mihill's mother, has "reserved" but not paid for one lot (45-A) to the left of Ryan's grave and two lots (44-A and 43-B) to the right of the grave.

Some of the artificial flowers on Ryan Mihill's grave extend to the adjoining grave of Melissa Driesse Couture, who may be associated with Ryan Mihill's family. The nearby concrete bench may be located in a reserved walkway between groups of burial plots.

Commission member Dan Chase offered to help to pick up and bag the excess ornaments on and near Ryan Mihill's grave in order to bring the lot into compliance with the Town Code.

7. Jim Garvin reported that the current rates for weekday and weekend/holiday burials are now correctly posted on the town website in Chapter 160-5 ("Fees") of the Town Code.
8. The Commission discussed §155-12 of the Town Code, which currently prohibits burials in the public cemeteries on Sundays and holidays "except in case of emergency." The Commission noted that Dignified Cemetery Services, the town's contractor for burials, offers burials on weekends and holidays for an increased fee. The Commission concluded that we should request that §155-12 be deleted from Chapter 155 of the Town Code to reflect actual practice. Secretary Jim Garvin will send a letter to the Board of Selectmen through Town Administrator David Jodoin proposing this amendment.
9. The suggestion of adding a columbarium at Evergreen Cemetery for cremated remains was mentioned to the Commission at the CIP meeting of July 20, 2023. The Commission has discussed this idea on previous occasions, both with respect to an outdoor columbarium in the wooded area at the back of Evergreen Cemetery, and within the Town Receiving Tomb. We will retain this item in our six-year plan and continue to investigate possible designs.
10. V. J. Ranfos reported that he had seen the solar-powered flagpole light in operation at Pembroke Street Cemetery before dawn and that it worked properly, at least in the summer season with long daylight hours for charging the battery. We will investigate buying two more lights of the same design for the flagpoles at Buck Street and Evergreen Cemeteries.
11. Adam Mendoza mentioned a question that has arisen with respect to the Williamson burial plot in Pembroke Hill Cemetery. Adam and Public Works secretary Chris Addington have researched the burial lot license records and examined adjacent grave lots, but discrepancies in the record remain and will require further research.
12. The next meeting of the Pembroke Cemetery Commission will be at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 14, 2023, at the Public Works headquarters on Exchange Street in Suncook Village.
13. On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
James L. Garvin, Secretary