

PEMBROKE CEMETERY COMMISSION MEETING

May 11, 2023

Minutes

Present: Dan Chase, James Garvin, Adam Mendoza, Ellen Paulsen (chair), V. J. Ranfos.
Ayn Whytemare of the Pembroke Historical Society joined the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

1. Chair Ellen Paulsen called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.
2. On a motion by Dan Chase, the minutes of the meeting of April 6, 2023, were approved as submitted.

New Business:

3. The Commission discussed the revised schedule of burial fees that was delivered to the town by Dignified Cemetery Services on March 1, 2023. This new fee schedule charges the town at rates that exceed the fees presently charged by the town to the public for burials. The Commission agreed to present a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen with suggested town fees that equal or slightly exceed those being charged to the town by Dignified Cemetery Services. Secretary James Garvin will write a letter to the Board of Selectmen explaining our recommendations.
4. The Commission discussed potential requests to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Committee for 2023. We currently have capital reserve funds sufficient to pay the \$9,225 costs of re-paving the driveway and doing culvert repairs at Pembroke Hill Cemetery, but we lack a sufficient balance to contract for the scanning of an area of Buck Street Cemetery by Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR) at the formerly quoted price of \$2,500. Secretary Jim Garvin will seek an updated quote for GPR scanning of this area for our possible presentation to the CIP Committee in 2023.

The Commission agreed that the rebuilding of the split granite retaining walls of the three driveway gates to Evergreen Cemetery should have high priority as a CIP request for 2023. Public Works Director V. J. Ranfos suggested that we seek bids on relaying these retaining walls and widening the driveways somewhat. For the present at least, he suggested that we not plan to install swinging gates at the three driveways but instead post signs that will indicate that the cemetery is closed during the winter months.

The Commission agreed to seek prices for signs for each of the three gateways that will indicate that the driveways and roads of the cemetery are closed to motor vehicles from dusk until dawn, during the frost period, and after heavy rains as stated in §155-70 of the Pembroke Town Code. V. J. Ranfos will seek bids on re-laying the granite retaining walls at the three driveways.

Old business:

5. Veterans' flags are to be placed in the public cemeteries before Memorial Day, May 29, 2023.

6. Correspondence between Secretary Jim Garvin and scout leader Catrina Rantala has confirmed Wednesday, May 24, 2023 as the preferred date for installation of veterans' flags in Evergreen and Pembroke Hill cemeteries. The Cub Scouts will begin to place flags at 6:00 p.m., and the Troop will begin at 6:30 p.m. Secretary Jim Garvin will confirm this date and these times with Scout leaders Catrina Rantala and Marc Cozad.
7. The Commission postponed further discussion on the suggestion that a "Gazebo-in-a-Box" might be purchased for placement in Evergreen Cemetery at the crest of the hill above the town receiving tomb and aligned with Pavilion Avenue. It was again mentioned that purchase and placement of a gazebo might be an appropriate Eagle Scout project, perhaps accompanied by an agreement that scouts would provide future maintenance of the structure.
8. The Commission agreed to investigate further why a lot in Pembroke Street Cemetery has no gate in its perimeter fence of granite posts and horizontal iron bars, as described by Zachary Sawyer at the Commission meeting of April 6, 2023.

[Further investigation showed that while this lot has no hinged gate, access to the lot was incorporated in the design of the fence. The two iron bars at one corner of the lot can be lifted in their slots in one of the granite posts and removed from the enclosure.

This lot was established by Jeremiah Hall Wilkins (1791-1864), whose photograph appears opposite page 364 in Volume II of the *History of Pembroke* (1895). The lot includes the graves of Jeremiah Hall Wilkins and his wife, Mary Thompson Wilkins (1799-1879). The lot also includes the graves of the Wilkins' children, Alanson (1822-1863); George (1827-1829); Caroline (1831-1857) and her husband, Franklin Hale; Thompson (1832-1833); Henry William (1836-1926); Charlotte (1838-1840); and Joseph (born 1844).

Henry William Wilkins was a marine in the U. S. Navy during the Civil War and Joseph Wilkins was a soldier in Company 1 of the 132nd New Hampshire Volunteers during the Civil War. Both of their graves are marked by flags.]

9. V. J. Ranfos and Adam Mendoza presented updates on projects discussed at previous meetings.
 - a. Adam Mendoza reported that Public Works has purchased a solar-powered flagpole light and installed it on the pole at Pembroke Street Cemetery as a test. The light is mounted high on the pole to place it beyond the reach of vandals and above mowing machinery. If the test is successful, we will purchase similar lights for the tall flagpoles at Buck Street and Evergreen Cemeteries.
 - b. Secretary Jim Garvin reported that our former supplier of flags and flag holders, Jerry's Flag Shop of Providence, R. I., has closed. Proprietor Jerry Snell gave us the names of the foundry that makes flag holders (Temple Aluminum Foundry, Inc., of Blandon, Pennsylvania) and the company that provides veterans' flags (Fayette Flag and Banner Supply, 12998 Lakeside Dr., Greenfield, OH 45123; dealers in stick flags).

At its April meeting, the Commission authorized Secretary Garvin to place an order for up to \$500 for aluminum flag holders (grave markers), including shipping. Garvin reported that Temple Aluminum Foundry can supply flag holders for \$11.00 each in quantities above 25. The Commission reauthorized Garvin to order 40 flag holders at \$11.00 each, with estimated shipping costs of \$46.87, for a total purchase price of about \$487.00.

- c. V. J. Ranfos reported that driveway paving at Pembroke Hill Cemetery will probably begin during the week of May 15th. Advanced Excavating and Paving has held its quote for this work, originally submitted in July 2022, at \$9,225.
 - d. The removal of maple trees in front of the wall of New North Pembroke Cemetery will be postponed to 2024.
10. Ayn Whytemare of the Pembroke Historical Society joined the meeting at 6:55 p.m. Ayn proposes to conduct a historical tour of Pembroke Street Cemetery, next door to the Whittemore Homestead, on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon toward the end of October 2023. She wants to concentrate on Revolutionary soldiers who may be buried there, researching five or six of them for special interpretation.

Secretary Jim Garvin offered to send Ayn a chronology of the expansion of Pembroke Street Cemetery over the years and a list of all Revolutionary soldiers who are known to be buried in Pembroke. He suggested that Ayn might research the Revolutionary Pension Records at the New Hampshire Historical Society to learn the details of service for selected soldiers and mentioned that the 1895 *History of Pembroke* might supply further information in its Chapter 12 ("Pembroke in the Revolution") and in Volume II, which provides genealogies of Pembroke families.

Ayn also mentioned a rumored cemetery at the former Pembroke Sanatorium, now purchased by the Town of Pembroke as conservation land. Having grown up in a house that abutted that property (later the Congregational Conference Center), Ayn said that she is quite sure that there is no cemetery on that property as had been rumored and as had been researched by the late Larry Perron of Pembroke.

- 11. The next meeting of the Pembroke Cemetery Commission will be at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 1, 2023, at the Public Works headquarters on Exchange Street in Suncook Village.
- 12. On a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James L. Garvin, Secretary