

# **PEMBROKE CEMETERY COMMISSION MEETING**

**April 9, 2015**

## **Minutes**

Present: James Garvin, V. J. Ranfos, David Richards (chair).

1. Chairman Richards called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Pembroke Town Hall.
2. The minutes of the meeting of October 9, 2014, were approved.
3. It was noted that the 2015 Town Meeting approved Warrant Article 8, which appropriated a sum not to exceed \$20,000 from the Cemetery Improvements Capital Reserve Fund for necessary repairs at Evergreen Cemetery. Secretary Jim Garvin asked who will write the specifications for the removal of the white pine grove. V. J. Ranfos stated that there is a Town Forester, and that Public Works Director Jim Boisvert will contact him about the standards to be observed in removing the trees.
4. Secretary Jim Garvin distributed e-mail correspondence from Lorette Girard, who stated that there are two large dead trees close to the Brasley/Girard lot near the corner of Oak Avenue and Valley Avenue in Evergreen Cemetery. Ms. Girard stated that her son Chris is a licensed arborist who offers to remove the two trees at no cost to the town. V. J. Ranfos will contact Chris Girard and discuss the trees in question.
5. The Commission considered a written note from Vivian West, owner of lots 13a and 13b in Buck Street Cemetery. Ms. West now has no need for these two lots and offers to sell them back to the Town of Pembroke. The Commission agreed in principle to purchase the lots at the original sales price, but will need to look at the current Commission budget, or other town funds, to find the money to repurchase the lots.
6. V. J. Ranfos reported in October 2014 that the secretary of the Public Works Department would issue burial licenses from that time forward. The Commission learned that burial licenses to the reconfigured lots shown in the plans attached to the Cemetery Commission minutes of October 9, 2014, have not been issued yet due to a need to agree on clearly defined numbers for the lots. The consensus of the Commission was that the numbers shown on previous plans held by the Public Works Department should be used on the new licenses.
7. Chairman David Richards reported that copies of older deeds have been requested for the Knowlton lot and other nearby lots in Buck Street Cemetery. Because several such requests are pending, the Commission agreed that Secretary James Garvin should write to the Board of Selectmen and request that the Selectmen authorize the Public Works Department to establish a uniform fee for providing copies of cemetery deeds and burial licenses.

8. Chairman David Richards discussed the standing offer by Mr. Griggs, current owner of the Batchelder farm adjacent to the northern boundary of Buck Street Cemetery, to convey land for cemetery expansion to the town. Mr. Griggs has asked to receive burial lots for his family in return for the conveyance of the land. Chairman Richards noted that it will take some years, and some expenditure of funds, to raise the grade elevation and provide underdrainage for some of the Griggs land before burials will be possible there. He therefore suggested that the town might offer the Griggs family a group of existing burial lots in the northeast corner of Buck Street Cemetery, as the cemetery now exists, in return for conveyance of a parcel of Griggs land for future expansion of the cemetery. It was suggested that a block of eight 4-foot by 8-foot lots might be provided from the newly loamed and seeded corner of the cemetery.

Mr. Griggs had also mentioned the possibility of reserving some lots in the expanded Buck Street Cemetery for burial of indigent people. The Commission noted that there seem to be no clearly defined areas in existing cemeteries for indigent burials, and was favorable to the idea of reserving a section of the Griggs land for that purpose.

9. V. J. Ranfos reported that the Public Works Department has received several inquiries about the number of burials permitted in a single 4-foot by 8-foot burial plot. These inquiries relate to cremation burials, either as cremations alone or in conjunction with a standard burial in a vault and casket. V. J. observed that a cremation burial usually requires a 2-foot by 2-foot excavation, so that theoretically eight cremation burials could be accommodated in a four-foot by 8-foot plot. The Commission observed that cremation burials have been placed on top of preexisting burial vaults, and had no objection to placing cremated remains in the same grave as standard burials.
10. This question, and others, are not mentioned in the existing Town Code for Cemeteries (Chapter 155). These gaps raised the need to reexamine this chapter and update it for issues that have not previously been addressed. Secretary Jim Garvin will re-type the existing code as an editable Word document so that the Commission can suggest changes and present them to the Board of Selectmen and the public.
11. V. J. Ranfos had reported in October 2014 that the Public Works Department had received a bill from Wright-Pierce for \$400 for cemetery plot identifications, as recorded on a compact disk. The disk was mailed to the Commission in June, but Secretary Jim Garvin had been unable to open the GIS (Geographic Information Systems) database files. V. J. reported that Wright-Pierce offered help to Public Works secretary Chris Addington, who was able to gain access to the files. The \$400 bill from Wright-Pierce has been paid.
12. Secretary Jim Garvin will order 20 to 30 metal flag holders (depending on price) in order to replace the remaining plastic holders in Buck Street and Evergreen Cemeteries.
13. Chairman David Richards again suggested that the Commission take steps to open the receiving tomb at Evergreen Cemetery and examine conditions inside. If the interior is found to be damp, we might consider damp-proofing the structure when pine trees around

and above the tomb are removed for safety in the future. Chairman Richards also suggested that a columbarium for cremations might be placed between the Badger-Appleton tomb and the town receiving tomb after the pine trees are removed above the tombs.

14. The next regular meeting of the Commission will be held on Thursday, May 14, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. at the Pembroke Town Hall.
15. The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
James L. Garvin  
Secretary