

Meeting of the Deerfield, New Hampshire Cemetery Trustees

DRAFT MINUTES

September 22, 2021

Present: Rick Druckenmiller, Dana van der Bijl, Maureen Mann, Phil Bilodeau

Absent: Sam White, Tina St. Peter

Meeting called to order at **9:33 am**.

Citizen Comments – None

The board voted unanimously to **accept the August meeting minutes**.

Rick reported that he and Sam went to look at an **old pine tree** near the Witham grave in **Morrison Cemetery**. It needs to come down, and there are two bushes that should also be taken out. The **family wants to remove the tree themselves**, but this is not allowed for liability reasons. Rick will let them know that if they would like to pay for a professional to remove the tree, we can start that discussion. Otherwise, we will make note that it needs to come down and see that it is done as soon as our resources will allow.

Dana reported seeing **bottles of beer and whiskey left on graves** in various cemeteries. They appear to have been left as a tribute (as opposed to litter). The board discussed the situation and unanimously **voted to update the cemetery rules to prohibit food and alcohol from being left in the cemeteries**.

The board reviewed **changes to the wording of cemetery deeds**. The new wording will clarify that when a cemetery plot is sold in Deerfield, it **conveys to the buyer the right to inter** rather than the ownership of the physical plot of land. The new wording has already been vetted by the town's legal counsel. After careful review, **the board voted unanimously to adopt the new wording**.

Dana presented four **warrant article drafts**, which were discussed and edited at length. The trustees were able to combine two of them, leaving a total of three warrant articles for the upcoming election.

Cemetery Warrant Article #1 Summary: The town recently discovered there are 29 town-owned cemeteries that must be maintained per RSA. The town currently maintains six. This warrant article would ask for funding to restore these cemeteries to a point where they can be maintained by the town moving forward.

Cemetery Warrant Article #2 Summary: By law, every New Hampshire community is responsible for providing burial space for town residents. There are fewer than 250 burial plots left in the town of Deerfield. The current plan is to develop the three-plus acres surrounding the already-established (but inactive) **Dowst-Cate Cemetery** on Cate Road. The warrant article will seek funding for this cemetery expansion project over a period of five years.

Cemetery Warrant Article #3 Summary: This article would establish a Cemetery General Maintenance Expendable Reserve Fund and request an amount to come from unassigned fund balance (no amount to be raised from taxation). Future proceeds from the sale of cemetery lots and interest earned will be deposited into this account.

The full wording of these three warrant articles will be finalized at our October meeting after the necessary financial information is compiled.

Maureen delivered the **informational display to Old Home Day 2021**. Our display includes information on our 107 known cemeteries, plot availability, and upcoming warrant articles. According to those present at the event, attendance was lower than expected. The weather was unpleasantly hot and humid, and COVID was/is still a concern. Maureen asked if it was possible to have the town government displays moved into the main meeting area at the George B. White Building. The town obliged, and it seems to be a welcome addition.

Rick has submitted a voucher to **repay \$10 to Karen Leavitt** of the Heritage Commission for the **Old Home Day banner** purchased on our behalf.

Tina responded to a new resident's inquiry about helping to care for **Parade Cemetery** with thanks and an invitation to an upcoming meeting. Dana will follow up.

Meeting adjourned at 11:32 am. The next meeting will be held at the **GB White Building** on **Wednesday, October 20th at 9:30 am.**

Respectfully submitted,

Dana van der Bijl, Secretary