

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF THE CEMETERY COMMISSION

July 8, 2008

Judge Welsh Room

Provincetown Town Hall

Members present:

Richard Olson--Chair

Astrid Berg

Gregory Howe—Co-Chair

Dwayne Raymond-Prickett

No members of the public were present for this meeting.

Meeting began at 2:00 pm

Mr. Olson, Cemetery Commission Chair, called the meeting to order.

--1st order of business:

Elect a secretary for the commission. The members unanimously elect Mr. Prickett as secretary.

--Mr. Olson then addresses the minutes of the last meeting and suggests that there is nothing specific within them to be addressed. However, he did note the following pertaining to the last meeting and the topics discussed then.

--Mr. Olson mentions that he did meet with Mr. Gately from the local funeral home prior to this meeting of the Commissioners. He thought it best that we might look at the schedule of fees instituted in 2002 by the previous Cemetery Commission. Mr. Gately will, in the future, suggest new fees to be more in line with other towns on Cape Cod. The Commission unanimously agreed that in the case of Stillborn births, interment should be free of charge.

--It is noted that it may be necessary to address the issue of fee changes at the next Town Meeting.

--Mr. Olson brings up the continuing baffling accounting concerning the cemetery funds. Mr. Olson also mentions that he has, in the recent past, met with the town clerk about this.

--Mr. Olson also notes and produces a copy of a letter written by the Law firm of Kopelman and Paige which addresses the proper care and use of cemetery funds in other towns and which specifically addresses "trust laws" concerning those funds. The letter in question was distributed to the Members of the Cemetery Commission for their files.

--Mr. Prickett notes that Mr. Tony Lemme, who was invited to attend the meeting and who is indeed considered the "point man" for care and daily activities at the Provincetown Cemetery, was ill and unable to attend the meeting. He will be asked to attend future meetings.

--Mr. Howe then brought up something that he'd heard or read that suggested an old rule of the Cemetery Commission implied (this could not be immediately validated or confirmed) that membership in the commission was only valid if the members were "plot owners." If this is indeed the case, then all appointments of current members were invalid. Mr. Howe said that he would check into this and find out the truth about the existence of this rumored rule for a later meeting.

--Mr. Howe then brings up the 5' depth of graves which is noted in the rules and regulations (Article 14). He notes that the depth may not be sufficient, practically speaking, considering the required cement

compartment and size of caskets. The 5' depth noted would leave only one foot of covering, on average, of earth. It is believed that the depth was, in reality, probably more than 5' but this will be checked into. When Mr. Lemme does attend a meeting this is a question that will be asked.

--Mr. Prickett and Ms. Berg then brought up the issue of parking on Town Cemetery land by a local cab company (Mercedes) and by the workers on the new Seashore Point complex. Mr. Prickett then produced photos taken earlier in the day (July 8, 2002) which clearly showed a black and white checkered taxi cab parked in the cemetery. It was noted that the car had been there for some time. Ms. Berg then brought up the possibility that since the Town of Provincetown has, in past dealings, given so much to the Seashore Point Corporation that if they wished to use the paved areas of the cemetery adjacent to Alden Street then we might consider charge them for such use. And, if charging them for using the paved areas was not possible, then might they be willing to finance the planting of more trees along the edge of the cemetery as a show of appreciation for being able to utilize the area for parking for months on end? No formal motion was made regarding this issue by any members but the possibility of considering it further is there.

--Mr. Prickett said that he'd noticed a precipitous drop in the amount of Seashore Point vehicles using the area recently but, nevertheless, it had happened quite a lot in the past and the issue should not be ignored.

--Mr. Prickett then suggested that it might be prudent to send a letter to the owner of Mercedes Cab from the Cemetery Commission addressing their use of the Town Cemetery as a parking area. It was discussed whether the letter should come from The Cemetery Commission or the Chief of Police or the Town Manager's office.

--Mr. Olson then suggests he might speak with Raphael Richter of Mercedes Cab Company directly about the parking issue which might curtail the activity without further action. Mr. Howe suggested we not target Mr. Richter directly. Mr. Olson then stated that he would meet with the Town Manager as soon as possible to discuss the parking issues.

--Mr. Olson then brought up the possibility of meeting with those who preceded us as members of the Cemetery Commission or those who have "institutional memory" about previous meetings and dealings with the Commission. Former members suggested for invites included Mary Henrique and Laurel Gaudzano. (sp). The name of Richard Caouette (sp) was also brought up as a possible invitee.

--Ms. Berg said that she was unsure exactly why the former Cemetery Commission dissolved. The other members agreed with her in that they, too, did not know exactly why the Commission had dissolved and not been maintained.

--Mr. Prickett then told the other members that he'd walked through the Winthrop Street Cemetery earlier in the day and had discovered it to be unkempt and littered. He noted that he'd seen condom paraphernalia and discarded liquor containers which indicated that the Winthrop Street Cemetery had been recently utilized improperly by "seemingly unsavory visitors."

--Mr. Olson then brings up the question of how funds are delegated when it comes to maintenance and "cleaning up" the cemetery on Winthrop. The members agree that this should be a question for Mr. Lemme when he visits a future meeting. Mr. Olson points out that the Catholic Cemetery, St. Peters, is maintained well and with less staff than the Town Cemetery.

--As a point, Mr. Howe offers that the Catholic Cemetery indeed accepts everyone, of all faiths, for burial.

--Ms. Berg points out, as she did at the previous meeting of the Cemetery Commission, that the **Ryan Report**, which addresses issues for "affordable housing", had noted 3.5 acres of land belonging to the

Town Cemetery as a “possible site” for affordable housing complexes in the future. All members agreed that this was a wrong way of thinking on the part of those who may have interests in future affordable housing possibilities and that such a thing would not be allowed for serious consideration in the future.

--Mr. Prickett then brought up the possibility of constructing an “ashes cemetery” on some of the presently unutilized ground to which Mr. Howe said we might indeed wish to consider the construction of a Columbarium. It was then brought up by members the possibility of having a “competition” rather like competitions that are held for war memorials, wherein artists and architects offer their ideas and the best design is chosen. The construction of the Columbarium could be potentially lucrative and also might maximize possibilities for future interest of burial in Provincetown. The members all agreed that this idea is worth further examination.

--Mr. Olson then brought up the point that we should learn what rate the available space is being used up and how long it is expected to last. Again, a question for Mr. Lemme for when he visits.

--Mr. Olson then said that Mr. Gately of the local funeral home will put him in touch with Nickerson Funeral Home in order to insure that we are all aware of each other. It was noted by Mr. Olson that he’d been told that Nickerson was aware of the fact that the Provincetown Cemetery Commission was indeed active again.

--Nearing to close of the meeting, Mr. Olson reiterated that he will again be in touch with Municipal Finance Director Alex Heilala (sp) for information about funds until he gets some solid answers.

--It was then suggested that the next meeting of the Provincetown Cemetery Commission should be scheduled for some time in early September after the season slows. The members agreed that this would be a good time. It was also suggested that the Commissioners perhaps schedule a “walk about” meeting with Mr. Lemme through the cemetery at some later date. Mr. Olson noted that that was indeed an option as the meeting would be held on “public property” and as long as it was posted it would be perfectly within the bounds of the meeting rules. All members agreed that this was a fine idea.

--The meeting adjourned at 2:53 p.m.