Conservation Commission’s
Cemetery Committee
Minutes

Date: September 10, 2015
Call to order: 3:05 meeting called to order

Attendance (X if present):

Committee Members

☒ Nancy Dickinson
☒ Eric Brower
☒ Lisette Henrey
☒ Anne Young
☒ Chris Shields
☒ Robert McKnight
☐ Denise Savageau

Others present:

Amanda Ryan
Chris Antonik

1. Call to order

2. Approval of Minutes
   a. August 17, 2015
      i. Motion by Mr. Shields to accept as presented and seconded by Mr. McKnight. All present voted in favor
   b. August 24, 2015 site walk
      i. Motion by Mr. Shields to accept as presented and seconded by Mr. McKnight. All present voted in favor

3. Meeting schedule 2015
   i. Motion by Ms. Dickinson to adopt as presented and seconded by Mr. McKnight. All present voted in favor

4. Correspondence
   a. Strackbein email
      i. Mr. Brower was curious about Mr. Andrew R. Melillo’s [the email’s author] methods regarding funding and policies. Ms. Dickinson asked if the committee’s members would want to hear of Mr. Melillo’s many restoration accomplishments as alluded to in his email. She further stated that someone
from the committee would respond. Mr. Brower then suggested that Mr. Andrew R. Melillo be invited and speak about his accomplishments as Jeffrey Mead did at the first meeting. Mr. Brower motioned that the Committee extend an invitation for Mr. Melillo to attend a Cemetery Committee meeting to discuss his work and maintenance philosophies. All present voted in favor

b. Taylor proposal
i. Proposal for cleaning stones – Mr. Brower recommended that the Committee first determine what the appropriate protocols were for cleaning burial stones to then be able to disseminate to concerned individuals who wish to assist in (or know how to) properly restore or clean them. Ms. Dickinson stated that the interest shown by Ms. Taylor is one that the Cemetery Committee should continue to encourage. Mr. Brower motioned that the Cemetery Committee thank her for the generous and unsolicited offer and, while grateful for the unsolicited offer, protocols must be determined first before any restoration is implemented and, that the Cemetery Committee looks forward to working with her on future projects. Ms. Savageau to forward the response of the Cemetery Committee (as the email was sent to Ms. Savageau). All present voted in favor

5. Town-wide Ancient or Abandoned Cemeteries
a. Statutes Concerning Cemeteries – Mr. Brower asked that each committee member start to familiarize themselves with the statutes. Ms. Young said that they take on a greater significance once proper ownership is identified. Ms. Dickinson added that Byram Cemetery is the ‘template cemetery’ as the committee determines its ownership and, once finalized, that all Town of Greenwich-owned cemeteries will follow the procedures that were taken with Byram Cemetery.
b. Update on lists – Ms. Ryan provided an update of GIS work to date. She has begun to create a map layer of all cemeteries in town from a list previously developed by Jeffery Mead and includes 57 cemeteries. 13 were ‘unseen’ by the aerial and Ms. Ryan stated that she would need to physically visit those. Mr. Shields asked if ownership had been attributed to any and Ms. Ryan responded that she was able to show ownership of all on the list. Ms. Dickinson described her research efforts and referred a 1954 Greenwich Time article indicating a produced report of cemeteries by the Town of Greenwich Parks and Recreation Department. Ms. Dickinson had asked Ms. Savageau if she could locate a copy of that 1954 report and is curious to see how the Byram Cemetery is described in this report.
c. Park and Rec – Mr. Brower would like to know who (or which department) is responsible for cemetery maintenance and is there someone employed by the town with an expertise in stone repair. Mr. Brower continued that it would be helpful to know what are the current practices for cemetery maintenance.
d. Protocol for cleaning and maintaining headstones – Ms. Dickinson recommended a Graveyard Preservation Primer by Lynette Strangstad. It was suggested that a copy be made available at the Greenwich Historical Archives. Ms. Dickinson further commented that the forms (and guides) that are provided in the Primer would be beneficial to the committee as they begin their surveys of the cemeteries in town. Ms. Dickinson identified a ‘best-case example’ of cemetery preservation called the Great Cranberry cemetery and will send link to committee members. Ms. Dickinson has reached out to additional cemetery preservation experts and will report on her findings at a future date. Ms. Dickinson further added that an invitation should be
extended to Mary Dunne (SHPO) to address the committee on available funding sources.

e. Mature tree impacts. Mr. Brower is concerned that ‘tree health’ be a high priority and became worried when Mr. Spaman said (at August 17th meeting) that he (Spaman) was reactive rather than proactive. The concern regards mature trees and should they become uprooted due to a fall, then extensive damage will occur resulting in displaced stones and graves.

6. Byram Cemetery
   a. Immediate needs/actions – committee would like a complete and updated burial survey and comparison to Mead 1989 survey.
   b. Short term/Long term plan

7. Other business
   Assignment – break up the 57 cemeteries and each member visits a grouping. Ms. Ryan will place the form and list for members to review and assess.

Assignments
Break up the 57 cemeteries and each member visits a grouping. Ms. Ryan will place the form and list for members to review and assess. ‘Vegetation’ is to be used for tree concerns

Ms. Dickinson to email links on “Cranberry Cemetery”

Extend invitation to Mr. Melillo to attend a Cemetery Committee meeting (with an invitation following to be extended to Ms. Dunne at a future meeting) – Ms. Savageau/Ms. Dickinson

Investigate the process of forming 501(c)(3) – Mr. Brower

Investigate whether Certified Local Government funds can be used for cemetery actions – Ms. Young

Investigate the cable/wire that runs ‘across’ Byram Cemetery – Ms. Savageau

Cemetery Committee would like an update on the State’s funding of $2,000 grant – Ms. Savageau

Survey Byram cemetery and compare to Mead 1989 survey – Ms. Young

Mr. Brower asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Henrey so motioned and Mr. McKnight seconded. The meeting adjourned at 4:21 pm.

| Next Meeting Date: Oct 8, 2015 | Adjourned at: 4:21 |