



CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 3, 2022, 4:00 p.m.
City Hall in Conference A
1 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Members Present: Susan Sterry, Co-Chair; Deirdre Forte, Co-Chair, Eva Boice; Sue Polidura; Kerry Rubinstein; Donald Margeson, Celeste Brooks, Duncan McCallum

Absent: Michael Griffin and Chris Benecick

Staff Present: Suzanne M. Woodland, Deputy City Manager/Deputy City Attorney (DCM)

1. Call to order at 4:01 p.m.
2. Roll Call of the Members as noted above.
3. Motion by Sue Polidura to approve the October 6, 2022, Meeting Minutes. Seconded by Donald Margeson. Approved unanimously.
4. Moose Plate Grant: Eva Boice reported on the City's award of the grant for the rebuilding of the wall at North Cemetery.
5. Rack Card: Eva provided a summary of her efforts to identify places to display the Rack Card. Discussion of the content of the Rack Card. DCM to follow-up with approximately 500 cards, as initial effort.
6. Review of State RSA 289: Moved to end of Agenda.
7. Update on Point of Graves Testing: DCM reported that City staff is working with engineering firm on this and possibly adjusting scope of work.
8. Sign for Cemeteries on South Street: No update for this meeting; conversation stalled with the operator of the cemetery.
9. Salem Charter Cemetery Sign: Committee members had an engaged discussion with regard to signage recommendations. Under discussion was whether to recommend to the City Manager that signage be added to North, Union and Point-of-Graves cemeteries as open only dawn to dusk. There was also an engaged discussion about the walking of dogs in the cemeteries and the issue of dog waste.

Motion by Kerry Rubinstein to recommend the City Manager add signage to North, Union and Point-of-Graves cemeteries limiting use from dawn to dusk and signage reminding visitors of dog ordinance requirements (leash required and pick up waste). Seconded by Sue Polidura.

There followed a robust discussion, initiated by questions and comments by Celeste Brooks, about whether limiting the cemeteries to entry between dawn and dusk was too restrictive for law abiding walkers. Questioning about whether the limit of dawn to dusk will actually deter vandals and others who plan to do harm/criminal acts. Brief discussion about whether instead of using “dusk” as the end point of using a fixed time such as 9:00 p.m. given how early darkness comes in winter.

Vote seven in favor of the pending motion and Celeste Brooks opposed.

Donald Margeson left meeting at 4:40 p.m.

10. Website to fundraise: Postposed and will be explored with new Digital Communications and Digital Specialist once that person is onboard.
11. Other business: Co-Chair Susan Sterry reported on efforts by Nick Cracknell and HDC.
12. Motion to adjourn made by Sue Polidura. Seconded by Celeste Brooks. All in favor. Meeting ended at 5:07 p.m.

Minutes prepared by:

Suzanne Woodland, Deputy City Manager / Deputy City Attorney

Approved at May 4, 2023 meeting