



CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes
Thursday March 3, 2022, 4:00 p.m.
Meeting held in person at City Hall in Conference A

Members Present: Susan Sterry, Co-Chair; Michael Griffin; Sue Polidura; Kerry Rubinstein; and Chris Beneck

Members Present by Zoom: Deirdre Forte, Co-Chair, Eva Boice

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

- I. Call to order at 4:03 p.m.
- II. Roll Call of the Members as noted above.
- III. There were only five (5) members present in-person and seven (7) in-person are necessary for a quorum. As such, the meeting continued without motions or voting.
- IV. Discussions:
 - A. Richard G. Adams, a local historian, was the scheduled speaker for the meeting. He provided an overview of some of the more notable figures buried or memorialized in the City's cemeteries. Those figures include William Whipple (signatory of the U.S. Declaration of Independence); Gov. John Landgon (signatory of the U.S. Constitution), Prince Whipple (a veteran of the War of Independence and one of twenty enslaved men who, in 1779, petitioned the New Hampshire Legislature for freedom) as well as the first known Jewish family in Portsmouth, Abraham and Rachel Issac. The City's cemeteries also include sea captains and ship builders reflective of its maritime history.
 - B. There was general discussion on the historic resources available at the Portsmouth Atheneum and the Portsmouth Public Library and how to link some of the history together such as the historic home to the historic gravesite. The Committee is interested in trying to create some greater visibility of the cemeteries through connections to various pieces of Portsmouth history.
 - C. Suzanne Woodland described next steps for moving forward on a plan to clean some of the headstones as an initial project. Committee members present agreed that the draft minutes from the last meeting correctly described the process for cleaning proposed. Suzanne will work with the Co-chairs to put

together the remaining pieces necessary to move the project forward for approval and funding.

- D. Co-Chair Susan Sterry and Suzanne Woodland described the pending application to have the Union Cemetery be listed on the NH State Register of Historic Places. This will be brought to the City Council for approval.
- E. Brief Discussion of how committee members could provide input into the municipal budget process so as to advocate for funding for cemetery restoration projects.
- F. Suzanne reported that she has been working with Stephanie Seacord to update the City's website relative to the Cemetery Committee, its work, upcoming projects and how to encourage donations to the Historic Cemeteries Trust. Kerry Rubinstein and Eva Boice have agreed to work with Suzanne and Stephanie on these website updates.

V. Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, April 7, 2022

Meeting ended at 5:10 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Suzanne Woodland, Deputy City Manager / Deputy City Attorney
Approved at April 7, 2022 meeting