



## **CEMETERY COMMITTEE**

**Meeting Minutes  
Thursday October 6, 2022, 4:00 p.m.  
Conference Room A  
1 Junkins Avenue  
Portsmouth, NH 03801**

Members Present: Susan Sterry, Co-Chair; Deirdre Forte, Co-Chair; Sue Polidura; Michael Griffin; Donald Margeson; Chris Benecick; and Eva Boice

Celeste Brooks by Zoom

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

1. Call to order at 4:02 p.m.
2. Roll Call of the Members as noted above.
3. Motion by Chris Benecick seconded by Eva Boice to approve minutes/notes of July 7, 2022, August 4, 2002, September 8, 2022 and September 22, 2022 and all in favor.

Brief discussion of lack of quorum at many meetings and the DCM offered to bring back a suggested ordinance change to resolve the quorum issue.

4. Rack Card

Chair elected without objection to bring forward the Rack Card discussion. Eva Boice described her findings regarding distribution of a rack card/brochure. Discussed process and cost for distributing. Not proceeding with commercial rack card vendors at this time, however, small quantity of rack cards could be printed and distributed to entities willing to display/stock them.

Eva Boice reported that Chamber of Commerce will take the Cemetery's Committee rack card for free because it is Portsmouth. Portsmouth Discover Center is willing to display cards. Library is willing to display the card/brochure.

Eva Boice is prepared to approach hotels/inns individually to see if they would display.

Suggestion by Sue Sterry to talk to historic homes and see if they would carry the card/brochure.

DCM will reach out to African Burying Ground Memorial Park Committee members relative to reference to African Burying Ground Memorial Park on the current draft. DCM will also ask Seacoast African American Cultural Center and Black Heritage Trail entities if they would be willing to display/make available.

## 5. Vandalism

Co-chair Sterry summarized the issue. Discussion that video cameras are not the preferred/best response. DCM reported that City exploring signage of dawn to dusk limitations to assist with managing the area. Cemeteries of most concern are Point-of-Graves, Pleasant and North/Union Cemetery. DCM indicated that City may do some trimming of bushes. Discussion of dogs in the cemeteries given that there is dog waste in the cemeteries.

Susan Sterry walked the North/Union Cemetery with Peter Britz to explore trimming the bushes which include invasive species. Corin Hallowell to identify areas for trimming later in the fall as other work permits.

Motion by Sue Polidura to limit dogs in the historic cemeteries, seconded by Donald Margeson. Discussion by the committee members about different approaches to have less damage from dog waste/dog activities. That motion withdrawn for report back from DCM on options.

## 6. Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Chair discussed the CIP submission she prepared on behalf of the committee. See attached.

## 7. Other business

Co-chair Sterry reported on her recent statement before the Historic District Commission and her support of the historic cemeteries.

Susan Sterry reported that Tuesday October 12, 2022 members of the DAR will help with headstone cleaning at North Cemetery. Pleasant Street Cemetery headstones are now cleaned (76 headstones).

Headstone database update provided. Celeste Brooks offered to assist with data entry.

Sue Sterry reported on her experience with John Lord, headstone specialist, when he was in Harmony Grove recently straightening headstones. Based on

what she saw and learned, recommended that volunteers would not be appropriate to do the work. Polidura followed up with questions about training opportunities to straighten headstones followed by discussion but no action.

For the next agenda: Adopt-A-Project and Adopt A Headstone and Kids events for 400<sup>th</sup>.

Sue Polidura motion to adjourn and seconded by Chris Benecick and all concurred. Adjournment at 5:09.

Minutes prepared by:  
Suzanne Woodland, Deputy City Manager / Deputy City Attorney  
Approved at November 3, 2022 meeting