

**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
COMMITTEE FOR CEMETERIES**



**PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE
THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2023, at 4:00 P.M.
CITY HALL –CONFERENCE ROOM A
1 JUNKINS AVENUE, PORTSMOUTH, NH 03801**

***Members of the public also have the option to join the meeting over Zoom
(See below for more details)****

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Minutes/Notes from November 3, 2022, December 1, 2022 and February 2, 2023, meetings
4. Potential ordinance change
5. Status of current projects
6. Available funds
7. Straightening and repairing headstones
8. Other business
9. Public Comment
10. Adjournment

****Members of the public also have the option to join this meeting over Zoom using the link below:***

To Participate by Zoom:

Zoom Information: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83675277019>

Meeting ID: [836 7527 7019](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83675277019)

Passcode: [954854](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83675277019)



DRAFT

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.

Draft Minutes prepared by:
Suzanne Woodland, Deputy City Manager / Deputy City Attorney



CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes No Quorum of Members Present in Person

Thursday, December 1, 2022, 4:00 p.m.
Planning Board Conference Room
1 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Members Present: Susan Sterry, Co-Chair; Donald Margeson; Eva Boice; and Michael Griffin in person
Kerry Rubinstein and Celeste Brooks by Zoom

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

1. Call to order at 4:02
2. Roll Call of the Members as noted above. No quorum was physically present.
3. No action was taken on the minutes of November 3, 2022 due to lack of quorum.
4. Discussion of Ms. Rubinstein's donation to support the Cemetery Committee's work.
5. Update on Moose Plate Paperwork. The DCM provided an update on completion and submission of the paperwork and the efforts to get updated pricing for the work contemplated.
6. Update on edits for Rack Card. Update provided by the DCM and discussion that the DCM would proceed with having the rack card printed for the committee members to distribute.

7. Update on POG Testing- DCM provided an update on alternatives to the original proposed scope of work from Weston & Sampson including perhaps more limited testing and/or more limited repairs to the worse walls even if more of a temporary/stabilizing measure.
8. Update on Signage for Cemeteries – regarding dog and time of use: DCM is working with the Department of Public Works relative to proposed signage.
9. NH State Register of Historic Places Sign Markers- DCM will follow up with the Department of Public Works regarding availability of a granite post for a marker.
10. Headstone Cleaning Request from Non-residents. Co-Chair Sterry reported on her volunteer work to assist a family with a grave at Calvery.
11. Signage for South Street cemeteries. Ongoing effort to create signage.
12. Other business. Discussion of vault door in need of repair at Cotton Cemetery.

Adjournment at 5:00 p.m.

Notes prepared by: Suzanne Woodland, Deputy City Manager / Deputy City Attorney

Adopted by the Committee: _____



CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Meeting Notes No Quorum of Members Present in Person

Thursday, February 2, 2023, 4:00 p.m.
City Hall – Conference Room A
1 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Members Present: **Susan Sterry, Co-Chair; Sue Polidura; Michael Griffin, Kerry Rubinstein; Donald Margeson; and Celeste Brooks**

Eva Boice and Deirdre Forte, Co-Chair on Zoom.

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

1. Call to order at 4:00 p.m.
2. Roll Call of the Members as noted above. No quorum being physically present, no action was taken.
3. Of Counsel Robert P. Sullivan joined meeting at 4:05 p.m.
4. The rack cards are in. Eva Boice suggested placing cards initially in library and providing to the Chamber of Commerce. Celeste Brooks will deliver some to the library. Kerry rubinstein will take some to the Chamber. Eva Boice will distribute others later.
5. The State required sign or plaque for Union Cemetery can be purchased for \$50.00 and attached to a piece of granite that is at cemetery. DCM will follow up.
6. Signs for dog control and dusk to dawn signs: DCM showed mock up of signs. Continued discussion and some objection to limiting access to cemetery at night.
7. City IT has completed a new database for cemetery locations and people buried in them. In the near term, the public will be able to access these databases from the City website and through the Library. It is projected that these projects will be completed in a few months.

8. Hall Cemetery: Companies have been contacted for estimates to clean up the fallen and diseased trees. Estimates came in at \$3k/day or \$3,200 w/ a three day timeframe. Department of Public Works representative Corin Hallowell has suggested contacting a couple larger companies that have stump grinders as some of that would have to take place to make accessible. Susan will be going in front of Trees and Greenry Committee to discuss taking down the trees.
9. Co-Chair Susan Sterry discussed her reach out to the City Manager regarding potential funding for tree removal for Hall Cemetery.
10. Department of Public Works is working on engaging a contractor to repair green door on the vault at Cotton Cemetery.
11. Discussion on Capital Improvement Plan, hearing and adoptin process.
12. Committee members present discussed potential change to the Cemetery Committee ordinance to change membership so that quorum could be met more frequently and to introduce a stagger. Attorney Sullivan summarized his draft of possible changes to the ordinance to accomplish the goals of quorum and stagger.
13. Cemetery Committee will continue to include the African Burying Ground Memorial Park in communications regarding the City's historic cemeteries as was done with rack card.
14. Portsmouth has been recognized as host community and sailors from the USS Cheyenne may now be able to assist with historic cemetery committee projects as community service. Co-Chair Sterry will follow up.
15. Co-Chair asked committee members if anyone is interested in applying for new round of grants. Would also like to submit applications for Point-of-Graves and Pleasant Street cemeteries to be put on the NH Historic Registry. Co-Chair will approach DAR, Sons of Liberty and sailors from Cheyenne to help with headstone cleanings.
16. Other agenda items deferred to future meeting.

Adjournment at 5:00 p.m.

Notes prepared by: Donna Splaine, Adminisrative Assistant and Suzanne Woodland, Deputy City Manager/Deputy City Attorney

ORDINANCE #

THE CITY OF PORTSMOUTH ORDAINS

That Chapter 1, Article IV, Section 1.411 – **CEMETERY COMMITTEE** of the Ordinances of the City of Portsmouth be amended as follows (deletions from existing language **stricken**; additions to existing language **bolded**; remaining language unchanged from existing):

ARTICLE IV: COMMISSIONS/AUTHORITIES

Section 1.411: CEMETERY COMMITTEE

- A. Membership and Term: The Cemetery Committee shall consist of not less than ~~twelve (12)~~**seven (7)** or more than ~~eighteen (18)~~**eleven (11)** regular members. The members shall be appointed by the Mayor subject to the approval of the City Council ~~for a term of two (2) years, coterminous with the City Council term. The first four (4) members appointed after adoption of this ordinance shall be appointed to terms of three (3) years commencing as of the date of completed appointment. Thereafter, all appointments shall be for terms of two (2) years. All appointments to fill vacancies shall serve the remainder of the vacant term. A quorum shall be a majority of the existing appointed members at any given time.~~
- B. Powers and Duties: The Committee shall provide advice and recommendations to the City Manager and the City Council with respect to all issues affecting municipal cemeteries, including the solicitation and acceptance of grants; the expenditure of any funds for specific improvements; and any expenditures from the Cemetery Trust Fund. Nothing herein shall limit the power of the City Council or City Manager to take immediate action in the event of exigent circumstances.
- C. It shall be the responsibility of the Cemetery Committee to encourage the restoration, preservation, and safeguarding of Portsmouth's historic cemeteries and their history for future generations.

The City Clerk shall properly alphabetize and/or re-number the ordinances as necessary in accordance with this amendment.

All ordinances or parts of ordinances inconsistent herewith are hereby deleted.

This ordinance shall take effect upon its passage.

Be it further ordained that on the adoption of this amendment, the terms of all existing members of the Cemetery Committee shall be terminated. The Mayor shall thereafter re-appoint the members to the Committee until all existing members have been offered the opportunity for reappointment.

APPROVED:

Deaglan McEachern, Mayor

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL:

Kelli L. Barnaby, City Clerk