



Cemetery Committee Meeting
Thursday, October 13th – 4:00 p.m.
Cemetery Building – High Street
MINUTES

Committee Members and City Officials in Attendance:

City Manager Kate Devonshire, City Council Liaison Billy Boone, Cemetery Committee Chair Stephen Collins, Committee Secretary Diana Boone, Committee members Paula DeFilippo, Caroline Melidossian, and Don Peters.

Other Attendees: Groundskeeper Superintendent Tabetha Young, Groundskeeper Donavon Decesare, Hank Young, Ron DeFilippo.

1. Call to Order

Chair Stephen Collins called the meeting to order at 4:25 upon the arrival of Kate Devonshire and Don Peters.

2. Adjustments to the agenda

Paula DeFilippo announced the addition of three new members:

Hank Young, Jana Sutherland, and Jean Schild.

Don Peters announced that he would be resigning from the committee.

It was suggested that item 10 on the agenda be moved to before number 4, as she would be covering many of the agenda items. Her report has been numbered "4a."

3. Review and approval of minutes of last meeting

Secretary Diana Boone read the minutes of the last meeting.

4a. Report by Groundskeeper Superintendent, Tabetha Young, on cemetery operations.

Tabetha Young reported on the removal of the nine trees that have been deemed hazardous.

TWIG will not be available to cut down any trees until the spring. There is one tree in Hillside East section D that is in imminent danger of falling and destroying the gravestones that surround it.

Tabetha is requesting a quote from Asplundh, which uses a machine that reduces the tree to sawdust from the top down. She feels that this tree must be removed before the winter, and she has been working with Kate Devonshire on this issue.

Tabetha Young reported on the electrical hazard at the cemetery building. The contractor who resided the building warned Tabetha that due to the risk of fire, no lights should be left on overnight, and nothing should be left plugged into the wall sockets at night. He applied some silicone to attempt to mitigate the issue, but gave no assurances that the problem was resolved. The committee discussed whether the hazard was something that Versant or the City should correct.

Tabetha Young reported on the excellent work being done by Groundskeeper Donavon Decesare. She stated that he has quickly become an asset to the Groundskeeping department.

Committee members were all in agreement on this point. Tabetha also reported that she and Donavon, along with Ricky Camick and others have worked very hard for months to set upright all 60 gravestones that had fallen over onto the ground over the years in Hillside West. This was greeted with great appreciation by the committee.

Tabetha Young reported on the condition of the three mowers belonging to the Groundskeeping department. There have been many problems with the machines, and only one has been reliable. A suggestion was made to use a small engine repair shop in Perry that would come to Eastport rather than bring the mowers to the hardware store in Calais for service. Tabetha felt that this would be beneficial, as it would reduce the amount of time the machines would be out of service for repairs.

Tabetha Young reported on using the sand accumulated from street sweeping, piled up behind the cemetery building, to fill in ruts and low spots in cemetery pathways. In a two-hour session with a payloader this summer, Public Works was able to move a significant portion of the pile. Howard Johnson of the Public Works Department has informed her that they are too busy preparing for snow and will not be able to work on moving the rest of the sand until next year.

Tabetha Young reported on drainage issues in the cemetery. There are areas on Hillside East and West that become extremely waterlogged after a rain. She said that the grade must be corrected on section A and B of Hillside West, as water does not drain uphill. A system of drainage must be created in Hillside East, where water first goes down, then up and then down again before reaching the drainage ditch on the far side of section D. There is no money in the budget for this work. Diana Boone asked if this was something that Paul Terrill, of the Northern Maine Development Commission, could be of assistance in to help us obtain grant money to accomplish these tasks. Kate Devonshire replied that there is no money for grant writing in the city budget, but she would be willing to look over any grants written by volunteers.

Tabetha Young reported she and Kate Devonshire had discussed painting the Hillside archway sign with a rust-inhibiting paint using volunteer labor next spring. Tabetha also noted that she and Kate Devonshire had discussed publishing an open letter of appreciation to all cemetery volunteers in the Quoddy Tides. The committee agreed that both suggestions were good ideas.

Tabetha Young reported that she would like to establish a set date for the schools to assist in placing flags on veterans' graves so that it will be on the school calendar each year. She stated that she has a box of 200 flags on hand, and Don Peters said that he has a quantity of flags available for use as well. Don reported that Kate Devonshire had added the work that he has done as a volunteer for years with regard to the flags at the cemetery to his job description for his new role at City Hall. Tabetha Young mentioned a program she had seen in Calais, in which students research a person who has been laid to rest in the cemetery, and then stand by the gravestone to role-play as that person (in costume) for passersby. The Fourth of July was suggested as a good date for this here in Eastport. It was generally agreed that this would be a good way to involve younger people.

Tabetha Young reported that after remaining unchanged for many years, Ricky Camick's fees have gone up. Paula DeFilippo noted that she would like to update the Cemetery Committee Charter to reflect the new rates. Stephen Collins offered to send her this information. There was some discussion over the billing methods for grave openings, as the City pays Ricky Camick and then the funeral home reimburses the City. Billy Boone suggested that it would make more sense for

the funeral home to pay Ricky Camick directly. Kate Devonshire stated that it is illegal for the City to profit from burials.

Tabetha noted that a portion of the land abutting Bayside Cemetery is being considered for use as future burial plots. Kate Devonshire said that she and Paige Atkinson had been measuring the land in question and are in the process of determining whether this land belongs to the City.

4. Cemetery Ordinance update – Ricky Camick's fees.

Covered in item 4a.

5. Electrical hazard repair; cemetery building.

Covered in item 4a.

6. Hazardous tree removal – Hillside East and West.

Covered in item 4a.

7. Moving of sand from behind cemetery building to cemetery roadways to fill ruts.

Covered in item 4a.

8. Setting of a monthly meeting week, day, and time to be added to the City Manager's calendar to facilitate planning. Committee Chair may cancel meetings with notice if there is no new business to discuss.

Paula DeFilippo suggested that Cemetery Committee meetings be added to the City Manager's calendar, as is the case for other city committee meetings. After some discussion, it was decided that meetings in February, April and August would suffice, and that Tuesday would be the only acceptable day, as Laura Stanzyck cannot attend on any other day. The third Tuesday of the month was best for Stephen Collins, as he often must work on the other Tuesdays. Paula DeFilippo agreed to send the dates to Kate Devonshire via email so that she could add them to her calendar, and the group agreed.

9. Establish an effective means for Cemetery Committee members and/or Tabetha Young to report issues that may arise in the cemetery that require action from the City Manager and/or the Cemetery Committee.

Paula DeFilippo asked Kate Devonshire and Tabetha Young if there was an effective way of communicating to either of them any issues that may arise in the cemetery that require action by the City or the Cemetery Committee. Kate Devonshire quoted the City Charter, which she said states that committee members are not to direct City employees. She interpreted that as an interdiction for committee members to discuss any issues with Tabetha Young directly, and that all communications must go through the City Manager. Kate Devonshire said that if issues arise, she or Tabetha Young will notify the Cemetery Committee of a special meeting.

10. Report by Tabetha Young on cemetery operations

Moved to item 4a.

11. Adjournment

Respectfully submitted by Paula DeFilippo 12/17/22