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MAYOR

CITY OF SALEM
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CEMETERY COMMISSION

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BOARD MEMBERS:
PATRICIA DONAHUE
BETH GERARD
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**MINUTES OF THE CEMETERY COMMISSION
AUGUST 19, 2020**

A meeting of the Salem Cemetery Commission was held on August 19, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system. Present on call were:

1. Roll Call

Present on call were: Acting Chair Beth Gerard, Members: Patricia Donahue and Anthony O'Donnell; Tree Warden Robert LeBlanc and Joanne Roomey, Commission Clerk. Also present on the call was Jen Ratliff who is our newest member but has not officially been appointed.

2. Approve Minutes: Patricia Donahue moved to approve the May 11 and May 14, 2020 minutes. Seconded by Anthony O'Donnell. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried.

3. Robert LeBlanc: Cemetery Work Report

- Interment Activities at Greenlawn for the months of May, June and July are as follows:

Full Burials: 17
Cremations: 21

- The pond management contractor, Solitude Lake will be down to the last their last pond services in September, then in October they will pull the fountains out and the Cemetery staff will store them for the winter. The Company has changed hands and in December, we may look to solicit bids for the Pond maintenance and invasive weed control for the two ponds. Presently, the company does (6) monthly visits, treats the ponds for floating weeds and algae, checks the functions of the fountains and submits a report on the overall pond aquatic health. This year there have been active growth in the ponds and Solitude lake has done a good job of keeping that under control.

- The construction project on the Charter St. cemetery is under way and I will read an update from Patti Kelleher, the City historic preservationist, later in the Agenda. There have been several on-site meetings and the site is officially closed and fenced off. Last week however, I did have to summon the Salem Police to remove an individual that was passed out sleeping.
- Dickson Chapel: The design work for the repair of the side doors has been received and Patti Kelleher is moving forward with the architect to get a set of specifications with a scope of work to potentially have this go out for Bid. The problem identified is that the design of the hinges was not enough to carry the weight of the doors.
- A quote has been received from an Amesbury window restoration company to do the wood sash work, which supplements the quote received to repair the stained-glass windows in the Chapel. The quotes are broken down by each window that will need repairs. The total of windows that need stained glass work is seven. The plan is to work on one or two at a time to spread out the costs. The Friends of Greenlawn have expressed interest in fundraising for this project.
- The Broad St. Cemetery Preservation Plan project is under way and the first meeting was held with Martha Lyon, Patti Keller, Friends of Broad St representatives and the preservation consultants Fannin & Lehner.
- The Daughters of the American Revolution had a plaque installation ceremony at the tomb of Colonel Timothy Pickering at the Broad St. cemetery on June 19th. The event, which was well attended unveiled the plaque that was approved by this Board in March. The plaque was nicely placed and fitting for the site.
- The Greenlawn office has been retrofitted for the front reception area with a half door and a plastic shield to separate the public from Kelly Ryan's desk. This is part of the COVID-19 changes to public buildings. Also, signage was added to the exterior of the office about the use of face masks inside. The office, garage buildings and all the trucks are being sanitized twice weekly by an outside company contracted by the City.
- The Cemetery Staff received three classes of instruction on proper arboricultural pruning practices. The staff in the past have relied on quick power tool methods of pruning shrubs and the end results are that the plant material becomes more maintenance intensive to keep the artificial shapes of the shrubs. The practice of natural shape pruning will be implemented, and the overall health and appearance of the shrubs will be beneficial.
- The F. Carroll Sargent Arboretum at Greenlawn Cemetery is beginning to take shape. Two volunteers, Charlie Lipson and Marissa Gabriel have begun tagging trees in the cemetery. The tree tags are a small aluminum circle with a number on them and the number corresponds to a set of measurement and photographic data. This data will be used by the Botany students of Dr. Lisa Delisio at Salem State University to correctly catalog and identify those trees. This is an ongoing project and the volunteers are off to a great start.

- Lastly, Mr. LeBlanc reported a couple of accidents with damage to cemetery property. First, is the accident that happened at the Broad St. Cemetery, when the contracted mowing crew hit a section of granite wall and knocked it loose and it dislodged from the wall. He is working with the responsible contractor and a structural engineer to determine the best way to put the granite block back into place. The wall is part of the Goodhue-Clifton-Tate/Richardson tomb and there have been studies on this section of wall in the past, that identified the wall as needing structural work. Maintenance practices and appropriately sized equipment for the job site have been reviewed with the contractor. Secondly, on July 7th the front gate at the Greenlawn cemetery was struck by a large vehicle and the fence and gate were damaged. The cameras in the area were checked but were unable to find the truck. The Salem police were called, and an accident report was filed. Cassidy Brothers Forge has picked up the two sections and they are being repaired.

4. Request by Friends of Greenlawn for Chapel use September 26, 2020 from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

Christine Lutts was on the call and asked if in addition to the virtual challenge she was hosting online, would she be allowed to let a small amount of people (less than 10) in the cemetery to view the historic Chapel with a rope across it. Also, Trails and Sails and Essex Heritage would be promoting the Chapel through Facebook and other social media. All proceeds would go towards the restoration of the Chapel.

The Commission gave several conditions and wanted to have measures in place: everyone had to wear masks if they could not be six (6) feet apart; signage with recommendations to wear a mask; view the chapel with a rope across it; and for folks to preregister for the event.

Patricia Donahue moved to approve the request by Friends of Greenlawn for viewing of the Chapel on September 26, 2020 from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. with previously discussed conditions. Seconded by Anthony O'Donnell. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried.

5. Request for Perpetual Care Funds for Paving

A quote was received from E.J. Paving Company to do the work which is desperately needed. There is \$102,000.00 in the fund and approximately \$35,000.00 will be used. Replenishment of the Perpetual Care Funds is done on an annual basis.

Patricia Donahue moved to approve the request for Perpetual Care Funds for paving. Seconded by Anthony O'Donnell. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried.

6. Request to enter and film at the Charter St. Cemetery

Andrew Carr wants to film and take pictures of the Charter St. Cemetery. While construction is going on at the cemetery, the Commission does not think it is a good idea to give anyone access to enter and film it, especially if any liability issues arise. The Commission will revisit the request when the construction is completed.

Patricia Donahue moved to deny the request to enter and film at the Charter St. Cemetery. Seconded by Anthony O'Donnell. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was denied.

7. Charter St. Cemetery Renovation updates

Stone wall on Liberty Street was numbered, documented and dismantled and transported to landscape contractor's facility to be reassembled. Rebuilt sections to be reinstalled at cemetery later this month. Chain link fence on west property boundary has been removed for new iron fencing to be installed later. Charter Street entrance gate has also been removed to be restored at the foundry. Remaining fencing on Charter Street to be removed later for restoration. Landscape work (new paths, lighting) to begin next month. New benches and landscape plants to be installed at end of project. Cemetery still scheduled to be closed for month of October.

Mr. LeBlanc is working with Patti Kelleher from the Planning Department regarding the renovations at the Charter St. Cemetery and will keep the Commission updated.

8. Broad St. Cemetery Survey updates

Consultants are completing Phase I including historic research and chronology and preliminary site map. They have been to the Phillips Library and found a photo of a public pathway that once existed behind the former Senior Center building. The Landscape Contractor from Charter Street was asked to look at the damaged tomb at the cemetery. Structures North (part of preservation plan consultant team) was also asked to assess condition of damaged tomb. The first public meeting for the project will be held this fall (type of meeting expected to be via Zoom/date still to be determined).

9. Greenlawn Cemetery Master Plan update

Mr. LeBlanc is working to develop a Master Plan with Martha Lyon, who is the selected vendor and a landscape architect, and she will be doing the initial assessment within five (5) phases. There will be six (6) meetings and two (2) public forums. The timeline is from September 2020 until August of 2021.

Mr. LeBlanc will keep the Commission informed of the status of the Master Plan.

10. Discussion on Covid-19 update, mask usage and burial services at Greenlawn Cemetery

Mr. LeBlanc spoke with David Greenbaum, the Health Agent from the Board of Health regarding if wearing masks are required at the cemeteries. Mr. Greenbaum sent a letter to Mr. LeBlanc:

“The mandatory face covering order was put in place to address areas where large crowds might gather and social distancing could not be maintained. It was determined that these areas were the downtown or B5 district and city parks and playgrounds, in particular Salem Willows and Forest River Park. When the map was initially made with the locations that would be affected by the mandatory face covering order Greenlawn Cemetery was inadvertently included as an area the order would apply. Once the mistake was realized the cemetery was removed and the map was updated. This was done because Greenlawn is a cemetery and not a park or playground and the order does not apply to cemeteries.”

Councilor Riccardi was on the call and was concerned about who would be enforcing wearing facemasks. She stated Greenlawn is a popular place for walking and there should be no gathering and some type of signage. Mr. O'Donnell assured the Commission that all local, state and federal guidelines and regulations regarding burial services are mandated at the cemeteries.

Jeffrey Gross from 2 Salt Wall Lane was on the call and was also concerned about the regulations and enforcement regarding signage and wearing facemasks and suggested adding rules for bikers, runners and walkers who are not social distancing at the cemetery. Julie was on the call and voiced her concerns regarding honoring the dead and to take care of the living to keep them healthy and safe.

Jen Ratliff suggested promoting signage now if you cannot be six feet apart, you need to wear a mask.

Patricia Donahue made a motion to formally request that the Cemetery Commission and/or Bob LeBlanc work directly with the BOH to require and encourage the promotion of wearing masks and signage. Seconded by Anthony O'Donnell. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried.

11. Next Meeting Date: September 16, 2020

12. New Business - None

13. Adjournment: Anthony O'Donnell made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Patricia Donahue. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Roomey
Commission Clerk