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MAYOR

CITY OF SALEM
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CEMETERY COMMISSION

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MINUTES OF THE CEMETERY COMMISSION
October 21, 2020

A meeting of the Salem Cemetery Commission was held on October 21, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system. Present on call were:

Roll Call

Present on call were: Acting Chair Beth Gerard, Members: Patricia Donahue, Anthony O'Donnell and Jen Ratliff; Tree Warden Robert LeBlanc and Joanne Roomey, Commission Clerk.

1. **Approve Minutes:** Ms. Donahue moved to approve the August 19, 2020 minutes. Seconded by Mr. O'Donnell. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried.

2. **Robert LeBlanc:** Cemetery Work Report

- Interment Activities at Greenlawn from August 1st until October 21, 2020 are as follows:

Full Burials: 9

Cremations: 11

- Following last month's meeting, signs were placed at all the entrance points and some of the prominent gathering areas at Greenlawn for the recommended use of a face mask while in the cemetery. To date, I have not had any complaints or calls about the cemetery and the public not practicing COVID-19 awareness.
- The following projects were accomplished over the past month and a half: the front gate was repaired after the damage that was done and both sides of the fence were removed and repaired. The gate is now completely functioning and is getting prepared for a fresh coat of paint. The front brick wall at the Orne St. entrance was cleaned and power washed. All mortar joints and broken bricks were repaired or replaced. The Staff breakroom was thoroughly cleaned and scrubbed, and a fresh coat of paint was applied to eliminate the years of dirt and dust. The room where the staff eat their lunch and change-up is now more sanitary and will be easier to keep clean. Some work was done around the Chapel by filling in some of the dangerous sunken sections of the old building structure.

- Dickson Chapel: A request for proposals is being advertised for the repair work to the doors that lead out to the patio area. Several contractors showed up to view the project and ask any questions about the scope of work that has been requested. Those bids are due back to the Purchasing Agent by October 27th.
- The Greenlawn office and all work area continue to be sanitized twice a week, as part of the COVID protocols. Staff have been issued PPE and most recently neck gaiters for their use while working in public.
- I met with the City Engineer this past week to go over the final details on the paving project and we hope to get this work done soon. I don't have a date yet, but the work should not take more than (2) days to complete.
- The F. Carroll Sargent Arboretum at Greenlawn Cemetery continues to gain support and interest. The partners at Salem State University now include the Geography Department GIS students to help with the correct global positioning of the trees that are being inventoried. To date, over 200 trees have been tagged and photographed and the Botany class will begin the identification of the tree species. Eventually, a data base will be created to show case the Arboretum and have many uses to include education and for maintenance of the collection.

3. Request by Friends of Greenlawn for Chapel use November 7, 2020

Christine Lutts was on the call and said the September 26, 2020 fund raiser was a super success and wanted to do it again and call it **"For The Love of Trees II"**. She will be following the Covid-19 guidelines and all proceeds would go towards the restoration of the stained-glass windows in the Chapel.

Ms. Donahue moved to approve the request by Friends of Greenlawn for the Love of Trees II stroll/walking tours and viewing of the Chapel on November 7, 2020 from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Seconded by Mr. O'Donnell. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried.

4. Request for Perpetual Care Funds to erect monument at the Alms House Site - Jen Ratliff (vote required)

Ms. Ratliff gave a presentation about the land which is now occupied by the Collins Cove Condominiums on Settlers Way. The last almshouse built in Salem was designed by Boston architect Charles Bulfinch and opened in 1816 on Collins Cove to provide housing and support for the city's impoverished, many of whom were expected to work the adjacent City Farm to offset the cost of their stay. This location had previously been used as an almshouse and hospital, which included a c. 1747 smallpox burial ground near Almshouse Wharf. Ms. Ratliff referenced headstone fragments from this burial ground, which are now in the care of the Peabody Essex Museum. In 1884, the City built a second building on the property to serve as a hospital for contagious diseases. This building was designed by Salem architect William Devereaux Dennis. This portion of Collins Cove was used for almshouses and hospitals for over two centuries and their burial grounds would have served as the only option for those who were unable to afford formal interment or

that had no family to claim their remains. The City of Salem closed the City Almshouse in 1953 and demolished the following year. The Chronic Care Hospital building was demolished in the 1985 to make way for the creation of the Collins Cove Condominiums, which were completed in 1987. During construction, the discovery of human remains, and headstones were reported to the Cemetery Commission.

Ms. Ratliff made a motion to approve the request to use the Perpetual Care Funds in the amount of \$2,500 to erect a monument at the Alms House Site. Seconded by Ms. Donahue. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried.

5. Request to Hold Wreaths Across America Event December 15, 2020 (vote required)

Mark Lovely was on the call and proposed running the Wreaths Across America Event for three days. There will be a sign-up sheet ahead of time and Mr. LeBlanc and Mr. O'Donnell will work with Mr. Lovely to coordinate places and times where small groups of people can come to the cemetery to place the wreaths on graves

Ms. Donahue moved to approve the request to Hold Wreaths Across America Event from Friday, December 18th until Sunday, December 20th from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Seconded by Ms. Ratliff. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried.

6. Charter St. Cemetery Renovation updates

The construction project on the Charter Street Cemetery is moving along nicely. Martha Lyon and Patti Kelleher have done a great job with the designed improvements. The wall on Liberty Street was completely taken down and re-built with nice granite block and mortared in place. The entrance to the cemetery from that side was improved with removal of brush and growth and replaced with some very nice low plantings on both sides inside the fence. The iron fence on Charter Street side was removed and is being refurbished and will be reinstalled. The pathways throughout the cemetery have been clearly defined and are in the process of being built into a stone dust pathway. The lighting is the last piece and that is getting installed this week. Along the edges of the new pathway screened loam was raked to grade and was seeded to hold the walkway in place and dress off the surrounding disturbed grounds.

7. Broad St. Cemetery Survey updates

The gate at the Broad Street Cemetery has been repaired. The Broad Street Cemetery Preservation Plan project is under way and the first public meeting was held on October 8th. Martha Lyon and her team did an excellent presentation about the history of the cemetery and some of the unique features that are part of the site. Mr. LeBlanc has copies of that presentation and if anyone who could not attend would like to view that he will be happy to send that out. The gravestone assessments are still being worked on and the physical features of the cemetery, like the walls and the fences are still in progress. Recently, there was a concerned party who emailed about the fact that there were fragments of gravestones that potentially could be picked up by people visiting the cemetery. Mr. LeBlanc surveyed the grounds and on the side of caution, due to the time of year and the increased visitors to Salem and the cemeteries, he asked the City's stone preservationist contractor Fannin and Lehner to collect any fragments that may pose a potential for theft from the Broad St. Cemetery. He also asked them to collect and catalog the fragments and they were stored at the Greenlawn cemetery office.

8. Greenlawn Cemetery Master Plan update

The first meeting of the Greenlawn Master Plan working group has been scheduled for November 5, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. This will be a virtual meeting and invitations have been sent out for anyone who may be interested in working on the project. The timeline for completion should be by August of 2021.

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

9. Next Meeting Date: November 17, 2020

10. New Business – None

11. Adjournment: Ms. Donahue made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. O'Donnell. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Roomey
Commission Clerk