



KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL  
MAYOR

CITY OF SALEM  
MASSACHUSETTS  
CEMETERY COMMISSION

98 WASHINGTON STREET - MAILING ADDRESS  
SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS 01970  
TEL. (978) 745-0195  
FAX (978) 741-7041

BETH GERARD, CHAIR

**BOARD MEMBERS**  
PATRICIA DONAHUE  
ANTHONY O'DONNELL  
JEN RATLIFF

**MINUTES OF THE CEMETERY COMMISSION**  
**February 17, 2021**

A meeting of the Salem Cemetery Commission was held on February 17, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system. Present on call were: Chair Beth Gerard, Members: Patricia Donahue, Jen Ratliff, Anthony O'Donnell and Tree Warden Robert LeBlanc.

**1. Approve Cemetery Commission Minutes for November 24, 2020 and January 20, 2021.**

Ms. Donahue made a motion to approve the Cemetery Commission Minutes of November 24, 2020 and January 20, 2021. Seconded by Ms. Ratliff. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried.

**2. Cemetery Commission Organizational Assignments for CY 2021**

Pat Donahue made a motion to elect Beth Gerard as Chair and to review this matter annually. Anthony O'Donnell seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

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

- Interment Activities within the cemetery for the past month are:
  - (2) Cremation burials
  - (9) Full burials
- The following is an update on the snow events for the past month, four (4) plowable storms. All cemetery Staff were in working on the cemeteries and street assignments.
- Due to injury, a staff member will be out for approximately two months. Right now, the staff is at three (3) with one open position.
- With the start of February, the staff began to collect all the holiday wreaths around the Greenlawn Cemetery. There are still quite a few on the monuments and this work will continue as time allows until completion.
- There are a couple of cemetery infrastructure failures that need to be noted tonight. First, at the Broad St. Cemetery last week, a section of the wooden fence tipped over into a back yard on Mount Vernon St. The Staff was there on the next day to recover

the fence section out of the yard and install a temporary fence for the time being, until repairs can be made. This fence will be addressed in the total Survey of the cemetery, as part of the “edges” in Martha Lyon’s report. Replacement recommendations for fence type and style will be provided. The second incident has to do with a couple of stones that make up the wall that surrounds the Dickson Chapel garden. The three-foot wall surrounds the garden and at one time may have been the foundation for the glass conservatory. These repairs will need to be done with historically correct mortar materials and only attempted during favorable weather conditions. There is no danger to anyone passing by and the entire wall needs work.

- A project is pending for some winter work to clean-up of the spoils pile area, down near the Sargent Pond. This is where all the leaves, grass clippings, brush and earth materials are dumped. I met with the Salem Conservation Agent, Brittany Dolan, and discussed the need to take the spoil, screen out the rocks and debris and save the loam. This will serve as a savings on the purchase of loam and reduce the volume of debris at the spoils pile area. She agreed that it needed to be done and felt it was part of regular maintenance at the cemetery. The operation will require a motorized screen-all, a front-end loader, and a dump truck. I have asked John Mscicz, out excavation contractor, for a rental period of two weeks on a machine that he owns. A straw waddle will be installed along the banks of the Sargent pond for the duration of the project to protect against any soil run off. All this work will be done in-house by the cemetery staff.

#### **4. Greenlawn Cemetery Master Plan update**

Mr. LeBlanc gave a brief update on the Greenlawn Cemetery master plan and outlined what had occurred since the last Commissioners meeting. Three public meetings had been held, one on January 26, 2021 with the friends of Greenlawn group, the second on February 1, 2021 with the neighborhood group and the Ward six councilor, Megan Riccardi and the last meeting on the February 8, 2021 with the Conservation Commission and the Historical Commission. During these meetings, Martha Lyon asked a series of questions to the people who attended and then recorded the results. This is the information that will be brought back to the working group to help for the draft for the Master Plan. Ms. Donahue commented that she liked the ideas about the cremation paths that had been presented and others agreed. Some discussion followed about the traditional values of some of the citizens of Salem and how some proposals, such as the “scattering gardens” would be received. Mr. O’Donnell added that he was aware of other cemeteries that have these types of alternative burial options. Mr. LeBlanc said he would keep the Commissioner informed as the process went forward. Ms. Gerard asked if it would be possible if the Commissioner’s alone, could meet with Martha Lyon. The

Commissioners would like to meet and walk the grounds of Greenlawn with Ms. Lyon. Mr. LeBlanc said he would reach out to her and set it up, probably in April when the weather is a little better for an outdoor walk.

**5. Broad St. Cemetery Survey updates**

The Broad Street Cemetery updates were put on hold because there was a ZOOM meeting the following night on this topic. Michael Steinitz was on the Zoom call and was asked to speak to the Commissioners and he invited them all to join in on the Martha Lyon presentation on the historical Broad Street Cemetery.

**6. Charter St. Cemetery plans for re-opening**

The Charter Street Cemetery discussion will be tabled until next month. The presenters do not have all of their correspondence ready to present to the Commission. The Commission Chair, Ms. Gerard, said that was understandable and the Charter St. Re-opening will be re-visited on the March Agenda.

**7. Comments from the Public:**

There were no comments from the public.

**8. New Business:**

Mr. LeBlanc informed the Commissioners that he was in the process of getting three quotes for the replacement of the pond fountains. He will follow up with the information in March. Also, that a "spring clean-up" of the monuments will need to take place and Mr. LeBlanc will post an ad in the newspaper and post it on the Salem website.

**9. Next Meeting Date:** Wednesday, March 17, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. via ZOOM.

**10. Adjournment:** Ms. Donahue made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Ms. Ratliff. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Roomey  
Commission Clerk