



KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL
MAYOR

CITY OF SALEM
MASSACHUSETTS
CEMETERY COMMISSION

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BETH GERARD, CHAIR

BOARD MEMBERS
PATRICIA DONAHUE
ANTHONY O'DONNELL
JEN RATLIFF

MINUTES OF THE CEMETERY COMMISSION
April 21, 2021

A meeting of the Salem Cemetery Commission was held on April 21, 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; Tree Warden Robert LeBlanc and Joanne Roomey, Commission Clerk.

1. Approve Cemetery Commission Minutes for March 17, 2021

Ms. Donahue made a motion to approve the Cemetery Commission Minutes of March 17, 2021. Seconded by Ms. Ratliff. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Robert LeBlanc: Cemetery Work Report

- Interment Activities within the cemetery for the past month are:
 - (4) Cremation burials
 - (9) Full burials
- The Cemetery staff is in full swing for the spring clean-up of the grounds. Raking, edging, and cleaning flower and shrub beds is taking place almost daily.
- The trellis was replaced with new pressure treated wood posts for the continued cultivation of the wisteria shrubs in front of the cemetery office. The form has been built and the area prepared for the concrete pad for the new park bench near the fountain pond. The staff is just waiting for several good temperature days to mix and pour the concrete. The bench, with the plaque is already assembled and will put in as soon as the concrete is ready.
- Kelly Ryan has sent in the spring flower order to Kane's Flower World. Prices have gone up this year and the money set aside for flowers from the trust funds will be supplemented with some money from grounds expenses account to fill the order. The typical order for flowers is 900 plants.

- Plans for the Memorial Day event this year will be different from previous years. A plaque will be unveiled at the Fredrick West Lander tomb at Broad St. Cemetery, with the Memorial Day ceremonies taking place at that location, not Greenlawn.
- The fence on the Winthrop St. side of the Broad St. Cemetery has been repaired by the staff. The fence was stood-up and pieced together with wood screws and some small sections of wood to the existing posts. The fence is now secure and back in place.
- On March 23, 2021, a meeting was held via Zoom at the Howard St. Cemetery with Doreen Wade from Salem United Inc.; contractor from Epoch Preservation; Patti Kelleher and Mr. LeBlanc to discuss the assessment project involving the (3) headstones located in African American section of the cemetery. The work will begin once a Right of Entry Form has been signed by the City of Salem and Salem United Inc. and/or their contractor Epoch Preservation. The headstones will be assessed, and Epoch Preservation will present a detailed scope of work for their restoration. That scope of work will outline what will follow in the process to memorialize those individuals that are buried there. During the summer, more research will take place about the area and its history and grants will be sought to aide in the project.
- The SOLitude Lake Management team has begun to monitor and test the two ponds at Greenlawn. Mr. LeBlanc will reach out to them to see what the date is for the fountain installation.
- Greenlawn Master Plan Update: Martha Lyon has put together an initial table of contents for the Plan and is working on the Context section. This will be the story of the History, Cultural, Natural and all the landscape features that make up Greenlawn. She is looking forward to meeting with the Cemetery Commissioners, as they had expressed interest in doing, probably two at a time when the schedule can be set for the month of May. The working groups will also re-convene to go over all the data that has been collected withing the next two months.

3. Charter St. Re-opening discussion - Vote

The fence installation is a slow and lengthy process and has not been completed due to materials and manufacturing. The commission will hold off until the May 19, 2021 meeting to get a date for re-opening.

Ms. Ratliff made a motion to table this discussion until the May 19, 2021 Cemetery Commission meeting. Ms. Donahue seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Rules and Regulations for the Charter St. Cemetery- Vote

Elizabeth Peterson, Director of the Witch House, was on the call. She will be managing the Welcome Center at the Charter St. Cemetery. When people arrive, there will be three staff members to hand out maps/guides and ask for a \$2.00 donation. There will be a separate entrance and exit with handicap accessibility. There was a discussion regarding occupancy size, tour guided group size and Covid standards. The cemetery will be open seven days a week from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., with winter months from 12:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Daniel Fury from Black Cat Tours was on the call and wanted to know what the limit was on how many people you could have in a tour group. Christine Lutts added that the commission should be proactive instead of reactive and should have a plan before the re-opening.

Ms. Ratliff made a motion to table this discussion until the May 19, 2021 Cemetery Commission meeting. Ms. Donahue seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Friends of Greenlawn Event request- Christine Lutts

Christine Lutts was on the call and wanted to have three events:

1. May 1, 2021 – Finding Ancestry Day from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. with a rain date of May 2, 2021. Also, the Friends of Greenlawn Cemetery have invited the Tree Commission to host a table regarding tree efforts.
2. May 8, 2021 – Bird Walk/Watch Day from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and will be coordinated with Charlie Lipson who was also on the call.
3. May 18, 2021 – Ribbon cutting on the side door of the Dickson Chapel, time to be determined.

Ms. Ratliff made a motion to approve the three events. Ms. Donahue seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Comments from the Public: None

7. Cemetery Paving – additional funding request – Vote

Mr. LeBlanc made an additional funding request of \$35,000 for asphalt paving to come out of the Perpetual Care Fund which has a balance of \$106,000, not including the \$35,000 for money that was approved by the Commission last summer for paving, as that amount was never encumbered.

Ms. Donahue made a motion to approve Mr. LeBlanc adding funding for asphalt paving in the amount of \$35,000 to be taken from the Perpetual Care Fund. Ms. Ratliff seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

8. New Business:

- a. Dog restrictions or fine for not removing and disposing feces;
- b. Add more security cameras to Greenlawn Cemetery;
- c. Closing the gates; and
- d. Number of people allowed at the cemetery for funerals should be within the state guidelines.

9. **Next Meeting Dates:** Wednesday, April 28, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. for a site visit at Charter Street Cemetery and May 19, 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 unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Roomey
Commission Clerk

**Know your rights under the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. c. 30A §18-25 and
City Ordinance Sections 2-2028 through 2-2033**