



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**  
**May 19, 2021**

A meeting of the Salem Cemetery Commission was held on May 19, 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 April 21, 2021**

Ms. Donahue made a motion to approve the Cemetery Commission Minutes of April 21, 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:
  - (5) Cremation burials
  - (2) Full burials
- The spring clean-up of the grounds is nearly complete. All the shrub and flower beds have been cleaned, the staff is just working on the final mulching and getting all the annual flowers planted. The Pollinator Garden will need some work and that will be addressed after Memorial Day with fresh mulch and deadheading any perennials from last year.
- The Orne Street gate is now complete. The gate received a coat of heavy marine primer and then a gloss black finish coat of paint. This work was performed by the ROCA group, who come to Salem with people who are looking to get back to work and a new start in life. They will also be working on painting the stairs at the Grand Army of the Republic Statue next week. These steps did not get painted last year and they are in real need for some spruce up.

- Mr. LeBlanc has several new flags, both the American flag and the POW flag that will get swapped out on the two flagpoles this week. Tomorrow, students from the Bates School will place the small flags on veterans' graves on the Liberty Hill side of the cemetery. If anyone is interested in helping around noontime, there should be flags available.
- Mr. LeBlanc received the notification from Kim Emerling, Veterans Agent, on the Memorial Day ceremony. Everyone should have received this in an email today. No in person attendance, except the speakers and it will begin on Monday at 12 noon.
- The Chapel doors are still being worked on. The carpenter found more wood rot on the inside of the door casing. He is in discussion with the Architect on what else needs to be replaced before he proceeds. Dan Stanwood, DPS Building maintenance foreman, painted the two windows to the left and right of the new door green, in anticipation of the new door being restored to Essex Green, which was the original color. Completion looks to be within the month.
- Salem Engineering has sent over the task order for the paving. The company is working in the Balcomb Street neighborhood and then will come to Greenlawn. The schedule has not been set, but this will take a week or two for prepping the site and then paving. Afterwards, there will be loam and seeding on the edges and that can be done with in-house staff and some hydroseed.
- The new fountains have arrived. Mr. LeBlanc will need to have an electrician remount the complete electrical box at each one of the ponds. The parts are all brand new and although we have the correct set-up, this is a new system and best thing to do is re-wire it from the panel.
- Last week, Mr. LeBlanc walked all of the satellite cemeteries with the lawn maintenance contractor. They were told how to cut each property, where to be careful and what the expectations are for this year.
- Two weeks ago, a worker was walking on the sloped section of the Broad Street Cemetery and his leg fell in a hole. The hole turned out to be the entrance plate to the tomb that was underground. Mr. LeBlanc contacted the cemetery interment specialist, John Msisch, and asked if he would be able to do a quick repair to make the area safe. He did the repairs the next day using a concrete cemetery lid, cut down to a small size and concrete mortar and sealed the opening and covered with earth. This is something that is happening at this cemetery on the sloped sections and will need to be addressed for safety purposes.
- Martha Lyon will be presenting to the Board next month. She will have an update and could be available for anyone who would like to meet and walk with her prior to that. The follow week, the Master Plan working group will re-convene and go over the data that has been collected so far from Greenlawn.

- Last week, Mr. LeBlanc was approached by a woman who said she had witnessed a man dumping household trash in the cemetery. She pointed out the man and the car, and Bob spoke to the man. First, he denied that it happened and then he admitted to it. Mr. LeBlanc told him that this was not allowed and that he should leave the cemetery. He escorted him out.

**3. Howard Street Cemetery - African American Headstones Assessment Report: Rachel Meyer/Salem United**

This will be heard at the June meeting.

**4. Opening of the Charter St. Cemetery**

Ms. Ratliff made a motion to re-open the Charter Street Cemetery on Friday, May 28, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. Ms. Donahue seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

**5. Tour Groups/ Occupancy limits for Charter St. Cemetery Grounds Preservation**

The commission and Elizabeth Peterson discussed limiting the maximum number of visitors to 75 people and the number of people on each tour group to 15 people. The commission will follow-up with Ms. Peterson at the June meeting to see if any changes need to be made.

Mr. O'Donnell made a motion for the occupancy limit to be 75 people and the tour groups to be a maximum of 15 people starting on May 28, 2021, to be revisited at our upcoming meetings leading up to and through October. Ms. Ratliff seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

**6. Friends of Greenlawn letter for Chapel Funding – Discussion**

Christine Lutts was on the call. She sent a letter to the Mayor for awareness purpose regarding restoring and preserving the Dickenson Memorial Chapel through the use of American Rescue Plan funds that are to be released to cities. The Mayor's Office is awaiting the funding guidelines from the federal government in order to evaluate if the Dickson Chapel will be an allowable use. Ms. Lutts is looking for any funding source for the Chapel renovations. The Cemetery Commission will stay alert for any news on when the Mayor has decided how the funding will be distributed and if the Chapel project will be eligible.

**7. Comments from the Public - None**

**8. Greenlawn Security Concerns and Dog Walking Rules Review**

Mr. LeBlanc contacted Hunts Security Company to get an estimate for security cameras to be connected to a web-base platform with live or archived video for six different locations at Greenlawn Cemetery. They said it would be approximately \$580 per camera plus there would be a Verizon Cloud connection/reconnection subscription for a total of \$4,824.

The commission discussed dog walking rules and decided to put up more signs for folks to pick up after their dogs, through a partnership with the City's Animal Control Officer. They wanted people to keep in mind, this is a cemetery, not a dog park. They also discussed illegal dumping of trash and decided more signs with fines for that as well.

**9. COVID-19 updates and mask wearing signage review**

After May 29, 2021 we will no longer have to wear masks inside or out. All signage will be removed. Mr. O'Donnell said the funeral home is still requiring masks to be worn inside.

Ms. Ratliff made a motion to lift all restrictions established during COVID-19 protocols at the Greenlawn Cemetery as to the number of people who could gather at the gravesite during funerals. Mr. O'Donnell seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

**10. New Business:** None

**11. Next Meeting Dates:** Wednesday, June 16, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

**12. 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 8:00 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**