



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
September 15, 2021

A meeting of the Salem Cemetery Commission was held on September 15, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system. Present on call were: Chair Beth Gerard, Members: Patricia Donahue, Anthony O'Donnell and Jen Ratliff; Cemetery Superintendent Robert LeBlanc and Commission Clerk Joanne Roomey.

1. Approve Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes for August 25, 2021

Ms. Donahue made a motion to approve the Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes for August 25, 2021. Seconded by Ms. Ratliff. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Cemetery Work Report

- Interment Activities within the cemetery for the past month are:

(9) Cremation burials
(2) Full burials

- **Greenlawn Cemetery**

- The Salem State Botany class started having weekly labs here on Tuesday morning. The students, led by Dr Lisa Delissio, will be working on identifying plant morphology, starting with grasses and vines and how they function and then will work into larger plant systems. There were about (15) students and they all seemed very excited about working at the Sargent Arboretum at Greenlawn.
- The cemetery staff have been working on spreading out the loam and preparing for seed in the newly paved areas. The work is at about 60% and we hope to have this complete by the end of next week.
- Starting after the Labor Day weekend the cemetery and tree staff have begun to institute security measures at the cemetery. The gates are being closed at sunset and re-opened at the morning start time of 7:00 a.m. The weekend shift will be coverage through DPS

staff who are working in the city on other functions but will open or close depending on what is needed to complete the coverage for the security at Greenlawn. Last weekend, there was a missed time to open, but that will be adjusted and should begin to run smoothly. Looking at video on the number of vehicles being cleared from the cemetery, it is a significant number, and this appears to be much needed.

- The dogs in the cemetery are being monitored for compliance with just the minimal amount of added signage, but still there have been discoveries of dogs leaving behind messes and dog refuse bags left at the front gate. Staff will document these activities and will report to the Board as the next couple of months go on.
 - The side doorway at the Dickson Chapel is still under construction. The architect, the contractor, Patti Kelleher, and Mr. LeBlanc all met last week to review progress. The doors are now being fitted with additional weather stripping and interior latches to improve the seal on the doors.
 - The wrought iron fence on Appleton Street was repaired last Friday and Mr. LeBlanc met with the owner of Cassidy Forge to go over more work that he has pointed out and need repairs. This will be quoted and the funding for this will need to be reviewed.
 - Kelly Ryan is working on some of the records that are stored in the basement of the cemetery office. A lot of the paperwork has been stored in cardboard containers. They have begun to deteriorate and need to be re-organized, labeled and put into new weather tight containers.
 - Martha Lyon will be meeting with Mr. LeBlanc and a local arborist to go over the tree inventory and survey. The scope of the work will be reviewed, and the arborist will get working on this piece of the Master Plan as soon as this is agreed upon.
 - The cemetery staff are following the proper COVID-19 protocols and they are eligible to participate in weekly testing if they desire. Two, half hour time slots have been authorized through the city to allow them to take advantage of this if they choose.
- **Broad Street Cemetery**
 - There was another cave-in on one of the tombs on the slope in the front of the cemetery, nearest the Broad Street side. With all the rain that we have had, there are some shallow spots, and the underground structures are being affected by erosion and openings are exposed. The latest failure was repaired to make the area safe, but more work may be needed.

- There will also be some tree pruning on an oak tree at the back of the cemetery next week that has branched out onto a neighbor back yard. This will be accomplished with hand climbing and careful lowering of cut sections.

- **Charter St. Cemetery**

- The cemetery staff continue to spend time at Charter Street on Wednesdays and the lawn service is performed on Mondays, probably through the end of October.

- **Howard St. Cemetery**

- Rachel Meyer and Epoch Preservation have been working on the three stones from the African American section of the cemetery and all reports are that this is going well. I suggest that maybe have Rachel report to the Commissioner at the October meeting to present her findings.

3. Charter St. Cemetery – Operation & Grounds update – Elizabeth Peterson

Elizabeth Peterson was on the call and said everything is going swimmingly and to keep the tour group size and the overall occupancy size the same. Ms. Peterson wants to change the egress to entering at Charter Street entrance and exiting out onto Liberty Street. If anyone needs any ADA assistance, they will personally bring them in and out. She also had concerns regarding being understaffed. When this occurs, she wants to only have ten people in at a time for about ten minutes. Ms. Peterson will keep the commission informed regarding the progress.

4. Boston Tea Party and Ships Museum Request (BTPSM)– Vote

Evan O'Brien from BTPSM was on the call and said they want to place one commemorative marker (medallion/plaque) next to John Prince's grave and an interpretive signpost near his headstone at Broad Street Cemetery in honor of the Boston Tea Party participants of December 16, 1773. They offered to have a ceremony with the mayor when they place the marker. BTPSM will be celebrating the 250th Anniversary in 2023. Mr. LeBlanc will coordinate with the Salem Historical Commission, Mayor's Office, Destination Salem and DPW staff to make sure their request meets all the criteria. Mr. LeBlanc will follow-up with the Cemetery Commission and BTPSM.

Ms. Ratliff made a motion to approve Boston Tea Party and Ships Museum to place a commemorative marker at Broad Street Cemetery contingent on the Historical Commission's approval. Ms. Donahue seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Cemetery Residency Policy Review - Vote

Shirley Marescalchi was on the call, she is a lifelong Salem resident and wanted to purchase a new single grave for her son who has been cremated and at the time of his death, was not a Salem resident. She was denied burial at Greenlawn Cemetery because they did not qualify. Ms. Marescalchi wanted to know how the commission determines eligibility for the burial of a loved one and how does she go about appealing this decision.

Mr. O'Donnell made a motion to table this until the next meeting for the commission to keep the Cemetery Residency Policy the same or change it. Ms. Ratliff seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Financial Report/Trust Fund Balances - Vote

Mr. LeBlanc went over the Cemetery Trust Fund balances and what each eleven trust funds can be used for and suggestion to keep it at the same allotment of 3.5% with a total allocation of \$127,957.05.

Ms. Ratliff made a motion to approve the Financial Report and Trust Fund balances presented by Mr. LeBlanc to keep 3.5% for eleven trust funds with a total allocation of \$127,957.05. Ms. Donahue seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

7. New Business

1. Do a survey what cities/towns allow dogs in cemetery
2. How many spaces do we have left at cemetery?

- 8. Adjournment:** Ms. Ratliff made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Ms. Donahue. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Roomey
Commission Clerk