



KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL
MAYOR

CITY OF SALEM
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CEMETERY COMMISSION

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JACOB ST. LOUIS

**MINUTES OF THE CEMETERY COMMISSION
JUNE 15, 2022**

A meeting of the Salem Cemetery Commission was held on June 15, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., via ZOOM, an online video conference call system. Present on call were: Chair Beth Gerard, Members: Patricia Donahue, Kate Hanson and Jacob St. Louis; Cemetery Superintendent Robert LeBlanc and Commission Clerk Joanne Roomey. Absent was Anthony O'Donnell.

1. Approve Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes for May 18, 2022

Ms. Donahue made a motion to approve the Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes for May 18, 2022. Seconded by Ms. Hanson. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Superintendents Report – Robert LeBlanc

- Interment Activities within the cemetery since the last meeting:
 - (2) cremation burials, with two more scheduled this week
 - (3) full burials
 - New Graves Purchased since last report: 8
 - Requests for Chapel Usage: 0
 - Dog Related issues/Calls: 2
 - Residency Clarifications (research beyond documents provided): 0
- Landscape improvements have been on-going throughout the past month. Work consists of grass cutting and trimming, top dressing of loam and seed on newer graves and bare areas, foundation installation for headstone, re-setting headstones and flower watering. Tree branch pruning has continued with the tree crew spending one day a week working on dead branch removals on primary and secondary roads.
- On Monday, this week the two ponds were inspected by the Regional Permit coordinator from Solitude Lake, our service provider for the pond health. Mr. LeBlanc has requested the results of this survey and will

share that with the Commission when they are delivered. The Sargent Pond has a significant amount of floating algae and that was treated during the visit. The smaller fountain pond was mechanically cleared, using string trimmers and hand tools, of invasive growth around the edges by the in-house staff. This will help to keep the ponds clear of vegetation and help with the pond structures. This pond should have a full clean-out this fall once the water levels drop for the winter. This project will require permitting from the Salem Conservation Commission. This was recommended in the recent Master Plan.

- Two water leaks were addressed this week by the cemetery staff. The main valve to the outdoor faucets was stuck in a half open position and this was freed up for full flow to the system. The faucet near the greenhouse patio was not working and Mr. LeBlanc asked to have it checked out. The valve was opened and now the faucet is functioning properly. This work will help improve the cemetery outdoor watering system.
- The week just before Memorial Day, the Highway Department came to Greenlawn and performed two days of pavement patching. Several of the worst sections of roadway were overlaid with a total of 25 tons of hot asphalt and rolled. This was a significant improvement to the road system in the cemetery, many thanks to the DPS Highway crew.
- A brief overview of the Historic cemeteries are as follows:
 - Broad St. Cemetery - The staff has gone to the cemetery with loam and seed filling in several depressions that had appeared on the front terraces. The openings, due to soil erosion, are the doorways to the underground tombs. The depressions had become hazardous, and this is an annual maintenance issue.
 - The Boston Tea Party & Ship Museum - contacted the cemetery department and said they are ready to place the commemorative marker at Mr. John Prince's grave. He was one of two Salem residents buried in Salem and had been original members of the Boston Tea Party. Harmony Grove also has a member of this group of patriots and that ceremony will be at 11:00 a.m., and then Broad St. Cemetery, for Mr. Prince, at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 22nd.
 - Charter St. Cemetery - is seeing a lot of visitors as the tourist season gets busier. The cemetery staff are there on Wednesdays, weekly to perform mulch bed weeding and other general maintenance required. The grass areas are cut on every other week schedule and that will be on-going until October. The pathways and last year's landscape improvements seem to be holding up well.

- The Friends Cemetery - This cemetery is also having a bi-monthly grass cutting. The gates are opened upon request by cemetery staff. Tomorrow, relatives of those interred there, will have requested a walk thru.
- Howard St. Cemetery - This cemetery is scheduled for on-going grass cutting on the same schedule as the Friends and Charter St. Two weeks ago, a caller was concerned about a headstone that was leaning, and probably has been like this for quite some time and reported that kids were standing on the headstone. Mr. LeBlanc inspected the site for any damage and cordoned off the headstone to prevent any further misuse. A professional preservationist will need to look at the headstone and recommend what corrections will be needed.
- A walk thru meeting was held last week with Brendan Murray, of Murray Masonry Co. to look at the Dickson Chapel stonework. The meeting lasted for approximately an hour and Mr. Murray was extremely interested in the age and condition of the Chapel. Some of his observations are as follows: The Exterior has three areas of concern:
 1. the slate slab that is in the outside garden area, right outside the new chapel doors has sunk. The slate slab has a slight crack running the length of the stone, perpendicular to the door opening to the inside of the chapel. An inspection of the area was performed from the basement looking up and it was determined that there is some kind of hollow under the slate stone, but it was not visible from the basement. The stone will need to be removed to understand the reason for the sag. He felt that this was something that could be accomplished and will provide an estimate for the work.
 2. There is a corner stone on the building, to the left of the front door, about ten feet off the ground, which has come loose. The stone is roughly 2' x 2' in size and needs to be re-set into the corner. He felt this was due to eroded flashing materials and could be repaired.
 3. The chimney stack for the basement furnace is in a state of dis-repair. The stack is built from brick and will all need to be repaired with new mortar joints and additional brick. This opening does not affect the operation of the furnace but is letting the weather into the basement of the chapel.

On the interior of the chapel, he looked at the masonry work and determined that the reason that the paint was peeling off in the two corners near the front of the room is due to the fact that the stone blocks had been painted with a paint that retains moisture. This trapped moisture is causing the problems with the masonry, and it should all be scrapped off, masonry re-pointed and then the correct type of paint can then be applied if that is what is planned.

Overall, he said although he is not a structural engineer, but works with this type of a restoration project all the time, he felt there were not

structural issues with the building. He suggested to consider the repairs for some of the exterior and interior stonework to keep the aging building at its present state.

3. Greenlawn Master Plan- Acceptance in Entirety-Vote

Ms. Donahue made a motion to accept the Greenlawn Master Plan in its entirety. Seconded by Ms. Hanson. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

4. Salem Cemetery Residency Policy. Present Status/Amendments – Vote

The commission thanked Ms. Hanson for consolidating and formalizing the previous policies of January 4, 2001 and September 12, 2018. The commission further recommends that this policy be posted at Greenlawn Cemetery and on the City of Salem website so that the information is easily accessible to all interested parties.

Mr. St. Louis made a motion to accept the revised policies with the amendments to the Salem Cemetery Residency Policy with the provision that this will be revisited when more space becomes available. Seconded by Ms. Hanson. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Request to amend the Ordinance sec. 16-68, related to Greenlawn Cemetery “Form of deed for sale of new lots”- Vote

The commission discussed changing the ordinance to remove the language in the fifth paragraph “and maintained for no less than 21 days”. Ms. Ryan stated that 21 days is not enough time to address these issues. Ms. Gerard explained to the commission the process of getting an ordinance changed.

Ms. Donahue made a motion to recommend to the city council to amend the language from the fifth paragraph of the Ordinance Section 1. Sec. 16-68. Seconded by Mr. St. Louis. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Dickson Chapel Building Usage Policy Review & Discussion

Mr. LeBlanc suggested that folks fill out an application to use the Greenlawn Cemetery Facilities/Grounds. It would be used as an agreement between the city, cemetery department and the person who wants to use the grounds and/or the chapel, like a contract. It would include the date, time, audience size, charges and special needs. Folks must keep in mind that there are no restrooms, no food or drink allowed in chapel or dogs. If it is private, it does not have to be ADA compliant, but if it is public it has to be.

Ms. Donahue said times have changed and most cemeteries/chapels have “friends” groups. If you look on the computer, you will see people do a lot of different things to raise money: christenings, funerals, weddings. We should not be close minded, be more open minded for memorials, funerals, cremations and burials. The friend’s group has made the chapel come alive. The commission should not be so strict.

Ms. Gerard will speak with Solicitor Rennard tomorrow and get her opinion on the draft policy/application and make sure all the legal verbiage is correct.

7. **New Business** – Review the Dickson Chapel Usage Policy.
8. **Adjournment:** Mr. St. Louis made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Ms. Hanson. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:35 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