**CEMETERY COMMISSION MINUTES**

**Tuesday, September 10, 2019**

Call to Order: by Chairman at 6:30 pm

Roll Call of Board Members: Present: Ron Harrison, Mary Anne Silva, Patricia Donahue,

Absent: Susan DameGreene; Tardy: Anthony O’Donnell (arrived 6:43 pm)

Pat Donahue made the move to Dispense with reading of May 14, 2019 and August 13, 2019 Minutes, seconded by Ron Harrison. AIF.

**Next Meeting Date**: Wednesday October 9, 2019 at 6:00 pm (Confirmed after close of Meeting)

Cemetery Staff Attendees: Bob LeBlanc, Ray Jodoin

**Chairman’s Report on Friends Cemetery Sign Event**

About 50-55 attended this informal event. This was an important event for Salem’s history. The Mayor spoke and a write up befitting the event appeared on the front page of the local newspaper.

**Report of Robert LeBlanc, General Foreman:**

* Orne St. fence repairs are anticipated to be complete by end of month
* Security cameras show no unusual activity over the past two months
* Will meet with Solitude Lake to assess the aquatic vegetation control program for next year as well as an annual review of this year’s program and recommendations to maintain water quality as we move forward
* Dickson Chapel Occupancy Permit has been renewed and is valid for two years
* September 28th Friends of Greenlawn will host an event to include a tree planting
* Bob LeBlanc will participate in discussions with Friends of Greenlawn and SSU re the potential for a level 1 designation for an arboretum for Greenlawn Cemetery
* Cemetery equipment has been inventoried and items identified as surplus will be removed from the books
* A new John Deere Backhoe has been ordered through the Capital Improvements Projects and Equipment Program to replace the old one
* Cemetery grounds work is a daily operation with Greenlawn lawn cut almost daily and the 4 satellite cemeteries cut bi-monthly. We had 3 college students during the summer assisting with this work as well as Serena Ross assisting with plantings.
* Requesting quotes for flag pole repair as one flagpole in Greenlawn is not working properly. He is also receiving quotes to have lights installed at the base of the poles so flags are flown 24/7.

Grave clean-up is continuing throughout the cemetery with focus on the active area; new signage has been posted.

**Ray Jodoin: Cemetery Master Plan Update**

He is continuing to reach out to other cemeteries for what they included in their master plan. We want to get the scope of work needed right.

**Appointment of Robert LeBlanc as the Commission Liaison**

**Robert LeBlanc’s Background;** *A certified arborist, a member of the executive board of MA Tree Wardens and Foresters Assn. as well as a past president; worked at Walpole for 20 years and 5 years at Babson College; SSU graduate.*

***Ron Harrison introduced a motion to appoint Robert LeBlanc, General Foreman, to work with Salem State University and the Friends of Greenlawn Cemetery to acquire a Level 1 Arboretum Certification status for Greenlawn Cemetery. Mr. LeBlanc will report to the Cemetery Commission the status of such on a regular basis.***

***And further he be authorized to represent the Cemetery Commission at the September 26, 2019 City Council Meeting to report on Dickson Chapel Updates and Arboretum status.***

Mary Anne Silva seconded the motion. AIF. (Anthony arrived at 6:43 pm)

The invitation to attend the City Council Meeting was handed out to Commission members prior to the motion.

**Kate Fox: Tour Guide Information**

Destination Salem is the city’s outreach organization. About 5 years ago a gentleman digging in Charter Street Cemetery was the catalyst for monitors in the cemetery. 2 years ago the City implemented limited access for October weekends due to the number of visitors. During 2018 all weekends were monitored and limited. In October 2018 there were 47,258 people in/out of Charter Street on weekends (not to include October 27th which was a rainout)

In their role as a partner with the city, Destination Salem wants to ensure the historic cemeteries are protected for years to come. If the Commission needs anything publicized she is willing to assist us.

As Kate spent time monitoring Charter Street she saw the most negative impact from leaders of student groups conducting scavenger hunts, with parent and teacher chaperones unaware that a cemetery is not a play area for children. This time is better spent at the Common, Derby Wharf. Unmonitored, unchaperoned time for children should not happen in a cemetery. School groups of 100 or more in a cemetery at one time.

Tourism is a large part of the Salem economy today. She has had 4 make-a-wish children come to Salem as it is magical to them. As it relates to the cemetery we may need stricter rules and enforcement of such.

***Guide Information***:

* The cost to become a guide is about $75.00 (includes testing, background check, etc.) Must wear ID at all times when conducting a tour. If a problem is encountered with a guide, contact the police and include the ID number.
* Step on guides do need to be licensed
* School tour groups do not need to be licensed
* The haunted tours and evening tours do not go into the cemetery
* Definitions: An **ESCORT** leads a group from place to place. A **GUIDE** talks history as he/she leads a group. **ANYONE who talks history leading a group MUST BE LICENSED.**

**Ray Jodoin: Recommendation on Closing Charter Street Cemetery:**

Ron read a letter signed by the Mayor and Police Chief to the Commission recommending Charter Street Cemetery be closed during October, 2019. Ray seconds their recommendation because of the anticipated larger crowds which will result with other scheduled events occurring in October. Ray also recognized that the licensed tour groups are doing their part to protect the cemetery but he is making the recommendation for the betterment and perpetual care of the cemetery.

Some discussion ensued to ensure the cemetery is protected during this time. Anyone entering when the gate is locked is trespassing and enforcement will be key. Ray and the Police Chief will make a walk around to see if additional measures are needed.

***A motion to close Charter Street, the Old Burying Point Cemetery from September 28th through November 3, 2019 to protect the cemetery’s historic gravesites from excessive foot traffic and other abuses was made and read by Mary Anne Silva. Seconded by Ron Harrison. AIF.***

We know this may mean more foot traffic at our other historic cemeteries and are aware of it.

**~~Susan DameGreene: Progress Report: Colonel Pickering DAR Plaque Event~~**

**~~Susan DameGreene: Progress Report: Susan Peabody Very Gravesite Project~~**

**New Business**

Anthony O’Donnell questioned where the Commission is with discounted graves. He would like concrete wording. Current rules require that if a discounted grave is used the family must purchase the grave in order to put a stone on the grave. If a veteran is buried in the area for discounted grave’s a veteran’s placque can not be put on the grave.

This lot is not allowed to have a stone as the city owns the plot. Mary Anne wants to talk to Kim Emerling the Veteran Agent to discuss this.

Pat Donahue made the motion to adjourn at 7:47 pm. Seconded by Ron Harrison. AIF.