

**NANTUCKET CEMETERY
COMMISSION
Posted Meeting of May 12, 2021, at 3:00 pm
Virtual Meeting via Zoom Video Conference**

DRAFT MINUTES FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Attendance: Commissioners: Frances Karttunen, Scott McIver, Allen Reinhard (Chair), Lee Saperstein, and Barbara White; Staff: Isabel Jordan, DPW.

1. Call to Order.

Chair Allen Reinhard called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm. A roll-call of attendees showed that all commissioners were present and that a quorum existed.

2. Public and Commissioner Comments.

There was no public comment nor any from commissioners.

3. Approval of Minutes from April 14, 2021.

Barbara White moved, Scott McIver seconded, and the Commission unanimously approved the minutes from the meeting of April 14, 2021. The vote was by roll call.

4. Approval of Lot Sales Since Last Meeting.

Allen Reinhard said that he had met with family members at Polpis Cemetery and they selected lot D-13 for Mary Ann Brunelle. Approval of the application by roll-call vote was unanimously in favor upon a motion by Scott McIver, seconded by Lee Saperstein.

5. Green Burials.

In introducing this topic, Allen Reinhard said that we had discussed Green Burials before and he wanted to keep the topic alive even if we do not reach any conclusion at this meeting. He explained that a Green Burial, an explanation of which can be found in many articles on the Web, is the interment of an unembalmed body, wrapped in a shroud, without coffin or vault. At the moment, the Town's Cemetery Regulations do require a coffin and a vault. He related that he has placed a call to Roberto Santamaria, Health Director, to ask if there are any health implications for green burials and is waiting for a call back. Given that the Polpis Cemetery is only for cremains, Green Burials will have to wait until we have the Newtown boundaries regularized and the cemetery fully surveyed by GPR. Barbara White asked if families that control plots in New and Old North Cemeteries could have a Green Burial. Allen Reinhard replied that those requests would need to be decided on a case-by-case basis and would still need the consent of the health department.

Lee Saperstein reviewed the earlier discussion in which Rob McNeil said that coffins, caskets, and vaults, while with long lives, will not last forever, thus their contents will eventually reach the soil. Lee Saperstein, relating his experience with the Town's fertilizer application committee, noted that bone is essentially calcium phosphate and may have a detrimental effect on Nantucket's groundwater. He then said that if the burial is above the groundwater table, a Green Burial may be all right. He then reminded commissioners that Curtis Barnes had related that his church placed the cremated remains, cremains, directly into the ground without any container.

Allen Reinhard then said that once we had more information from the Health Department, we would return this discussion to the agenda with Green Burials and container-less cremains burials as separate items.

Just before moving to the next item, Lee Saperstein noted that traditional Jewish burials, such as might happen in the Jewish section of the Prospect Hill Cemetery Annex are virtual Green Burials because they use only a simple wooden coffin and an enshrouded body.

6. Cemetery Surveys Update.

Allen Reinhard reported on the very real progress that is being made toward repair and renewal of the cemetery monuments. Rob McNeil has a company with which he worked in the past and they have sent him preliminary cost estimates for the work to be done. Scott McIver has also been in contact with three other companies, which can be used to satisfy the minimum number, three, for a valid request for a bid. It was noted that recordable surveys for the cemeteries would be a separate project.

7. Burial Plot for Cremains Abandoned with Town Clerk.

Allen Reinhard reported that the Town Clerk has given him more information on the abandoned cremains stored in the vault in her office. Of the more than 25 sets of cremains that had accumulated over the years, most has been identified and reclaimed by the families. Five remain, of which four are identified and one is unknown; heirs to these have not been found. The oldest is from 1939.

Lee Saperstein and Frances Karttunen both suggested that two plots at Polpis be used for the inurnments. Scott McIver volunteered to provide a stone that conforms to the regulatory size. While it is unlikely, with today's identification and tracking of citizens, to have another unknown person, the possibility of an heirless pauper remains. Hence, there may be future need for burials of the indigent. Lee Saperstein suggested to Allen Reinhard that, with his knowledge of the plots at Polpis and their attractiveness to potential applicants, he select two plots that are unlikely to be sought and bring them back to the Commission for action. Allen Reinhard noted that plots at the Polpis Road end of rows C or D might work for these burials.

8. Polpis Cemetery and Quaise Monument Latest Developments.

Allen Reinhard introduced the topic of the Polpis land swap saying that there had been communication from the attorney for the abutters but that we would need to wait for Ken Beaugrand to return from vacation to learn more. Lee Saperstein noted that Ken Beaugrand had shared some correspondence received from the attorney and a provisional sketch map of a swap acceptable to his clients. Lee Saperstein discussed this map and then promised to send it by e-mail to the Commissioners. He had received it in a trial communication sent by Ken Beaugrand to him and Allen Reinhard. This item will come back soon on a future agenda.

Allen Reinhard then turned to the status of the Quaise memorial saying that the stone was inscribed and ready to be installed. Scott McIver agreed and said that it would be in place soon. Once it is, the Commission will plan a dedication and create publicity items to be placed with the newspaper and other venues.

9. Cemetery Projects List.

Allen Reinhard reminded the commissioners that he, as Chair, kept a list of projects as a reminder of things on which the Commission is working and as a cue to new agenda items. The list is appended to each agenda and set of minutes. One of the items on the list of projects is toe and corner markers and that has been the subject of a question from an heir to a person buried in Polpis. The questioner wanted to know if the Commission had any new thoughts on his request to replace the existing corner markers on his plot with stone ones that he would provide. Allen Reinhard related that he told the questioner that there had been no new conversations; inasmuch as the question has been asked, in turn he asked the Commissioners for their opinion. One person noted that many lots had eight lots surrounding them and that there might also be undue pressure to change them to match. Allen Reinhard noted that the existing markers are green and can get lost in the grass. Lee Saperstein noted that they are on steel pins and can be found with a metal detector. Scott McIver said that he had access to one. The Commission, by consensus because there was no motion, agreed not to change the style of these markers.

It was noted by Allen Reinhard that the boundary of the Historic Coloured Cemetery parallel to Vesper Lane should have a split-rail fence. Earlier discussions about this fence were inconclusive. He will talk to Rob McNeil, DPW Director, about moving this item to a work order. Speaking of fencing, he noted that the brush on the north side of Old North Cemetery, by Wyers Way, was intruding into grave sites and that it should be cleared and a fence installed. He will discuss this situation also with Rob McNeil.

9. Commissioners Comments, Old, New and Other Business.

Under this item for additional comments, Lee Saperstein noted that committee membership application and renewal time was now and those members with 2021 term dates should file an application.

Frances Karttunen observed that the biologic solution that has been applied to stones in the Quaker Cemetery continues to keep the monuments bright and lichen free. She pondered if the same treatment could be done in New and Old North Cemeteries. Isabel Jordan said that the

original work in the Quaker Cemetery had been done by a contractor but, perhaps, it will be done when the monument restoration project begins.

10. Adjournment came by consensus at 4:04 pm.

Next regular meeting: Wednesday, June 9, 2021, at 3:00 pm by Zoom Video Conferencing. If regular face-to-face meetings resume, a notice will be sent with the agenda for the June meeting.

Respectfully submitted: _____; Date: _____
Lee W. Saperstein, Secretary

Nantucket Cemetery Projects List.

- Cemetery monument condition survey.
- Consolidation of lots at Newtown Cemetery with recordable ground survey.
- Split rail fence at Polpis Cemetery.
- Survey to lay out additional lots at Polpis.
- Toe and lot corner markers for new Polpis lots when laid out.
- Dedication of new monument at Quaise Asylum Burial Ground.
- Fencing at the Historic Coloured Cemetery.
- Fencing and brush removal at New and Old North Cemeteries.