

Cemetery Com Minutes
April 21, 2021
Dunstable Town Hall

Present: Susan Tully, Susan Psaledakis, Alan Chaney

Meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.
Minutes of January 11, 2021 were passed.

Discussion of Green Burials continued. Sue P. brought up information she found on-line. There are not many public cemetery in Massachusetts that allow green Burials.

Two that she found were the towns of Hawley and Western. Hawley defined the term and explained that it is allowed providing that a biodegradable shroud or casket is used and that the grade will continue to be filled to maintain a level soil surface.

Westord went into much more detail noting that they will take place in “a designated area”, “removable medical devices are to be removed, “any clothing, jewelry or mementos...must be biodegradable”. “Monuments are not permitted on Green Burial lots.”

During the discussion the Superintendent felt that there would be no need for us to have a “designated area” and that less detail is needed for our Rules and Regs. We will continue the discussion next time as there have not been any requests for this service yet.

The next item of discussion was the question of Portraits on gravestones. There are currently many grave stones with scenes etched in, and one or two that include a small likeness of the deceased. Plastic or ceramic color portraits of the deceased are not allowed as they are eye catching and a distraction to the calmness we wish to maintain for all. It was noted that lights or music are not allowed for this reason.

There was a discussion of what constitutes “good taste”, how standards change through the ages, and the difficulties involved in defining it. Sue T. felt that there is no need for anything in writing as it is already required that all designs must be submitted to the superintendent or the Commission for approval. Sue P. would be more comfortable

if there were some basic guidelines at least limiting size of etched portraits. This discussion will continue at a later date.

Sue P. shared copies of the write-up on the Meeting House Hill Cemetery done by John Elsbree as part of an Eagle Scout project in the 80's. She suggested that it might be used for a description of that cemetery on our webpage. Alan will fact check and Sue T. moved to use the piece with minor changes.

Next item of business was the Rydingsvard recognition planned for September by the DAR. They plan to honor Anna (Davis) Rydingsvard with the installation of a plaque and wish to invite interested members from several town boards along with the Historical Society board members. Alan and Sue will forward name and addresses to Sue P.

There has been one request for purchase of a burial lot in the Blood Cemetery. Sue P. passed out copies of the genealogy showing their relationship to the Blood family as required for burial there. The lot of Mrs. Ruth (Johnson) Miscovitch still contains space for several more burials depending on whether or not they are cremated.

The current deed will be signed and notarized tomorrow.

The meeting adjourned at 10:40.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Psaledakis