

APPROVED April 7, 2016

**Charlotte Cemetery Commission
Warned Meeting March 22, 2016
Town Hall 4:30-6:00pm**

Minutes

The purpose of the meeting was to gather residents who had expressed interest in assisting with Cemetery Commission work and to fill vacancies if possible.

Participants: Stephen Brooks, Linda Hamilton, Judy Rowe, Sue Smith, Cheryl Walker and Viki Zulkoski. Also wishing to be active but unable to attend: Susan Ohanian.

Commissioner Stephen Brooks welcomed all and acknowledged receipt of letters from Linda and Viki expressing interest in being appointed to the Cemetery Commission. After a brief overview of Commission activities, budget and potential new projects, the following actions were taken:

ACTIONS:

- Sitting Commissioner Stephen Brooks appointed Cheryl Walker to the vacant 1-year Commissioner term, which runs to next Town Meeting.
- Commissioners Brooks and Walker appointed Viki Zulkoski to the vacant 3-year Commissioner term which runs to Town Meeting 2019 if she is elected to that post at Town Meeting 2017.
- Commissioner Brooks' resignation was offered and accepted, with sincere appreciation for the important work he has accomplished in the last 5 years, and his agreement to continue supporting the Commission as a resource person for advice and specific tasks.
- Commissioners Walker and Zulkoski appointed Linda Hamilton to complete Brooks' 3-year Commissioner term which runs to Town Meeting 2018 if she is elected to that post at Town Meeting 2017.
- By mutual agreement administrative duties were divided: Chair - Viki; Secretary - Linda; Treasurer - Cheryl.
- Stephen Brooks was requested and he agreed to do the following:
 - Monitor the Town's land management bid process and advise the Commission when and how work can begin this spring/summer.
 - Oversee installation of completed new signage for East and West Burial Grounds.
 - Continue fund-raising efforts.

OTHER BUSINESS

The budget and current work were discussed in more detail, confirming the following:

- Two Cemetery Commission accounts are maintained by the Town Clerk's office: Town allocation (Maintenance Account) with current available balance of negative \$1,600 due to a recent unanticipated legal fee. Project Account with private donations, current balance 0.
- \$3,000 of the FY16 budget is currently encumbered for grounds maintenance work this spring/summer as part of the Town's bundled contract for land management (mowing etc.), now in the bidding process.
- The \$1,600 legal fee was for clarification of how to apply in Charlotte the State's recent changes to cemetery records, deeds and mapping protocols. This was done by Town Attorney Stitzel's office, with apologies for a delay of several months to complete the task. This was charged to Cemetery Commission but in due course reimbursement will be requested from Selectboard's line item for Town legal fees.
- If progress is to be made this fiscal year on acknowledged remedial needs such as trimming, tree removal, perennials, mapping etc, additional funds may need to be requested from Selectboard. This decision to be made after Commissioners review the situation in more depth.
- Cemetery Commission works closely with Selectboard for inclusion of a Cemetery budget within the annual Selectboard proposed budget, and with the Town Auditors who monitor fiscal accounts for legal compliance. However, program planning and implementation are the purview of the Cemetery Commission, without need for Selectboard or Auditor approval.
- A very helpful 2014 publication, *Digging Deep*, is available from Vermont Secretary of State, and serves as a handbook for Town Cemetery Commissions and guide to relevant State statutes.
- A more complete review and understanding of past and current work (and budget) is needed before new projects can be initiated. This orientation process is anticipated to take a few weeks. Commissioners committed to meet approximately twice a month until this is achieved (tentatively every other Thursday 11:30-1:00 in Town Hall, starting April 7).
- Once plans and budget are firm for both on-going maintenance and attention to remedial needs, the Commissioners wish to explore the feasibility of creating a new Town cemetery. A task force will be established for this purpose under Commissioner leadership, to include at least Judy Rowe, Sue Smith and Susan Ohanian.

The three new Commissioners will sign the required oath of office March 23. And within a week the Chair will send a letter to Town Administrator, Clerk/Assistant Clerk, Selectboard, and Auditors informing them of these appointments and giving contact information. She will also indicate our interest in meeting with both Selectboard and Auditors in the very near future. A copy of these minutes will be sent to Selectboard and Auditors and filed with the Town Clerk until space on the Town website can be arranged and used for regular posting of minutes and other information.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda S. Hamilton
Secretary