



TOWN of BROOKLINE
Massachusetts
Walnut Hills Cemetery
Old Burying Ground

Trustees

Robert Cook, Chairman
Nina Brown
Gerard Hayes
Peggy Maguire
Joslin Ham Murphy

Director of Parks and Open Space

Erin Chute Gallentine

Walnut Hills Cemetery Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, June 5, 2019
8:30am – 9:30 am

Trustees Present: Gerard Hayes, Peggy Maguire, Robert Cook and Nina Brown

Trustees Absent: Joslin Ham Murphy

Staff Present: Erin Gallentine, Director of Parks and Open Space, Jessica White, Parks and Open Space Assistant

Guests Present:

1. Welcome and Approval of the Minutes

R. Cook moved for approval of the March 6, 2018 Minutes. Seconded by P. Maguire. All in favor.

2. Sign Deeds

The deeds were passed around and signed by the Trustees.

3. Walnut Hills Cemetery Update

Bill McDermott's golf cart has arrived. It will be a pilot on loan from the golf course and a space in the garage has been arranged for storage.

E. Gallentine stated that B. McDermott has seen an increase in dog walking/dog's off leash. E. Gallentine discussed working with the police to issue tickets. The police would be responsible for issuing these tickets, but if there are times and offenders that are repeatedly problematic in the cemetery we should coordinate with them for assistance. The dog signage within the cemetery was discussed. E. Gallentine stated that some cemeteries do not allow dogs in the cemetery at all. E. Gallentine discussed the off leash Green Dog Program and possible fee increase. E. Gallentine described the process of how an off leash ticket is issued. E. Gallentine thinks it's a good thing that people are walking their dogs on leash within the cemetery, it increases presence and makes people feel more secure. However, it is important that they obey the leash law. Otherwise, it is very disrespectful to the cemetery and its visitors.

The Allandale Road sidewalk was resurfaced. She stated that this season the Water and Sewer Division and one of our private engineers, Environmental Partners, completed an inspection of all catch basins on the property. She stated that the intent is to get the first phase of work done in construction season 2020. E. Gallentine stated that once we have final cost estimates from the engineers, we should revisit how much we are able to get done. As she mentioned previously the funding approved in SW01 will not cover a significant area and priorities will need to be set regarding areas that should be addressed first. E. Gallentine stated that we will continue to talk about this. R. Cook stated that he is in favor of giving E. Gallentine as much discretion as she needs to make the project the best size the money can afford. P. Maguire stated that it makes sense and would be less intrusive than coming in multiple times to the cemetery. E. Gallentine is worried about the available funds. E. Gallentine and P. Maguire discussed the roads in the worst condition. P. Maguire and E. Gallentine discussed how they pave with a very slight crown to allow water runoff.

The sewer lining project is complete; this took place earlier in the spring.

E. Gallentine discussed the complaints Bill McDermott has been receiving regarding pot holes and her work with the Highway Division to provide seasonal repairs.

She stated that at the last meeting J. Murphy raised the concern of using a passport as a residency verification form. E. Gallentine has reached out to the School Department to ask for a copy of their residency verification checklist. E. Gallentine discussed the three deeds that are on hold and require further residency verification. E. Gallentine and Cemetery Supervisor, John Ronan both feel that a passport is not a valid form of identification for residency since it does not provide a current address.

E. Gallentine discussed the situation of a Town owned pauper grave that had 2 interments and a complicated subsequent history with a Mr. Caminos (one of those interred was the Caminos family nanny) purchasing the lot 8 years after the interment. Mr. Caminos' family was unaware that someone else had been previously buried in this lot. However, it was not clear that either the individual interred or Mr. Caminos were unaware of that fact. She stated that what was decided at the meeting was if the family wanted to purchase a family lot, the Town will sell this lot back to the Town (compensate them for that one lot Mr. Caminos purchased) if they are looking at purchasing two or more lots. E. Gallentine stated that they are looking at purchasing with two or more and the matter was settled.

The Cemetery Revenue Trusts Funds balances thru May 31st were shared with the Trustees. All the funds are in good standing. E. Gallentine discussed the amounts in SW01, TW23 and TW24. The Funds Supervisor and Treasurer will both attend the September Walnut Hills Cemetery Meeting to discuss fund performance.

4. Old Burying Ground Update

N. Brown stated that the Fannins will be at Old Burying Ground on Sunday, working on conservation of the grave stones. They agreed to have people observe the conservation work being done. It will be a little social, with refreshments. All the Trustees are invited and a copy of the invitation was given to each Trustee. N Brown stated that the Fannins would like to help

with the restoration of the Foster Fence. N. Brown discussed how this restoration work differed from what the Fannins have been working on. Molds will have to be built for this portion of restoration work and the Friends of the Old Burying Ground would like to contribute to the making of the molds. E. Gallentine stated that we are waiting on a few projects/hardware but the Engineering Department has a lot on their list to put out to bid. P. Maguire thinks the before and after pictures must be amazing to look at.

E. Gallentine stated that she is sending a letter of appreciation from the Town and the Trustees to the Friends of the Old Burying Ground acknowledging all their work. She stated that The Friends have been amazing partners and supporters of the historic burial ground. They have been contributing \$9,500 a year to the restoration and conservation of the stones and monuments. E. Gallentine stated that it is because of the Friends that we were able to do a full conditions assessment of the stones. She stated that this year in addition to doing the restoration work, the conditions assessment of the stones is being updated to help plan for work for the next 5 years.

5. Green Burial Discussion

P. Maguire brought up Green Burials at the last meeting. E. Gallentine stated that 10 years ago the Trustees talked about green burials. E. Gallentine gave some background into what a Green Burial is. At the time Green Burials had not progressed much in the US and the Trustees decided that they were not ready to offer this as an interment option at the town cemetery. E. Gallentine stated that the notion of burials will change a lot over the next decade with Green Burials likely being in higher demand.

E. Gallentine has reached out to some of her colleagues to discuss their plans moving forward. Lexington has been talking about green burials as well and building a municipal crematorium. They found that it was not economically viable in terms of shifts to build a municipal crematorium. However, Lexington is looking at Green Burials and they provided E. Gallentine with a summary of rules they worked on with their Town Counsel to allow for Green Burials. E. Gallentine reviewed these rules and stated that it would have to be a designated portion of the cemetery. E. Gallentine stated that we have not had a big demand now, but she can see more interest in the near future. N. Brown stated that from an environmental standpoint having pervious surfacing is a good idea, versus the concrete. N. Brown discussed water infiltration. She thinks Green Burials are a good alternative and wonders if there is space for something like this. E. Gallentine stated that the Trustees should be thinking about the next build out and when the Trustees embark on that process to look at a whole host of options and maybe a possible Green Burial area. G. Hayes and E. Gallentine discussed the maintenance around ground settling above the body. She stated that they will have to top dress with more frequency.

G. Hayes discussed the book "Cemetery Dead" that he is currently reading. New trends/alternatives for burials were discussed amongst the Trustees. P. Maguire thinks being educated on these new trends is a great way for being prepared and ahead of the curve. P. Maguire would like to invite someone from a local funeral home that she has been in touch with, to educate the Trustees on the work he has done regarding Green Burials. She will get that information to E. Gallentine.

6. Other Business

J. White will send out an email to work on changing the September meeting and poll trustees for future meeting dates.

E. Gallentine and G. Hayes discussed the status of B. McDermott's deck. She stated that it goes through the Building Department and she has communicated that if this is something that is pursued, she would need to see a sketch. E. Gallentine stated that this is something that is not happening right away and is not a high priority for the Town. N. Brown stated that Walnut Hills Cemetery is on the State Register of Historic Places and building something like this may involve its own set of rules.

G. Hayes asked if the ornamental engraving they had approved had been completed, E. Gallentine reached out to John Ronan, who responded that the individual had not completed the engraving and that he did not have a schedule or time frame. G. Hayes and E. Gallentine agreed that the ornamentation was detailed and having it grey scaled was the right compromise.

P. Maguire wanted to point out that there is a History and Rural Beauty Tour of the Walnut Hills Cemetery, led by Steven Jerome, June 22nd from 1pm-3pm and costs 22 dollars.

7. Adjourn

R. Cook Moved to adjourn. Seconded by G. Hayes. All in favor.