



## CEMETERY COMMITTEE

**Meeting Minutes  
November 7, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.  
Conference Room A  
Portsmouth City Hall  
1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth, NH**

Members Present: Co-Chair Susan Sterry (Sterry), Co-Chair Dee Forte (Forte), Peter Splaine (Splaine), Sue Polidura (Polidura), Michael Griffin (Griffin), and Steve Buzzell (Buzzell)

Members Present via Zoom: None

Members Staff Present: Corin Hallowell (Hallowell) Parks and Greenery Foreman, City of Portsmouth

Members Absent: Duncan MacCallum, Eva Boice, Celeste Brooks

1. Meeting called to order at 4:00 p.m. and roll call of the members was taken and as noted above.
2. **Minutes:** Splaine moved to approve the minutes of October 3, 2024 meeting. Seconded by Polidura. The motion was approved.
3. **Headstone Repair and Cleaning:**
  - a) Sterry showed photos of Hall Cemetery which showed that some tree stumps were growing suckers. Hallowell explained that the stumps would be cut down much lower and weed whacked so it would eventually die back. Sterry explained that an evasive species evaluation would take place in the spring with a plan to eventually have just a ground cover in the area which would then require no mowing. Sterry explained that there were not as many broken headstones as originally thought, and a discussion ensued as to what is the best way to repair the broken headstones, i.e., repairing using a strap or epoxy and using a clamp. It was decided to use a to be determined two-part epoxy to repair the headstones and using a brace. Buzzell offered to head up this project, finding the appropriate epoxy and bringing the broken headstones to his workshop or possibly at a location at the cemetery. This would take place in the Spring and volunteers would be enlisted. Splaine suggested looking into ancient Greek methods of repairing headstones, which he will research.

- b) Sterry showed a photograph of the commemoration of Catherine Moffatt Whipple plaque at the Langdon tomb. Four descendants of other signors of the Declaration of Independence were in attendance. Thank you to Jeff Boucher and Glen Kelliher from the Highway Department who did an excellent job mounting the plaque.
  - c) Sterry showed a photo of the Wendall tomb on Pleasant Street which is being damaged by plants and trees and is in dire need of repair and of great concern as there are human remains in the tomb. Splaine offered to research methods of repair for this circa of tomb, which is in the late 1700s, which may be sand mix. Griffin will contact the masons who worked on the stonewalls at Cotton and Proprietors cemeteries and provide a repair estimate.
  - d) Sterry showed a photo of the stonewall at Hall Cemetery which is in need of repair. The stonewall is dry stacked and some stones have fallen against a neighboring house. Sterry will obtain an estimate or possibly have some volunteers work on this project. Griffin will contact the mason company who are working on the stonewall on Court Street to look at this project.
  - e) Sterry advised that on October 9, 2024, a number of people cleaned most of the obelisks at Union Cemetery using a power washer.
4. **Liberty Mutual Service Day:** Deputy City Manager Suzanne Woodland asked that the Committee submit the paperwork for the Liberty Mutual Service Day to her and Hallowell. Forte advised that all she needs is the EIN for the City of Portsmouth in order for Liberty Mutual to move forward with service day planning. Hallowell offered to help obtain the EIN.
  5. **African Burying Ground Memorial Park (ABG) Update:** Sterry, Forte and Hallowell attended the last ABG Committee meeting. Forte provided a summary of the focus of the ABG Committee, which is repairing the tiles which have been popping off of the Sankofa, which appears to be due to improper and non-weatherization appropriate installation. A brief discussion ensued about having co-committee representatives from the Cemetery Committee and the ABG Committee in order to work together on African American and slave cemeteries together. A discussion ensued regarding the slave cemetery off of Lafayette Road adjacent to the Christ Episcopal Church.
  6. **Evasive trimming at North and Union Cemeteries:** Trimming will continue at these cemeteries at the back water side to get rid the area of evasive species.
  7. **Yellow Fever Project Update:** Tabled for future discussion.
  8. **Hall Cemetery:** See 3(a) above.

9. **Guidelines for Cemeteries Update:** Dee distributed cemetery guidelines from Gilford, NH for review as a starting point to develop formal guidelines for Portsmouth. The Committee will be working with Legal on these guidelines. A discussion ensued regarding the need for a new cemetery in Portsmouth.
10. **Other Business:** The Committee received a \$200.00 donation for Cotton Cemetery from Joe Porter.
11. **Public Comment:** None
12. **Adjournment: Polidura moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Griffin. Motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 5:03 PM.**

Next meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 5, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. in Conference Room A.

Minutes prepared by:  
Barbara Zulkiewicz

Minutes Approved: January 9, 2025