

**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
COMMITTEE FOR CEMETERIES**



**PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE
THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2025 at 4:00 P.M.
CITY HALL – CONFERENCE ROOM A
1 JUNKINS AVENUE, PORTSMOUTH, NH 03801**

***Members of the public also have the option to join the meeting over Zoom
(See below for pre-registration details)****

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes from the March 6, 2025 Cemetery Committee Meeting
3. Discuss Revisions to Visitor Etiquette in Historical Cemeteries Guidelines
4. Installation of Additional Markers
5. 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence
6. List of Repairs for 2025
7. Discuss Available Grants
8. Other Business
9. Public Comment
10. Adjournment

****Register in advance for this meeting:***

When: April 3, 2025 04:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/TpjEBbQgSMSqBO7qdOhESA>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.



CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.
Conference Room A
Portsmouth City Hall
1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth, NH

Members Present: Chair Susan Sterry (Sterry); Celeste Brooks (Brooks); Peter Splaine (Splaine); Sue Polidura (Polidura); Michael Griffin (Griffin); Steve Buzzell (Buzzell); Duncan MacCallum (MacCallum)

Members Present via Zoom: Eva Boice (Boice)

Members Staff Present: Suzanne M. Woodland, Deputy City Manager / Regulatory Counsel

Members Absent: Co-Chair Dee Forte (Forte)

Public Attendees: John Chagnon (Chagnon)

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call:** Meeting called to order at 4:00 p.m. and roll call of the members was taken and as noted above.
2. **Minutes:** Polidura made a motion to approve the minutes with a single correction which was mentioned by Boice. Boice seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion was approved.
3. **Review New Volunteer Policy:** DCM provided a summary of the City Council's adoption earlier this year of a new policy regarding volunteers that sit on City boards and that a Volunteer Handbook was created as a result to serve as a resource. The handbook can be found on the City Clerk's section of the City website. DCM also stated that there are two (2) new policies that are referenced in the handbook: a non-discrimination policy and electronic devices or emails that may have been given by the City. It will be a requirement that all committee members at the time of appointment or renewal to a board sign off on the policy.
4. **Discuss Visitor Etiquette for the City of Portsmouth Historical Cemeteries:** A draft document of points of etiquette was initially prepared by Forte and reviewed by DCM. The Committee discussed the list and made some revisions which will be circulated and discussed further at the next meeting. Chagnon, a Proprietor of the Proprietor Cemetery, requested a copy of the final guidelines and stated that the

Proprietor Cemetery Trustees were working on guidelines as well. Chagnon requested getting together with Griffin to discuss signage at Proprietors, Cotton and Harmony Grove cemeteries. Griffin commented that this is important as people are not aware that there are 5 different cemeteries that adjoin each other, and signage, a map and identifying the key people that are buried there would be helpful. Sterry said that it would be beneficial for all the cemetery organizations to work together on this endeavor. Chagnon invited the Committee to the next trustees' meeting on April 23, 2025 to discuss signage. Chagnon also mentioned a possible website for the Proprietors Cemetery.

5. **Discuss Guidelines for Installation of Additional Markers in City of Portsmouth Historical Cemeteries:** The Committee opted for an update on maintenance items. Hallowell provided an update on the work done at North Cemetery during the last month. The chain link fence along the dirt road towards the railroad track area was removed and the area was cleaned up. Plans to grade the area and to plant grass in the Spring. Portions of the fence which extended towards North Mill Pond and the drainage swell were left due to undetermined boundary lines. The tree crew will take down the two (2) dead ash trees, and debris and loose rocks were removed. Earl Chase, Horticulturist from Prescott Park and the DPW crew remove evasive species at the shoreline.
6. **Other Business:** Sterry stated that the Cemetery Committee received a \$10,000 grant from the Mahoney Family in honor of their mother and father. This was accepted by the City Council and will be designated strictly for North Cemetery. The fence was taken down, the removal of dead trees will be scheduled, and the area will be landscaped.

Sterry stated that NH L-CHIP grants will be available for a matching grant. She intends to write a grant which will target repair of and straightening of headstones.

Brooks stated that she is still waiting to hear back from Flatbread about being scheduled for their fundraising evening.

Boice announced that this was her last meeting as she is moving out of state and expressed appreciation for preserving the history of the great City of Portsmouth.
7. **Public Comment:** None.
8. **Adjournment:** Brooks moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Griffin. All in favor. Motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 5:11 p.m.

Next meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 3, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. in Conference Room A.

Draft Minutes prepared by:
Barbara Zulkiewicz

Minutes Approved: _____

DRAFT

Help us protect this historic cemetery:

Please do:

- Supervise your children and pets
- Dispose of all pet waste, litter, and cigarette butts properly

Please refrain from:

- Touching or removing memorials, mementos or artifacts without permission
- Using alcohol or bringing weapons into this sacred space
- Idling your vehicle or travelling off the designated roadways or parking areas
- Disturbing wildlife or plants
- Allowing your pets to relieve themselves on the monuments which damage them

Thank you for showing your respect for this space.

Draft for April 3, 2025, Cemetery Committee Meeting

Guidelines for Installation of Additional Markers in City of Portsmouth Historic Cemeteries

The following guidelines apply to Cotton, Elmwood, Hall, North, Pleasant, Point of Graves, Union Cemeteries. These historic cemeteries do not have room for new internments, but requests are received from time-to-time for additional markers or signage.

Persons or organizations wishing to install additional markers in any historic cemetery shall submit a written request to the Cemetery Committee for its consideration and recommendation to the City Manager. In making its recommendation, the Cemetery Committee will typically consider the following elements as may be applicable:

1. Historical Significance

Assessment of Historical Value: Evaluate the historical significance of the existing markers and the cemetery as a whole. Consider the historical context and the contribution of the proposed marker to the cemetery's narrative.

Documentation: Require documentation of the historical relevance of the individual or event commemorated by the proposed marker.

2. Aesthetic and Design Considerations

Consistency with Existing Markers: Ensure the design, materials, and inscriptions of the new marker are consistent with the existing markers to maintain the cemetery's historical integrity.

Approval of Design: Require submission of design plans, including dimensions, materials, and inscriptions, for committee approval.

3. Preservation and Maintenance

Impact on Preservation: Assess the potential impact of the new marker on the preservation of existing markers and the overall site. Consider factors such as space, environmental conditions, and maintenance requirements.

Maintenance Plan: Require a maintenance plan for the new marker, including responsibilities for upkeep and funding sources.

4. Community and Stakeholder Input

Public Consultation: Engage with community members, descendants, and other stakeholders to gather input and address any concerns regarding the addition of a new marker.

5. Transparency

Ensure the decision-making process is transparent and inclusive, providing opportunities for public comment and feedback. This will typically take place at a noticed public meeting of the Cemetery Committee.

6. Regulatory Compliance

Adherence to Regulations: Ensure compliance with local, state, and federal regulations regarding historic preservation and cemetery management.

Permits and Approvals: Obtain all necessary permits and approvals from relevant authorities before proceeding with the installation of the new marker.

7. Ethical Considerations

Respect for the Deceased: Ensure that the addition of the new marker is respectful to the deceased and their families and does not disrupt the sanctity of the cemetery.

Cultural Sensitivity: Consider cultural and religious sensitivities related to the placement and design of the new marker.

8. Decision-Making Process

Committee Review: Cemetery Committee shall timely review any request, may request additional information of any applicant, and suggest any additional process as it deems useful prior to making a recommendation to the City Manager.

Documentation of Decisions: Cemetery Committee shall record its recommendations through its meeting minutes, which are public records.

These guidelines aim to balance the preservation of historical integrity with the respectful addition of new markers, ensuring that the cemetery remains a place of reverence and historical significance.