



CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
April 3, 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); Steve Buzzell (Buzzell); Michael Griffin (Griffin); Peter Splaine (Splaine); Sue Polidura (Polidura)

Members Present via Zoom: Co-Chair Dee Forte (Forte)

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

Members Absent: Duncan MacCallum (MacCallum)

Public Attendees: None

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: Motion** by Brooks to approve the minutes of the March 6, 2025 Cemetery Committee minutes. Polidura seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion was approved.
3. **Finalize Visitor Etiquette in Historical Cemeteries Guidelines:** Hallowell stated he felt that the guidelines should be posted on the website vs. adding another sign in the cemeteries. He suggested that the Committee adopt the guidelines and if issues arise or persist, then the Committee could revisit placing signs in the future. Brooks made a number of revisions to the guidelines. Motion by Polidura to post the guidelines to the City of Portsmouth website once edited, Griffin seconded. All in favor, the motion was approved.
4. **Discuss Guidelines for Installation of Additional Markers in City of Portsmouth Historical Cemeteries:** Sterry stated that people and organizations are showing an interest in the City's historic cemeteries and placing mementos and other temporary items on headstones, guidelines are necessary to require approval to what families or organizations can place on the headstones. The Committee would be able to approve a design, obtain information on the materials to be used and who the parties responsible are for upkeep of the items who wish to place markers or decorate headstones that are not permanent in nature. Hallowell stated that only

permanent markers should require approval by the Cemetery Committee. There has been a problem with temporary items such as flower, wreaths and flags that people place and don't come back to retrieve or discard these items. The Committee will work on creating a form for this purpose. Temporary items such as plastic flowerpots or plastic mementos that have deteriorated could be disposed of. **Motion** by Brooks to post the permanent marker guidelines as discussed to the website. Seconded by Splaine. All in favor, the motion was approved. Sterry stated that the DAR requested and received permission to install a marker in front of Woodbury Langdon's tomb.

5. **250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence:** Sterry stated that the Athenaeum plans to create a presentation for the anniversary and she offered to provide information focused on the City's cemeteries. Sterry asked Polidura to create a timeline / outline of the New Hampshire history of the Declaration of Independence for use by the Committee and Brooks will contact the PHS Band Director to inquire if they have a drum and fife band that could play some colonial times music.
6. **List of Repairs:** Sterry provided an update of the list of repairs at the cemeteries. Hollowell advised that he will order the requested materials, to include epoxy and the tripod to conduct headstone straightening. Polidura stated that the headstone of the daughter of Prince Whipple, Esther, is broken in half. Buzzell offered to use epoxy to repair it.
7. **Other Business:** Liberty Mutual Service Day has been arranged by Forte and is scheduled for May 9, 2025 for cleaning of wrought iron in one of the cemeteries. The unveiling of Dinah Chase Whipple's headstone is scheduled for June 13, 2025. Sterry will conduct a presentation on Dinah Chase Whipple at the Portsmouth Library on June 12, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. Hollowell gave an update on the repairs at the African Burying Ground Memorial Park.
8. **Public Comment:** None.
9. **Adjournment:** **Motion** by Polidura to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Brooks. All in favor, the motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 5:14 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 1, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. in Conference Room A.

Minutes prepared by:
Barbara Zulkiewicz

Minutes Approved: May 1, 2025