



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
AFRICAN BURYING GROUND MEMORIAL PARK COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Monday, November 17, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.
City Hall Complex - Conference Room A
1 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call:** The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m.

Members present: Assistant Mayor JoAnna Kelley (Chair); Dierdre Forte (Forte), Co-Chair - Portsmouth Cemetery Committee; Dariya Steele (Steele), Black Heritage Trail New Hampshire; Dzifa (Joyce) Patterson (Patterson), Seacoast African American Cultural Center; Ron Baisden (Baisden); and Jill Minot-Seabrook, Seacoast African American Cultural Center.

Staff present: Suzanne M. Woodland, Regulatory Counsel; Jennifer Smith, Staff Attorney; Corin Hallowell (Hallowell), Parks and Greeneries Foreman; and Camryn Biancavilla, Legal Intern

Guests: Dr. Kathleen Wheeler, archeologist

Zoom: Jason Green (Green), Black Lives Matter New Hampshire
2. **Review and approval of draft minutes of the April 21, 2025 meeting:** Forte moved to accept the minutes of the April 21, 2025 meeting. Seconded by Baisden. All in favor, the motion was approved.
3. **Langdon Farm Burying Ground:** Regulatory Counsel Woodland stated that she confirmed with Staff in Legal and Planning that there has not been any activity that would impact the site at this time and will advise the Committee of any updates.
4. **Curation Alternatives:** Attorney Smith provided an update on a meeting with the Museum Curator at the Dyckman Farmhouse Museum in New York City who suggested that the Committee identify stakeholders in the community who would be willing to curate the remains and hold them. This could be a cemetery that would have knowledge of how to properly care for the remains and ensure the longevity of the remains. Strawberry Banke, the Portsmouth Public Library in the Special Collections Room, and Black Heritage Trail were expressed as other options and would be further discussed in the new year.
5. **Review Draft of Report to the City Council:** Chair suggested the Committee present an end-of-the-year report to the City Council on December 8, 2025. Regulatory Counsel Woodland and Attorney Smith drafted a report that included the updating of the mission statement, change of the name of the Committee, and other accomplishments of the Committee. Wheeler suggested that the topic of the remains being held in

Sacred Trust be included in the report. The Committee drafted the language to be included in the report. The Chair asked the Committee members to confirm that they are still interested in continuing to serve on the Committee and if there was a Committee member who would like to present the report to the City Council. Baisden moved to approve the report as discussed and to have the Chair place on the December 8, 2025 City Council meeting agenda. Forte seconded the motion. All in favor, the motion was approved.

6. **Other Business, if any:** Discussion ensued regarding the remains held in Sacred Trust and teeth which were pulverized for sampling (which are kept in a separate location and are frozen) and to make sure the Committee is aware of the location of these remains.
7. **Public Comment:** None
8. **Schedule Next Meeting:** The next meeting of the African Burying Ground Memorial Park Committee will be held in Conference Room A at Portsmouth City Hall on Monday, January 26, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.
9. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Minutes approved: June 1, 2026

Meeting Minutes prepared by: Barbara Zulkiewicz