



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
AFRICAN BURYING GROUNDS PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Monday, June 1, 2026 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), Chair - Portsmouth Cemetery Committee; Dariya Steele (Steele), Black Heritage Trail New Hampshire; Ron Baisden (Baisden); and Jason Green (Green), Black Lives Matter New Hampshire and Black Lives Matter Seacoast (via Zoom and then in person); and Rev. Robert Thompson (arrived 4:25 p.m.).

Staff present: Suzanne M. Woodland, Regulatory Counsel; Jennifer Smith, Assistant City Attorney; and Corin Hallowell (Hallowell), Parks and Greeneries Foreman

Guests: Dr. Kathleen Wheeler, archeologist

Zoom: JerriAnne Boggis, Executive Director, Black Heritage Trail

Absent: Representatives of Seacoast African American Cultural Center

2. **Review and approval of draft minutes of the November 17, 2025 meeting:** Baisden moved to accept the minutes of the November 17, 2025 meeting. Seconded by Forte. All in favor, the motion was approved.

3. **Update on Committee:** The Chair reported on the change to the name of the Committee and the update to the mission of the Committee.

4. **Transfer of the Chestnut Street Remains:** JerriAnne Boggis and Regulatory Counsel Woodland provided a summary of the conversation with the Black Heritage Trail (BHT) late in 2025 to transfer the dental remains from Dr. Wheeler to the Black Heritage Trail. Dr. Wheeler reported that she has been speaking with Peter Lamb regarding a sacred container for the remains that do not need refrigeration. There are also pulverized remains from prior research efforts that are frozen and are currently stored at Dr. Wheeler's request with Independent Archaeological Consulting in Dover.

Motion by Baisden to authorize the transfer of the remains from Dr. Wheeler to BHT to be held in sacred trust as documentation is put in place and conditions allow. Seconded by Steele. All in favor.

5. **Remains from the Sargent Museum:** JerriAnne Boggis reported on the meeting with the State Archeologist and representatives of the Black community for BHT to take custody

of a skull from the former Sargent Museum and arrange for reburial with a marker. The Department of Public Works would assist with the reburial. There was discussion regarding the possibility of reburying the skull at Langdon Farm Burying Ground or at one of the City's Historic Cemetery.

6. **Langdon Farm Burying Ground:** Assistant City Attorney Smith described the preconstruction meeting at the Christ Church site on Lafayette Road where the Langdon Farm Burying Ground is located. The Burying Ground and areas around it where there may be additional graves and the additional 25 feet required by State law have been demarked as No-Entry Areas. Dr. Wheeler provided additional information. Discussion of ground penetrating radar results at the site.
7. **Public Comment:** None
8. **Schedule Next Meeting:** The next meeting was scheduled for September.
9. **Adjournment:** Motion by Steele, seconded by Forte; meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Meeting Minutes prepared by:
Barbara Zulkiewicz

Minutes approved: September 22, 2026