

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
COMMITTEE FOR CEMETERIES



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2025
1 JUNKINS AVENUE, PORTSMOUTH, NH 03801

For the Zoom recording:
<https://youtu.be/rrEVn3E>

MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Roll Call:

Attending: Dee Dee Forte, Celeste Brooks, Steve Buzzell, Michael Griffin. Absent: Peter Splaine, Sue Polidura. Staff: Corin Hallowell, Stephanie Seacord (recording secretary)

2. Approval of the Minutes of the October 2, 2025 Cemetery Committee Meeting on a motion by Celeste, seconded by Steve.

3. Review of potential 2026 projects

- Wendell tomb repair (Pleasant Street Cemetery) – awaiting cost estimate from Chris Volpe. Steve may have alternate if needed.
- North Cemetery – review of stone straightening and potential ironwork repair by Peter Hapny. Steve and Corin will review the stone and bent rail straightening and Dee will discuss fence detail repair/replacement work with Hapny. <https://www.portsmouthnh.gov/sites/default/files/2025-11/North%20Union%20Railing%20Project.pdf>
- Steve suggested projects the Committee might address during the winter
 - Creating a GIS map of the City's historic cemeteries that could be added to the website.
 - Cemetery Committee page and information about the historic cemeteries needs to be updated.
 - Creating 'blue' historical markers for those cemeteries without them e,g, Cotton. Stephanie is now handling those projects and will followup.
 - Creating "State of the Cemeteries" inventory of work done and work needed. An Excel spreadsheet would allow for updates, help channel the resources and show the Committee's results.
 - Cleaning: all of the headstones have been washed with D2 (using the City's backpack unit) – except for the back corner of Union which should be addressed next spring.

4. UNH yellow fever project activity at North Cemetery – Dee met with Alex Garcia Putnam, his wife and two Salve Regina students to do more LIDAR work to try to find a mass grave for the victims of the outbreak c. 1785. Have not yet analyzed the data. For other LIDAR projects there would need to be a more substantive reason – but maybe use as an exercise to train students. Perhaps UNH archaeology students might be hired as interns for credit next summer?

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
COMMITTEE FOR CEMETERIES



5. Cemetery tours in October – Dee tried to join a tour but they were all sold out. Portsmouth Historical may resume the tours in the spring.
6. Headstone straightening at Cotton - Steve and Corin reported that two members of Corin's crew were very engaged in assisting Steve. He noted that $\frac{3}{4}$ of one white marble stone that had been buried in the dirt crumbled to dust when he tried to lift it, underscoring the need for this work. He is now working on bases for the stones that have been toppled.
7. Committee terms and new members - Dee has discussed with June Philbrick in the City Clerk's office. Brighid "Briggs" Brady was appointed by the City Council at their October 6 meeting and will be receiving the packet of information and joining the next meeting. June will send Dee a list of all Committee members and their terms.
8. Other business
 - Daughters of the American Revolution requested the placement of their marker at the Woodbury Langdon tomb. The committee would like to meet with the requester, Caroline X to ask what the plaque says, the intended placement and the ceremony the DAR would like to hold before voting to approve.
 - Resident Laura Kostick has asked if the white marble epitaph on the Sherburn tomb could be replaced as it has worn to illegibility. That requires approval by the descendant and the City. Perhaps the original wording is in Louise Tollman's 1983 report?
 - Matthew DeLouis, Northern Masonry has expressed interest in working on the Point of Graves wall. Corin will keep him informed as the design/engineering and bid process will precede hiring a mason. Suzanne Woodland is contacting the NH Division of Historical Resources regarding the project.
 - CIP – A joint work session of the City Council and Planning Board will discuss the CIP on November 12 at 6 pm in Council Chambers. Dee will attend to advocate for funding the Cemetery Committee's requests. The Council will hold the first Public Hearing on the CIP at their November 17 meeting.
9. Public Comment – Suki [full name?] and Kathy Logan, residents of the South End complimented the committee on their work and discussion. They are interested in the Point of Graves project. Getting a design/engineering plan may take 6-12 months to complete the bid and selection process for hiring design/engineering and then completing a plan. Suki may have a donor – who may not want to wait for a long bureaucratic process. Dee will followup with Suki.

Next meeting: Thursday, December 4 at 4 pm.

Committee voted to cancel the January meeting – with the option of scheduling a date other than January 1, if needed.

Adjournment at 5 pm on a motion by Celeste, seconded by Steve.