

## Minutes of Meeting September 18, 2013

Location: Babcock-Smith House, 124 Granite St, Westerly

In attendance: Pegee Malcolm, Evelyn Wheeler, David Bell, Mike Laferriere, Judith Fardig, Bob Butler, Henry Duquette, Edna Kent, Kim Ripoli, Dory Wagner, Tom O'Connell, and Alan Clarke.

Excused absences: Sally Small, Charlotte Taylor, Kirsten Hammerstrom, Roger Guillemette and Rick Whitesell

Additional Attendees: Carlo and Betty Mencucci, Isobel Hart of the Tiverton Historical Cemetery Commission, Letty Champion, Charlene Butler, and Maureen Buffi, secretary

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm by Chair Pegee Malcolm

- Introduction of Draft Meeting Minutes from June 19, 2013  
With a correction to the name of the cemetery in Barrington in the Member Updates/Comments section (Forest Chapel), the Draft minutes were approved 12-0.
- Commission Reappointments  
All commission members interested in continuing have been reappointed. Starting In 2014, term appointments will be staggered.
- Election of Officers  
Pegee and Henry indicated they wished to continue on as chair and co-chair (respectively). Judy made a motion to vote and Bob seconded it. They were re-elected unanimously.
- Implementation of RIGL 44-3-63  
Evelyn, Henry and Pegee drafted a letter to send to cities and towns explaining that state law allows them to create an ordinance whereby they may offer tax abatement for property owners who maintain registered historic cemeteries located on their properties.  
  
The draft letter was reviewed by commission members. A motion was made by Tom and seconded by Bob to vote on approving the letter to be mailed to cities and towns. The motion to send the letters was approved.
- Headstone Preservation Training  
Various workshops are offered throughout the country and some preservation companies can be hired to provide training on-site locally but there is a need for formalized training to be accessible to many. Jonathan Appell, a monument conservator, and other preservation organizations have made videos of their workshop sessions. One option may be to get permission to use a video on CD or YouTube as a training tool. A suggestion was made that a video could be linked to the commission's website.

- Cemetery Adoption Program

Each local committee, historical society or commission has its own adoption process. The question was raised if there should be a statewide template for adoption, possibly with different levels of involvement? What would be the criteria or should it be left to individual towns? Michael L. will put together a proposal to link adoption programs to the rihistoriccemeteries website. There was also a suggestion made to recognize outstanding volunteers.

- Update on Historic Cemetery Signs

Pegee reports there are 304 signs in the process of being made. The sign posts will be a lighter 2lb construction. Mike Hebert estimated that the signs will be ready approximately between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

### Member Updates/Comments

Mike: Followed up on a report of an advertisement banner in front of a cemetery in Johnston near the landfill. There was a question if the sign was in compliance. The ordinance states that there cannot be construction within 25' of a cemetery. The Johnston Historical Society will be contacted to look into this. Mike is working to upgrade the website to unlimited storage to handle 70,000 photos from John Sterling. Photos of cemetery entrances with sign can be sent to Mike directly. Mike prefers landscaped photos at 450 pixels wide although he can convert others. The Facebook page now has 200 "Likes".

Alan: East Greenwich now has a cemetery commission. There are 5 people interested in serving on the commission. An Eagle Scout has picked a cemetery in need of help as a project. Alan's e-mail newsletter, "Grave Concerns" has a good following. He was able to get a GPS reading for a cemetery behind the plaza across from the showcase.

Henry: He reported that Betty and Carlo finished a cemetery in Addieville, re-setting at least 30 stones. On Tuesday at the Bridgeton School there will be a slideshow presentation on the restoration of the East Farm cemetery. Methods and materials will be discussed. At the Marsh Hopkins Potter lot the last two major repairs will complete the work there. At BU 029 on Iron Mine Road the same process was started. A neighbor has been helping. A half dozen lots cleared within past 2 years need to be re-done. The Phetteplace-Jones lot was cleared in spring and work to re-set stones is now starting.

Judy: Still working in North Burial Ground in Warren where she now has someone to install the gates which first have to be sandblasted and painted. She is looking for tree guys to volunteer time.

Bob: Continues to work in WG 022 where for the first time he was able to mow. Most of the stones are now up. On Nov. 16 or 17 there will be a memorial service with Battery B. Bob was contacted by Sgt Brown, constable in Exeter, about a stone thought to belong in West Greenwich. It turned out that the stone belonged in Arcadia in Exeter.

Dory: The Richmond and Exeter Historical Societies contacted her with questions. She was also contacted by Mike Hebert about a lighting change which would possibly affect a cemetery that they couldn't find but the project had to be canceled for other reasons.

Evelyn: Gave an update the status of the GPS project. There were 2,616 cemeteries confirmed out of approximately 3,500. A couple months ago she contacted the Scituate Historical Society and put an ad in "The Observer" to recruit volunteers. There were 16-18 people who signed up do GPS readings. The Paine House Museum in Coventry will offer a cemetery tour on Sept. 20.

Tom: He plans to get GPS readings when weather cools. Will continue to better identify and describe cemeteries for a book coming out later in the fall.

David: Tiverton has been doing cemetery tours over a couple years. They are a new member posting on Find-A-Grave. Isobel has been doing GPS readings. The Sakonnet Times will run a story to see if readers can offer additional information on TV 048.

Kim: The Headstone Realignment Project at the Veterans Cemetery is going well. They received a grant for expanding the columbarium. There is an ongoing problem with people bringing dogs into the cemetery instead of using nearby trails. The issue will be discussed at an upcoming hearing.

Edna: An Eagle Scout did a fantastic job cleaning Judge Wilmarth cemetery but there are still many broken or downed stones. She received a call from a member of the Winsor family who is interested in volunteering to clean the Winsor cemetery. At the Steere cemetery on Douglas Hook Rd. a volunteer will get a new sign to install for his project. On Sept. 30, volunteers will meet to get as many GPS readings as possible. Edna thanked Carlo and Betty for their work in Sprague cemetery. A new sign will be ordered.

Pegee: Was contacted by Sheldon Whitehouse's office to discuss how veteran's graves in Warwick and Cranston are being cared for. There is a possibility that the state may maintain cemeteries on state property. Any city or town having cemeteries on state property should send Pegee a list. She was contacted by 2 people interested in cleaning cemeteries including an Eagle Scout interested in CR 036 on Park Ave. She also followed up on a complaint concerning Oakland cemetery not responding to requests for info.

Meeting adjourned at 9:19pm

Respectfully Submitted by Maureen Buffi, secretary