

BETHANY CEMETERY COMMISSION

DRAFT

MINUTES

October 21, 2021

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kris Sullivan at 7:38 pm. In attendance were members Will Brinton, Michael Calhoun, Carol Goldberg, and Kris Sullivan. Also present was town resident Thomas Connolly.

Kris welcomed Mr. Connolly to the meeting and asked what he wished to discuss with the commission. He is a direct abutter to the Carrington Cemetery and has concerns about some recent activities there.

Such activities include removal of the hedge along Rainbow Road last year, brush cleared near the property lines, several solar lights on graves, recent tree work, and increased number of people visiting the cemetery, both during the day and at night.

Kris briefly explained to Mr. Connolly the function and responsibilities of the commission. The commission also addressed his specific issues in turn:

1. Hedge removal. The old hedge that ran the length of the cemetery on Rainbow Road was removed last year by Public Works. There were numerous complaints of near-accidents due to poor sight lines for people pulling out of the cemetery. Boulders were installed to protect the old headstones close to the road. Removal also increased visibility of the cemetery from the road to discourage illicit activity.
2. Brush clearing. The new part of the cemetery was laid out in the early 1940s and plot were configured close to the property lines. Over the years, the margins grew in, but there are still plots in the brushy areas, sold and unsold. The brush clearing was done to reclaim these areas so they can be used when needed.
3. Solar lights. Mr. Connolly informed the board that there are several graves marked with solar lights, in violation of the cemetery rules & regulations. The commission will inspect the site to examine the scope of the issue.
4. Tree work. Two neighbors reported that there was an unpleasant incident recently involving a town contractor doing tree work in the cemetery. When the residents approached the contractor, the worker was verbally abusive. The commission agreed that this was unacceptable.
5. Increased visitors. Mr. Connolly also advised that there have been more visitors than usual in recent months, both during the day and at night. The rules and regulations do not explicitly state the hours that the cemetery is open, but several other town properties such as Veterans Park close at dusk. A sign was suggested to indicate that the cemetery was only open during daylight hours.

Regarding items 4 & 5, the commission felt that a letter to the Board of Selectmen was the appropriate course of action. Kris will draft a letter on behalf of the commission.

The commission discussed the installation of pins in sections C & E as well as updating maps with recent burials and headstones. Town Engineer Dave Nafis stated that, on average, he can set 20-24 pins per day. His firm's daily rate (8 hours) is \$1,300. Concrete monuments, if desired, cost \$300 each. Nafis also said he can locate any grave locations and new headstones at the same time if we mark them with flags. The cost to add these locations to the maps would be about \$300.

Maps of sections C & E were reviewed to determine the best locations to place the pins. Section E is straight forward, but there are still some questions for Section C. The commission will have to schedule a site visit or two to locate new graves and markers but need to resolve the pin issue first.

Will reported that he left a message for Skip Clark regarding repairing headstones in the Methodist Cemetery but had not heard back from him yet.

The McCrea family has offered to contribute toward taking down an old tree in front of the Methodist Cemetery and plant a new one. Will agreed to check with the family to confirm which tree they are talking about possibly removing.

Kris brought up the issue of where the revenue is going from plot sales. The original agreement, dating back to July 2012, was for the town to take care of landscaping out of the general fund, with any capital expenses coming from the dedicated cemetery fund. This fund is supposed to receive the revenue from plot sales to pay for one-time items such as mapping and headstone repair. We need to confirm that this is occurring.

The minutes of the June 17, 2021 meeting were reviewed. Michael made a motion, seconded by Carol, to approve as presented. Unanimous approval.

Michael suggested we consider meeting at 7:00 pm instead of 7:30 pm. The commission agree this was a good idea for next year's meeting schedule.

Carol said that we should provide a copy of the cemetery rules & regulations to anyone who purchases a plot. We will do so going forward.

Michael made a motion, seconded by Carol, to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm. Unanimous approval.

William L. Brinton

William L. Brinton
Acting Secretary

