

TOWN OF PEACHAM

Peacham Cemetery Preservation Committee Meeting Minutes from April 22, 2020 meeting (approved April 29, 2020)

Present by telephone or video

Committee Members: Becky Jensen, Laura Johnson, Annette Lorraine, Wendy Morgan on behalf of Bob Morgan

Public: Cheryl Stevenson, sexton

This was the first meeting with newly appointed members for 2020. We agreed to see if more members could be appointed to the meeting before electing a Chair. Dean Schoolcraft is no longer serving on this committee. Annette Lorraine volunteered to moderate this evening's meeting.

Record Keeping: The committee would like a review and report of the record-keeping system for deeds and burial records. With the town office closed for covid-19 safety, this action plan is temporarily tabled. Becky Jensen will look into it when she is back in VT and the town office more available.

Review of Current State of Peacham's Cemeteries: The committee expressed a desire for a tour of the main cemetery; will work with a map marked up by Cheryl Stevenson for the moment. Cheryl has been making plans for a cremation area; she had Cabot surveyor, Lisa Ginett, give an estimate but unsure if estimate is still good. Any change to the cemetery and its cost would still need to be approved by Selectboard. There are several historic cemeteries beside the main one in the village.

Maintenance: Since it is Spring, Cheryl Stevenson wants us to obtain updated burial costs from our other sexton, Ron Craig. She forwarded the updated sexton job description form. First burial will be May 1st. Cheryl will also talk to Tom Galinat, our town clerk/treasurer, about whether we can find funds for sprucing up the Peacham-Groton historic cemetery this year, and possibly survey a new cremation area in the main cemetery. Committee members expressed interest in what funds might be available but want Cheryl to hold off on actual work until the committee can review more details, then recommend (or not) to the Selectboard. It does not look optimistic for state correctional facility work crew to do mowing this summer.

Green/natural burials: A majority of the committee wants to pursue this. There are a number of ways to approach this such as the location (main cemetery in Peacham or explore possibility of other locations), the style of maintenance (park-like with walkways and landscaping, or more natural or woodsy) and presence or absence of grave site markers, and so on. Discussed the possibility of an informal survey of Peacham residents. Wendy M. noted the library presentation on green burials was well-attended. Wendy M. offered for Bob M. to do more research on how to approach natural burials, and report back. It was noted that Patrick Healey on the VT Cemetery Association and sexton for Montpelier's cemeteries is a good resource – Montpelier and some other VT towns are currently doing natural burials and working out the logistics of them.

Policies: The committee members will familiarize themselves with the updated Peacham Cemetery Rules & Regulations over the next few weeks. We agreed we have no desire to change or re-write them, unless there are discrepancies between them and how things actually work, or the way we want them to work, the committee can discuss edits and recommend an update to the Selectboard. Annette L. offered to check and keep track of these. We will also add a section about green/natural burials when we are ready.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Annette Lorraine