

NANTUCKET CEMETERY COMMISSION
Posted Meeting of April 9, 2025, at 3:00 pm
DPW Conference Room, 188 Madaket Road, with Zoom Connectivity

FINAL AND APPROVED MINUTES

Attendance, by Roll Call: Commissioners: Frances Karttunen, Scott McIver, Allen Reinhard, and Lee Saperstein; Charlie Polachi, DPW, Cemetery Administrator, Bob Bystrowski, Real Estate Specialist. There was a quorum at all times.

Guests: Jascin Finger, Maria Mitchell Association, Angela C. Marcellino.

Absent: Barbara White.

1. Call to Order.

Allen Reinhard called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm and recording of the meeting started: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lEaQbYEEliM&list=PL49sKqpy7VAhIyX1ozdd1bZ3zV8kXfP8M&index=58>.

2. Public and Commissioners Comments.

With no members of the public present, there were no public comments; equally, there were no Commissioners' comments. Frances Karttunen did say, however, that she had an item of business that she would bring up under "New, Old, and Other Business."

3. Minutes of March 12, 2025.

Allen Reinhard asked for approval of the minutes of March 12, 2025, and Frances Karttunen so moved with Scott McIver seconding the motion, which was approved unanimously by roll-call vote (Frances Karttunen, aye; Scott McIver, aye; Allen Reinhard, aye; and Lee Saperstein, aye).

4. Approval of Lot Sales since Last Meeting.

There have been no new lot sales since the last meeting. There was, however, a request from Caroline Ellis for a refund of her payment for Lot G-9 in Polpis, which she wished to relinquish. Following a review of a request by M. J. Beck for an inurnment on July 1, 2025, for which according to Scott McIver the necessary paperwork had been filed and for which Commission approval was not needed, the Commission voted unanimously to refund Caroline Ellis's payment (Lee Saperstein, moved; Scott McIver, seconded; Frances Karttunen, aye; Scott McIver, aye; Allen Reinhard, aye; and Lee Saperstein, aye).

5. Monument Restoration Project Update: Newtown Cemetery and bid for New North Cemetery.

Allen Reinhard asked Charlie Polachi to review the progress of the two restoration projects in Newtown and New North Cemeteries. Work in Newtown has been approved and is underway. The Invitation for Bids for New North is working its way through the Town offices and should be released soon. These projects will include the cleaning of all monuments in each cemetery with the D-2 Biologic cleaner. Lee Saperstein turned to Jascin Finger and reminded the Commissioners that she had held classes in Prospect Hill Cemetery on the proper way to clean stones; several commissioners indicated that they had taken these classes.

Earlier conversations about the absence of monuments in a large portion of Old North Cemetery led to a request for a ground-penetrating radar, GPR, survey of that portion of the cemetery. Hager-Richter Consultants, who had done the GPR work in Newtown, submitted a bid for \$14,000, which is below the threshold for competitive bidding. Charlie Polachi asked for Commission approval of this project to which Lee Saperstein moved approval, Frances Karttunen seconded, and all agreed (Frances Karttunen, aye; Scott McIver, aye; Allen Reinhard, aye; and Lee Saperstein, aye). Charlie Polachi will report on this project's schedule.

6. Newtown Cemetery Report.

Allen Reinhard noted that the agenda suggested that this topic would include an update on the plan for consolidation and, thence, future improvements to the cemetery. He reminded Commissioners that Newtown was projected as the only cemetery for full-body burials but that an inability to clear the southern-most portion of the cemetery due to its indeterminate status meant that these plans were on hold. He introduced Bob Bystrowski, Real Estate Specialist II, and asked him if there was any news. Bob Bystrowski said that they were still waiting on Town Counsel's advice on how best to proceed. Lee Saperstein reviewed the Commission's efforts to get the burial ground declared officially as a cemetery and said that he would send the memorandum and report from 2018 to Bob Bystrowski. Charlie Polachi offered, also, to send him the Hager-Richter GPR reports for Newtown.

Lee Saperstein said next that Article 94 of the Annual Town Meeting, ATM, was for the authorization of a lease to the Nantucket Educational Trust of land abutting the cemetery on the southeast side. The Commission had been told by Tracy MacDonald, Real Estate Specialist, of the plan to provide more housing for teachers and it was in general favor of the lease. Lee Saperstein hoped that this use of abutting land would speed up the determination of Newtown as a cemetery. Attached to these minutes is the plan associated with Article 94.

7. Historic Coloured Cemetery Video

Allen Reinhard looked to Frances Karttunen for a report on the presentation in the Dreamland of the Historic Coloured Cemetery video on May 4, 2025. She said that it was scheduled and that the video plus the question-and-answer period afterwards would be captured by NCTV and available for viewing on YouTube. She also said that the theater had 314 seats and that it would be wise to reserve seating now in case it became filled (go to www.nantucketdreamland.org, select "films and events," then "Community Events" and then select tickets from the page for the video).

8. Old, New, Other Business; Thoughts on Future Planning and Goals.

As promised earlier, Frances Karttunen said that she had a piece of old business to discuss, namely a memorial to Captain Absalom Boston and his wife, Hannah Cook Boston. At the last meeting of the Commission, there had been consent to start planning for such a memorial and she would like to move on that process now. In a series of PowerPoint slides (attached), she showed us some of the choices that need to be made including size, material, orientation, and inscription. Members of the Boston family are buried in the Historic Coloured Cemetery and have headstones. It is known that Absalom Boston and his wife are also buried there but have no headstones, which is why she is proposing a memorial rather than a monument.

In that the Commission has already voted in favor of a memorial, it moved directly to a discussion of design elements. Scott McIver said that there was a choice between granite and marble for the material as well as size and orientation. Lee Saperstein said that he favored the longevity of granite and liked the idea of a vertical monument, somewhat larger than the neighboring headstones but not excessively so. There was a favorable agreement on the proposed inscription. Charlie Polachi suggested, in that the restoration projects were costing less than had been budgeted, the monument could be paid for from the maintenance budget. Scott McIver said that he would return to the next meeting with several different draft designs for the Commission's review.

It is recorded here that, during this discussion, six strangers asked to be admitted to the Zoom discussion and they were so admitted. One or more of these six proved to be a vandal who defaced the active screen. Charlie Polachi immediately shut down the recording, removed the vandals from the link, and reported the hack to Zoom. This was at 3:51 pm, which ended the recording.

Allen Reinhard suggested that, before ending the meeting, he hoped that the Commissioners could talk more about the future of the Cemetery Commission. He noted that the Commission had accomplished a lot since its independent incorporation but it was timely to look at future projects. He was pleased that like-minded people are interested in joining the Commission. Lee Saperstein added that there will be much to do for Newtown Cemetery. Once established as a cemetery, it will need to be cleared back to its boundaries. While the one-time consultant's report on how it should be laid out may be inconsistent with what has been found about the layout of graves, it suggested elements that need to be accommodated: entry, parking, laneways, and locations of new burial sites. It will be nice if the un-maintained southern corner of the cemetery has room for additional burials.

9. Adjournment.

At 4:11 pm, Allen Reinhard suggested that the meeting had completed its written agenda and could, thus, be adjourned, which it was.

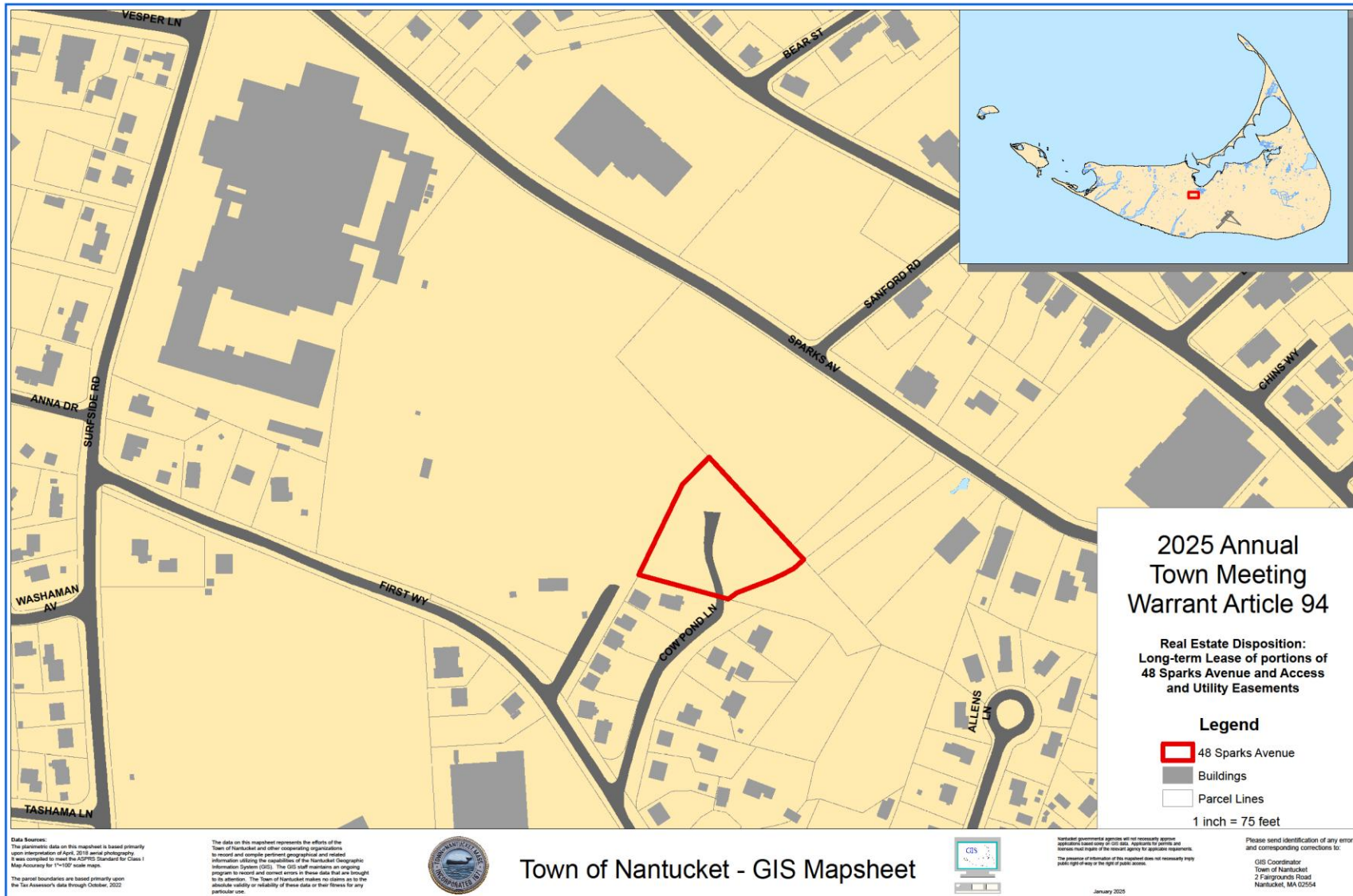
Next regular meeting: Wednesday, May 14, 2025, at 3:00 pm, in the DPW conference room at 188 Madaket Road. For those who wish to attend virtually, a Zoom link is attached:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85669907430?pwd=UCtldFIPSE9VTitrU05CVTJyOWkydz09.>

Respectfully submitted: _____; Date: 04/12/2025
Lee W. Saperstein, Secretary

Cemetery Projects List (as printed on the agenda):

1. Consolidation of lots at Newtown Cemetery with recordable survey. Awaiting action.
2. Begin Monument Restoration at Newtown Cemetery and establish contract status for New North Cemetery.
3. Fencing at the Historic Coloured Cemetery.
4. Fencing and brush removal at New and Old North cemeteries.
5. New map needed for Polpis addition of new lots.
6. Installation of new lot corner markers at Polpis.



Although there are headstones in the Historic Coloured Cemetery for members of the Boston family, there is no monument for Captain Absalom F. Boston and his wife Hannah Cook Boston.

Visitors to the cemetery often come specifically looking for a headstone for Absalom Boston and are disappointed to find none.



Some visitors find this stone lying flat in the ground and partly overgrown and believe it is Captain Boston's.

It is actually that for his son Absalom Jr. who died as a small child.



The text on this stone reads:

A. F.
Son of Capt. A. F.
and H. C. Boston
Died April 3, 1836
AE 36 ms, 5 d



Headstones for other members of the immediate family of Captain Boston include those of his first and second wives.

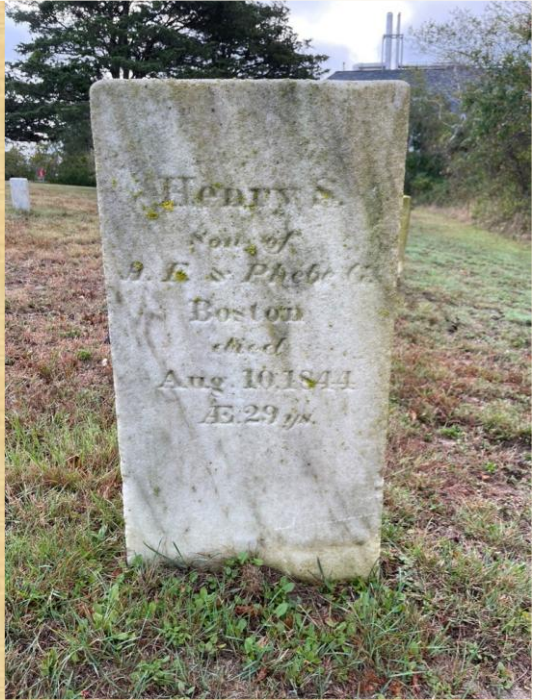
Mary "Polly" Spywood
d. 1812
Mother of Charles Boston

and

Phebe Spriggins
d. 1826
Mother of Henry Boston
and Caroline Boston Clough



Headstones
for his sons
Charles
d. 1833
and
Henry
d. 1844



And the headstone and footstone for his daughter Phebe Ann, d. 1849.
The CemCom restored Phebe Ann's footstone to her grave in February 2024.

There are no headstones for:

Oliver Boston, who died in Boston in 1872.

Thomas Boston, who died in Illinois in 1926 and was interred in Graceland Cemetery, Chicago.

Caroline Boston Clough, who was still living with her daughter Amelia on Nantucket in 1870.

Absalom F. Boston, who died in 1855.

Hannah Cook Boston, who died in 1857.

Proposed:

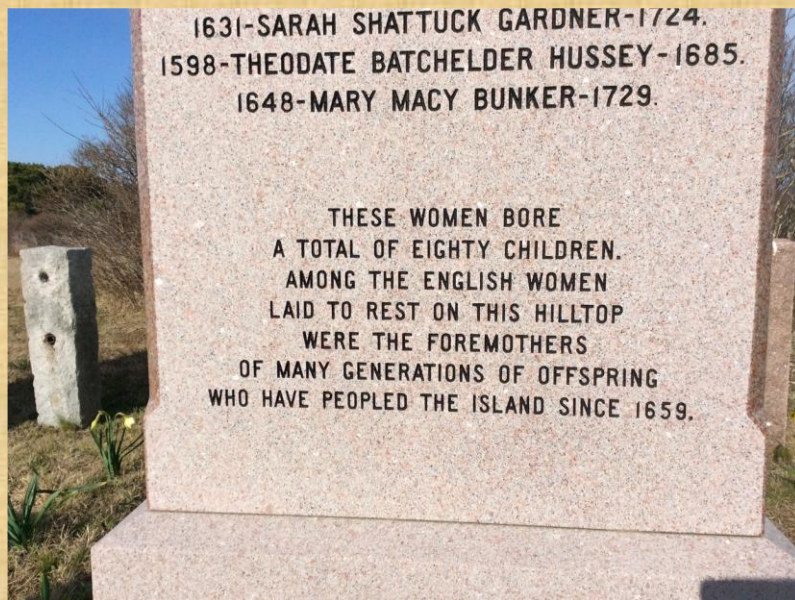
**That the Cemetery Commission
have a monument erected
in the Historic Coloured Cemetery
to memorialize
Captain Absalom F. Boston
and Hannah Cook Boston**

Precedents:



The Women's Monument (right) added to the Founders Burial Ground at the end of 2009





The monument at Settlers Landing. Not a cemetery marker, but significant.

The Quaise Farm Asylum
monument
to those interred
in unmarked graves
in the small cemetery
off Polpis Road.



The monument to Captain
Paul Cuffee
in front of the Westport MA
Friends Meeting House.

Erected in 1913
by Cuffee's great grandson
Horatio Paul Howard.

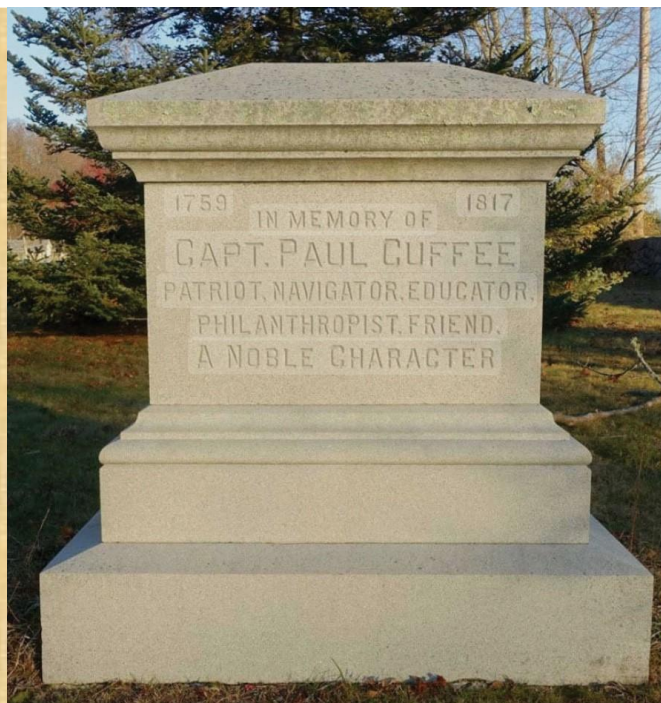


Photo courtesy of Carl Cruz

The inscription:

IN MEMORY OF CAPT. PAUL CUFFEE
PATRIOT, NAVIGATOR, EDUCATOR
PHILANTHROPIST, FRIEND.
A NOBLE CHARACTER

This is a monument,
not a grave marker.



There are headstones for Paul Cuffee And his wife Alice Abel Cuffee elsewhere in the same Westport Quaker cemetery.

In the case of Absalom Boston and Hannah Cook Boston, we are unable to place headstones, since we don't know exactly where in the general vicinity of the other Boston family graves they were interred.

We can erect a monument to the two of them near to the other family graves.

Here is an example of a Nantucket monument rather than a grave marker.

Elisha Bunker has no grave in New North Cemetery because he died at sea.

For some unknown reason, there was no headstone for his widow, Sarah Pinkham Bunker, although she was interred in the family plot along with her daughter, son-in-law, grandson and his wife.

This monument was commissioned and erected by Elisha's and Sarah's great grandchildren.



If the Cemetery Commission goes forward with the proposal to place a monument to Captain Absalom F. Boston and Hannah Cook Boston, in the Historic Coloured Cemetery, the first order of business will be to get a cost estimate.

For that it will be necessary to decide on the type of stone and the design (vertical or lateral).

We also need to decide on an appropriate inscription, since the price of the monument will be affected by the number of letters and spaces in the inscription.

First draft of a possible inscription:

In memory of
Captain Absalom F. Boston
1785-1855
Husband and father
Whaling master, entrepreneur, citizen

And

Hannah Cook Boston
1795-1857
Wife and mother
Stewardess on the S.S. Island Home