

NANTUCKET CEMETERY COMMISSION
Posted Meeting of June 11, 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. It was determined by roll call that there was a quorum at all times.

Absent: Barbara White.

1. Call to Order.

Allen Reinhard called the meeting to order at 3:01 pm and recording of the meeting started: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSn5EMnhri4&list=PL49sKqpy7VAhIyX1ozdd1bZ3zV8kXFp8M&index=61>.

2. Public and Commissioners Comments.

With no members of the public present, there were no public comments. Allen Reinhard commented positively that he had visited all of the Town Cemeteries in anticipation of Memorial Day and found them in “beautiful” condition.

Frances Karttunen said that she had visited several Town cemeteries on Memorial Day Weekend and has created a PowerPoint review of items of concern. She asked for permission to project the slides and it was granted readily. The slides are attached to these minutes.

Some of the slides listed potential action items and they were discussed. The need for lot markers in Polpis Cemetery was noted and Scott McIver said that he would be able to place them soon. The brush-cutting and mowing at Quaise needs to be coordinated with the Nantucket Conservation Foundation. The NCF had done a thorough job of mowing the access trails but work remains within the burial ground itself. Scott McIver said that he would see to repainting the letters of the Miacomet Indian Burial Ground sign. Charlie Polachi indicated that he would look into the water fountain and benches at the entry to the ground. Allen Reinhard agreed that the entry to the Historic Coloured Cemetery was on hospital grounds. He would try to coordinate brush cutting and clean-up with the hospital. He and Charlie Polachi will ask the DPW for an entry sign. Once information on the number of burials in the Quaker Cemetery is gleaned, the DPW will be asked to place an informational sign at the Vestal Street entry. Repainting of the sign at Old North Cemetery will be put into a DPW work order. Allen Reinhard and Charlie Polachi will talk to the DPW about the roadway into the Founders’ Burial Ground.

3. Minutes of May 14, 2025.

Allen Reinhard asked for approval of the minutes of May 14, 2025, and Scott McIver so moved, with Frances Karttunen 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. Polpis Cemetery.

Allen Reinhard said that the Commission had several actions before it.

- The memorial stone design for Koon/Cosgrove was reviewed and approved: moved by Scott McIver, seconded by Frances Karttunen, and approved unanimously (Frances Karttunen, aye; Scott McIver, aye; Allen Reinhard, aye; and Lee Saperstein, aye.)
- The previously approved inurnment of the remains of William Higbee Phillips will take place in Polpis Cemetery in lot E-26 on June 15, 2025.
- Also, the previously approved inurnment of the remains of Gary Walter Beck will take place in Polpis Cemetery in lot E-12 on July 1, 2025.
- The language in the Beck stone memorial was approved: Scott McIver moved, Frances Karttunen seconded, and approval was unanimous (Frances Karttunen, aye; Scott McIver, aye; Allen Reinhard, aye; and Lee Saperstein, aye.).

Bob Bystrowski said that there had been no formal action on the licenses for the encroachment into Polpis Cemetery by the abutters to the east. He noted that a formal survey will be needed and he would look into acquiring one. Charlie Polachi reported that there is a work order for brush cutting and a new fence on the north side of Polpis Cemetery but that it may not be done until after the summer workload is dealt with.

5. Historic Coloured Cemetery Video Screening.

Charlie Polachi reported that the Town had installed a link to the video of the Historic Coloured Cemetery onto the Commission's web page. Frances Karttunen reported that the video would be shown on the following dates and places: July 29 at 1:15 pm at the Salt Marsh Center, August 1 at 6:30 pm in the Great Hall of the Atheneum, and August 11 at 5:30 pm in the Whaling Museum.

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

Charlie Polachi reported that work at Newtown Cemetery is underway to repair and restore monuments. The contractor will do the repairs first and then treat the stones to clean them. The invitation for bids for New North has cleared all steps and will be released shortly. Approval has been granted for a GPR survey in Old North in the section that is devoid of monuments.

7. Newtown Cemetery Report.

With respect to Newtown Cemetery, Bob Bystrowski reported that a formal title search is underway. When that is ready and, provided no hindrances are found, the request for a formal taking of Newtown Cemetery by the Town will need to go to the next Annual Town Meeting.

9. Fencing at the Historic Coloured Cemetery along the Vesper Lane Side.

Charlie Polachi announced that a work order has been filed for fencing along the Vesper Lane side of the cemetery. Scott McIver reported that he has been working on designs for a memorial in the HCC to Absalom and Hannah Boston and shared three variations: upright marble, granite with a rounded top, and granite with a scalloped top. The consensus was for a granite memorial with a rounded top; he said that he would come to the next meeting with a full design and cost proposal.

10. Thoughts and Discussion Regarding the Future of the Commission.

It is now known that there is one applicant for the one vacancy in next year's Commission membership. The applicant will be invited to attend the July meeting.

11. Old, New, Other Business, and Final Comments.

With no requests for new or old business, Allen Reinhard declared adjournment by acclamation.

12. Adjournment.

Adjournment was at 4:00 pm.

Next regular meeting: Wednesday, July 9, 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: 06/15/2025
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.

Slide 1.
Memorial Day Weekend 2025
Cemetery Reports
Frances Karttunen

Slide 2. Over the long holiday weekend I visited the Polpis Cemetery, the Quaise Asylum Burial Ground, the Founders Burial Ground, the Miacomet Indian Burial Ground, The Friends Burial Ground/Quaker Cemetery, and the Historic Coloured Cemetery. Most of these I did in the company of Stephanie Bohon, a visiting scholar from the University of Tennessee who is currently researching Nantucket's Wampanoag history at the NHA Research Library.

Slide 3. Polpis Cemetery action item:

At previous CemCom meetings we have discussed getting the corner markers into the newly laid-out plots.

As of Sunday, May 25, there were still surveyor's flags and strings laid out on the ground.

There are two up-coming inurnments scheduled for Polpis Cemetery, and it would be a courtesy to the families to have the flags and strings taken up beforehand.

Can Scotty and Allen finally get the corner markers set before the first of the scheduled inurnments?

Slide 4. Quaise Asylum Burial Ground
The paths from the two parking areas to the cemetery have been neatly mowed.



Slide 5. Another view of the mowed path.





Slide 6. Quaker Ladies are blooming abundantly around the monument.

Slide 7. Action item 1:
Although the path has been mowed, the cemetery has not been. Last year's grass is knee-high within the cemetery.



Slide 8. This looks unkempt for visitors.



Slide 9.

Action item 2:

The cedar corner markers are now engulfed in brush. The brush needs to be cut back and the cedar posts and rails replaced as needed,



Slide 10.



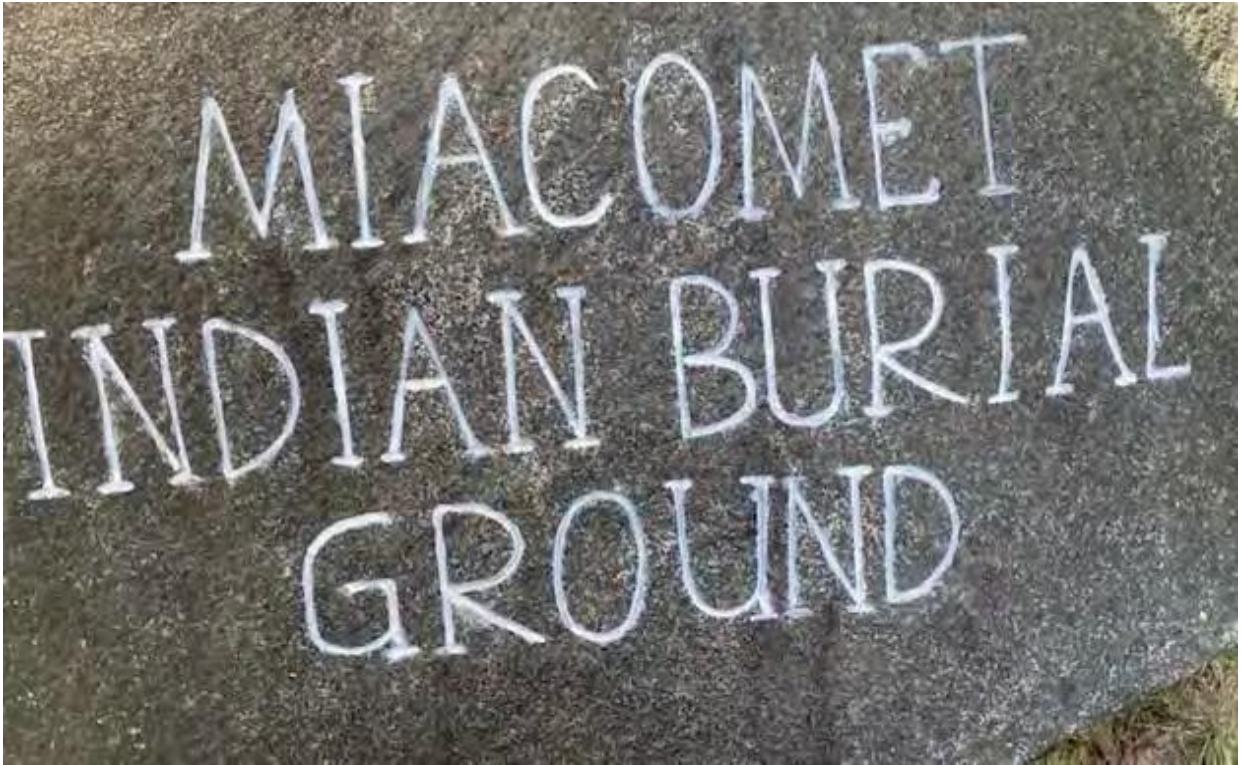
Another of the corner markers.

Slide 11.

This corner maker is barely visible.



Slide 12. Miacomet Indian Burial Ground: The monument when it had been freshly painted.



Slide 13. Action item 1: The letters need a new application of white monument paint.



Slide 14 (also 15 and 16). Action item 2: Some of the cedar rails are down.



Slide 17. The rails that are still sound need to be put back in place. Missing ones and rotted posts need to be replaced.



Slide 18. Matter of concern: Where we removed an unauthorized memorial bench in front of the monument, there is now a drinking fountain and two rather unattractive generic benches.



Slide 19. Ground stone around the base of the drinking fountain



Slide 20. Historic Coloured Cemetery
Action item 1: The entrance to the cemetery is overgrown.
This brush needs to be cut back.



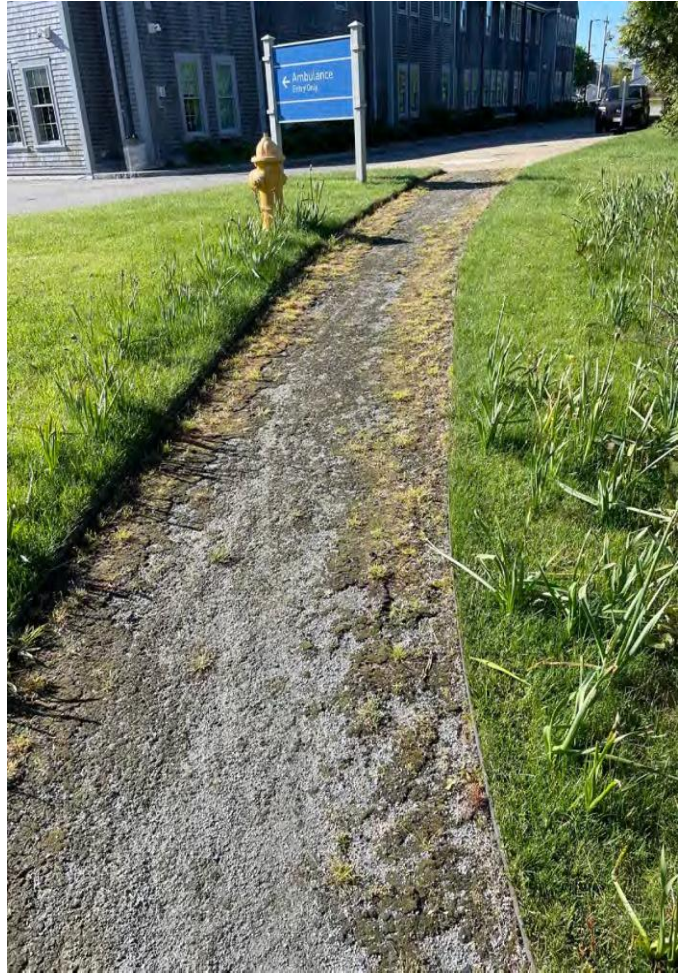
Slide 21. The only signs at the entrance from the parking area to the cemetery are hospital signs. The path curves in such a way that one only sees the hospital helipad and not the cemetery.

Action item 2:
There needs to be Cemetery Entrance sign here.



Slide 22. Matter of concern:

The path from the handicapped parking place to the cemetery has been overgrown with moss and is probably no longer negotiable with a wheelchair or walker. Since this is Nantucket Cottage Hospital property, we probably need to take it up with the hospital administrators.



Slide 23. Mysteries:

1. For this Memorial Day a veterans' flag standard was inserted into the ground at Polly Boston's headstone, and a geranium was planted on her grave. Her only child, Charles Boston, was not a veteran.

Benajah Boston Jr. WAS a Civil War veteran, but he is buried in Illinois. There is a headstone in the Historic Coloured Cemetery for his father, Benajah Boston Sr. (a cousin of Absalom Boston). I took the liberty of moving the flag standard to the grave of Lahaina-born Pacific Islander John Swain whose name Frank Morral believed to be the last inscribed on the monument to Nantucket's Civil War dead. Edouard Stackpole identified Swain as a Civil War vet, but his grave does not have a government marker. Swain died in 1865 on Nantucket of heart disease. I think he probably sought to enlist along with other Nantucket men but was rejected on the grounds of his age and poor health.

2. For several years a flag has been placed on a grave right up against the fence closest to the hospital. The grave marker is not a military one, and I find it illegible.

Action item: I will contact the American Legion and try to identify these two honorees.

Slide 24. Quaker Cemetery/Friends Burial Ground:
This is the sign that has been placed at the Vestal Street side of the cemetery that people are using for an entrance.

It doesn't inform people that the large open area is full of unmarked graves.
If we do a project over the winter to determine an accurate number of those burials, there should be an additional sign about that.



Slide 25. Action item:
The informative sign at the corner of Madaket Road and Quaker Road is nearly illegible.
It must be repainted.



Slide 26. Reminder:
The wooden Reuben Chase
sign in Old North Cemetery
was in this eyesore condition.
What has become of it?
Will it be restored or replaced?



Slide 27. Founders Burial Ground Matter of concern:
The entrance to the Maxcy's Pond parking area and the road to the uphill parking area are
repeatedly washed out and hazardous for cars.

As seen From Cliff Road:



Slide 28. Getting back onto Cliff Road.



Slide 29. One side of road to uphill parking area



Slide 30. The uphill parking area itself.



Slides 31, 32, 33. The now completed house abutting the burial ground.
Note, Proximity to the monuments.



Slide 34. A berm has been constructed inside the fence line with plantings on top. When mature, they may screen the sightlines between the house and the cemetery.



End of Slides.