

NANTUCKET CEMETERY COMMISSION
Posted Meeting of December 10, 2025, at 3:00 pm
DPW Conference Room, 188 Madaket Road, with Zoom Connectivity

FINAL AND APPROVED MINUTES

Attendance, by Roll Call: Commissioners: Jascin Finger, Frances Karttunen, Scott McIver, Allen Reinhard, and Lee Saperstein; Charlie Polachi, DPW, Cemetery Administrator. It was determined by roll call that there was a quorum at all times; for reference, the correct Zoom link is

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86337037514?pwd=cUTROpCbZz4jjEqvO1G73lvsqWgQxE.1>

Meeting ID: 863 3703 7514

Passcode: 983505

1. Call to Order.

Allen Reinhard called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm and recording of the meeting started:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTdLulkeI8s&list=PL49sKqpy7VAhIyX1ozdd1bZ3zV8kXFp8M&index=67>. A roll call established the listed attendance.

2. Public and Commissioners Comments.

Frances Karttunen asked if she might introduce material about the video of the Historic Coloured Cemetery; yes, of course, said Allen Reinhard. The hospital is interested and would like to talk with her further. She will meet with Chris Glowacki of the Foundation and expects to have lunch with Dr. Koehm. Frances Karttunen then asked if she might bring another matter for this cemetery and was told to go ahead. She reported that the path from the Hospital's parking area alongside of the cemetery into the cemetery needs maintenance to remove moss and other growths. It also needs a directional sign. She asked for permission to bring these items up as coming from the Commission. All agreed that she might and she was thanked for her concern.

In a separate issue, she said that she was pleased with the offer by LMC of an inscribed stone for the entrance to the Quaker Cemetery on Upper Vestal Street; she thought that it would be very helpful in alerting cemetery visitors that the entire field was a cemetery. She liked the proposed inscription, although felt that there were several minor errors that could be corrected; the edited version follows:

QUAKER CEMETERY

This Quaker Burial Ground was established in 1731, and over the next century and even years beyond, thousands of Friends were laid to rest here in unmarked graves, leaving the field today seemingly empty. The few existing headstones were placed by Hicksite and Gurneyite Quakers.

Frances Karttunen then gave a review of the history of the Quaker Cemetery. Her notes, including this history, are appended to these minutes.

3. Minutes of November 12, 2025.

Allen Reinhard asked for approval of the minutes of November 12, 2025; Scott McIver made that motion and Frances Karttunen seconded it; it was approved unanimously by roll-call vote (Allen Reinhard, aye; Jascin Finger, aye; Frances Karttunen, aye; Scott McIver, aye; and Lee Saperstein, aye.).

4. Polpis Cemetery: Applications.

Allen Reinhard said that he had in hand three lot applications and one request for inurnment, which all needed approval. The lot applications were all in Polpis and included:

Alison McDonald, lot F-5;
Kathleen Walsh, lot G-9;
F. Scott Wilson, lot F-2.

Lee Saperstein moved their approval, Scott McIver seconded, and a roll-call vote approved the sales (Allen Reinhard, aye; Jascin Finger, aye; Frances Karttunen, aye; Scott McIver, aye; and Lee Saperstein, aye). It is noted that Kathleen Walsh's application was approved last month while this month's action included the appropriate paperwork.

The inurnment application was for Thomas Koon in lot H-29 and it was approved: Scott McIver moved, Lee Saperstein seconded, and the vote in favor was unanimous (Allen Reinhard, aye; Jascin Finger, aye; Frances Karttunen, aye; Scott McIver, aye; and Lee Saperstein, aye).

An additional agenda item for Polpis Cemetery was the installation of split-rail fences along the northern and eastern boundaries. Allen Reinhard visited Polpis Cemetery with Mo Moore and Ray Sylvia of the DPW on December 3, 2025. He showed them the bounds on the northern side, which is the wooded side and also that the eastern fence should extend from the bound by the road up to the encroachment but not beyond. The DPW staff said that they would get to installation as soon as they could.

5. Monument Restoration Project Update.

Charlie Polachi reported that work at Newtown Cemetery was nearly complete; there are two upright stones that are under temporary support but will be made self-supporting. Scott McIver noted that the cleaned monuments looked great. Charlie Polachi also reported that a bid by LMC for \$47,700 for restoration work at New North Cemetery had been accepted by the Town. It is less than the estimated amount, thus leaving a fund surplus.

Frances Karttunen observed that the original contract at Old North included the cleaning only of stones that had been restored thus leaving many un-cleaned stones. Charlie Polachi said that he was in the process of preparing a bid request for the cleaning of all remaining stones in Old North Cemetery. [Action: Charlie Polachi will prepare a bid for cleaning all remaining stones in Old North.]

6. Newtown Cemetery Update.

Charlie Polachi reported that, while we await action at Annual Town Meeting for potential taking of land for the purpose of a cemetery, he has gone ahead and contacted a surveyor (Leo Asadoorian of Blackwell and Associates) to ask for estimated costs to survey the lots within Newtown Cemetery so as to produce an 81L (MGL Chap 41, Section 81L) plot for 46 Sparks Avenue and recordable surveys in 40, 42, and 44 Sparks Avenue.

7. Historic Coloured Cemetery: Fencing.

Allen Reinhard also reported that he had visited the Historic Coloured Cemetery with Mo Moore and Ray Sylvia from the DPW to verify the location of a new split-rail fence on the south side, alongside the Vestal Street Land Bank property. When he mentioned that the DPW staff intended only to end the fence on either side of the path into the cemetery, Frances Karttunen said that she remembered that the Commission had approved the purchase and installation of two granite posts to mark that entry. Scott McIver said that he would create a cost estimate for that installation. [Action: Scott McIver will prepare an estimate for posts at the southern entrance to the Historic Coloured Cemetery.]

8. Future Commission Projects.

All commission members agreed that the largest future project would be to establish Newtown Cemetery legally as a cemetery and then to proceed with the steps needed to open up lands in 40, 42, and 44 Sparks Avenue as well as preparing walking paths and parking areas.

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

Scott McIver said that he had brought proofs of the text for the Absalom Boston monument, as well as photographs of different styles and rock types, and was seeking consensus on how best to proceed. Allen Reinhard suggested that we take each element of the monument in turn: stone type, shape, and text. Accordingly, Lee Saperstein moved that the stone should be granite and Scott McIver seconded that. In discussion, Jascin Finger thought that white marble was more in keeping with the look of the Historic Coloured Cemetery. A vote was taken and four favored granite (Allen Reinhard, aye; Frances Karttunen, aye; Scott McIver, aye; and Lee Saperstein, aye). Jascin Finger said that her “no” vote reflected her interest in marble. For the shape, all agreed that a vertical upright was best; moved by Frances Karttunen, seconded by Scott McIver, and approved unanimously (Allen Reinhard, aye; Jascin Finger, aye; Frances Karttunen, aye; Scott McIver, aye; and Lee Saperstein, aye). When discussing the proposed text, Jascin Finger suggested that a statement of installation should be placed on the rear of the monument. Again, unanimity prevailed in approving the text. Scott McIver has provided a final proof, which is attached, and an estimated cost of \$8900 plus \$500 for installation. He was told that these votes permitted him to begin work on the monument. He thought that it would be ready by summer. It was suggested that June 19th, the Juneteenth Holiday would be a good target date. [Action: Scott McIver will create the Boston Memorial.]

9. Adjournment.

Adjournment was by acclamation at 4:04 pm.

Next regular meeting: Wednesday, January 14, 2026, at 3:00 pm, in the DPW conference room at 188 Madaket Road and by Zoom.

Cemetery Projects List:

- Consolidation of lots at Newtown Cemetery with recordable ground survey: Awaiting action.
- Begin monument restoration at New North Cemetery
- Fencing at the Historic Coloured Cemetery. Work order submitted.
- New map needed for Polpis addition of new lots.
- Installation of new Lot Corner markers at Polpis.

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

Frances Karttunen:
Notes for the Dec. 10, 2025, CemCom meeting:

From Dr. Mimi Koehm about establishing our Cemetery film at the hospital:

"I spoke with Amy Lee and she said this project would be of interest and the hospital would like to talk with you further.
She said Chris Glowacki from the Foundation would be the hospital's point person.
I sent him the info so he will follow up with you."

Dr. Koehm and I plan to meet for lunch at the hospital on Friday.

When I meet with Chris Glowacki I intend, with the CemCom's permission, to also bring up maintenance of the path from the reserved parking spots to the entrance to the cemetery. It is currently getting moss-covered and would be difficult for a person with a wheelchair or walker to navigate. There also should be a sign indicating that the path leads to the cemetery, since it curves, and the entrance is not clearly in sight. I hope the hospital might take care of both these issues.

Proposed inscription (on the Quaker Cemetery Vestal Street entrance):

This Quaker burial ground was established in 1731, and over the next century thousand of Friends were laid to rest there in unmarked graves, leaving the field today seemingly empty, the few existing headstones were placed later by Hicksite and Gurneyite Quakers.

This does a good job of explaining to those who don't know that the entire place is a burial ground.

"thousand of Friends" should read plural: thousands of Friends
This is a wise way to put it, because we have yet to establish how many thousands.

"there" should be: here

There is a seemingly run-on sentence. The comma after "empty" should be a period.

I think "later" should be omitted, since orthodox/Wilburite Quaker burials were still taking place simultaneously with Hicksite and Gurneyite ones

Al Lee has noted, burials took place for over more than a century. After 1831 they undoubtedly fell off in numbers as Quakerism declined, but they did not stop. In 1870 Judith Bunker Paddack was buried there, and six years later John S. Chase, a Civil War veteran, was buried there despite his participation in war. A few others have been interred in the cemetery much more recently.

Here is a bit of cemetery history, mainly based on the work of Robert Leach:

1731 A new meetinghouse and burial ground were established at the corner of Madaket Road and Quaker Road (then called Main Street and Grave Street.)

1732 Charles Clasby, first burial in the new site

1792 The meetinghouse built in 1731 was demolished, and a larger one erected at corner of Pleasant and Main Streets, leaving more room for burials at Madaket Rd/Quaker Rd

1823 Retirement of sexton Eliphalet Paddack, who was said to have buried more bodies in the Friends Burial Ground than were alive on Nantucket at end of the 1800s. (This would be 3000.)

1870 Judith Bunker Paddack, daughter-in-law of Eliphalet Paddack and known as the last birthright Quaker on the island, died at age 93 and was buried in the Friends Burial Ground.

1876 John S. Chase, Civil War veteran and whaler, died in a "fall from aloft" and has a headstone in the Friends Burial Ground.

Although infrequent, burials have continued until recent times.

1915 Nantucket Monthly Meeting turned over control of the Friends Burial Ground to the Town of Nantucket with a payment of \$1533 for perpetual care. There is a Town of Nantucket account into which donations have been made for the care of the Friends Burial Ground.

Also in 1915 the Nantucket Monthly Meeting records were located in Lynn, MA, but eventually migrated to Sharon, MA, and then Centerville, MA. According to Leach, "John Foster's farm became the repository of all collected records of Nantucket Monthly Meeting, dating back to the era of Mary Coffin Starbuck."

Here is a letter sent to Lynn in 1910 (I think) about care of the cemetery:

Nantucket, Mass
Sept. 14th, 1910 (?)

William S. Oliver
Lynn, Mass

Dear Sir,

Benjamin Albert was over to my house the other day & I asked him if there was no way of keeping Mr. Butler Folger (sic) hens and chickens out of of (sic) the Friends burial ground my Grandfather and grandmother is (sic) buried there Thomas & Lydia Macy. Butler Folger told Mrs. Albertson they was only eating up the grasshoppers, the ground is in bad shape from the hens
Can't you stop it
Hoping to hear from you

Yours respectfully.

Charles H. Macy
153 Main St.

PS

You needn't bring my name in but I am not afraid to back it up.

The Absalom and Hannah Boston monument; final proof.

