

NANTUCKET CEMETERY COMMISSION

Posted Meeting of July 8, at 3:00 pm

DPW Conference Room, 188 Madaket Road and on Zoom

July DRAFT MINUTES FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL.

Attendance, by Roll Call: Commissioners: Frances Karttunen, Allen Reinhard, Lee Saperstein, Jascin Leonardo Finger, Amelia Holmes (3:04 PM), and Charlie Polachi, Cemetery Administrator. It was determined by roll call votes that there was a quorum at all times.

1. Call to Order

Declaring a quorum present Allen Reinhard called the meeting to order at 3:01PM. Moved directly to agenda.

2. Public and Commissioner Comments

Having no members of the public present, Allen Reinhard asked for comments from commissioners. Lee Saperstein noted the Saltmarsh's time and date for the viewing of the of Historic Coloured Cemetery film as Friday July 10 at 4PM.

3. Approval of Minutes

Allen Reinhard asked for the approval of the minutes from June 10, 2026. Frances Karttunen made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and Jascin Leonardo Finger seconded. There was a roll call vote with Frances Karttunen, Allen Reinhard, Lee Saperstein, and Jascin Leonardo Finger all in favor.

4. Historic Coloured Cemetery Ceremony for Unveiling of Absalom Boston and Hannah Cook Boston on Juneteenth. Many Thanks to Frances Karttunen and Scott McIver for Making this Event Happen.

Allen Reinhard stated he had put this on the agenda because he was very pleased with how it went and that Frances Karttunen needed full credit and praise for pulling all the strings together and making everything happen. Frances Karttunen noted that she received a lot of help and was quite pleased with the turnout of at least 60 people – it was a bit more than anticipated. She noted that the Summer Street Church loaned chairs for the service.

Allen Reinhard broke in because at 3:04, new commission member, Amelia Holmes, arrived via ZOOM and he welcomed her to the Cemetery Commission.

Allen Reinhard returned to talking about the historic colored cemetery and the unveiling of the monument. Frances Karttunen noted that there were three photographers there – from the *Inquirer & Mirror*, *The Current*, and “Nantucket Daybreak,” and they all posted photos. There was also coverage on WCAI radio and a piece in *The Boston Globe*. Jascin Leonardo Finger added that she was also in attendance noting that it was a lovely event and giving kudos to Frances Karttunen for putting it all together. Jascin Leonardo Finger noted there was music by Molly Glazer and her son, Isaiah, and Reverend Splain provided opening and closing remarks. Allen Reinhard also noted, thanks to now past Cemetery Commission member, Scott McIver, for getting the monument completed. He did the engraving and placed the stone. Frances Karttunen further noted that Scott McIver had told her that there is a substance applied to the surface of the stone for carving and that with exposure to air the lettering will darken and become more prominent.

4. Commission Reorganization: Election of Officers

Allen Reinhard stated that this was the first meeting of the new commission. He noted that he had already welcomed Amelia and now it was time to turn to voting for new officers. For a variety of reasons, Allen Reinhard would like to step down as Chair and he nominated Lee Saperstein to be Chair. Frances Karttunen then spoke to the fact that she would like to remain Vice Chair. After a brief discussion, Jascin Leonardo Finger moved that the Committee vote in favor of Lee Saperstein as chair and Frances Karttunen as vice chair. The vote was seconded by Amelia Holmes and went to a vote for both positions. A roll call vote was made with all in favor.

Allen Reinhard continued with the position of secretary formerly filled by Lee Saperstein. Lee Saperstein detailed how he had taken the meeting minutes, including using the AI transcript from the ZOOM meeting recording. Charlie Polachi further detailed how the transcript can be utilized. Jascin Leonardo Finger volunteered to serve as Secretary. After discussion, Lee Saperstein asked for a vote to accept Jascin Leonardo Finger's offer. Allen Reinhard nominated Jascin Leonardo Finger as secretary. Lee Saperstein seconded. A roll call vote was made with all in favor.

At this time, Allen Reinhard asked if he could make a few comments as the now past-chair of the Cemetery Commission. He detailed the work of the Commission over the years, which started initially as a work group concerning the Founders' Burial Ground. He touched on the work at most of the cemeteries with other members adding in other points about the Commissions accomplishments over the years. One item Allen Reinhard mentioned for action was reminding the Nantucket Conservation Foundation (NCF) that it needs to replace the split rails at the Quaise Asylum Burial Ground, which sits on their land, and he said he would take that on. **ACTION ITEM: Allen Reinhard to remind NCF of split rail replacement.**

5. Approval of lot sales at Polpis, Lot J 31 to Jannett Rose Hudson, G2 to Sofia Leiburg

Lee Saperstein noted for the new member of the Commission that the Cemetery Commission is the approving agency for any business transaction in the cemeteries and the regulations require approval of sales of lots, approval of requests for interment, approval of monuments, and then final approval of burial dates.

There are two requests to purchase lots at Polpis Cemetery. They are both cremains because that is all that is allowed at the cemetery. They are for: Janette Rose Hudson, purchasing Lot J31 and Sophia Liburd purchasing Lot G2 (last name as corrected by Frances Karttunen). Frances Karttunen made a motion to approve and Allen Reinhard seconded with a unanimous roll call approval.

Allen Reinhard mentioned how the process unfolds when someone has an interest in purchasing a lot. He noted that he meets the individual(s) at the Cemetery with the map that he continues to update with each purchase. He usually provides people with some history of the cemetery. He provides them with the lot application form that they then fill out and return with a check for \$900 which is the current price. Then it comes to the commission to be voted upon. Form and check are then turned into Charlie Polachi. Frances Karttunen further noted that they receive a certificate of ownership of that lot which is an important item to keep. Charlie Polachi added that he and the Chair of the Cemetery Commission sign the plot purchase documents and they are then stored in the vault. Allen Reinhard added the amount of new plots that have been added to the Polpis Cemetery – approximately 138 – and the process both he and Scott McIver went through to delineate these new plot lines. The reason for cremains only at Polpis is because of the native population that once inhabited the area. In order not to disturb any archaeological sites, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has determined that burials can only be about 2 1/2 feet deep. Thus the stipulation for cremains only. The Commonwealth does also permit the direct burial of ashes which negates the need for a plot. This would be casting the ashes in a small area with no stone marker.

6. Monument Restoration Project Update: New North Cemetery

Frances Karttunen stated she did not see anything happening in New North Cemetery. Charlie Polachi stated that the contractors were waiting for temperatures to rise and then to get the lawn cut since the ticks were an issue since they kneel down for extended periods of time making repairs. Frances Karttunen replied that she noticed that mowing was finally happening and she is very grateful to Charlie Polachi for making it happen. There was an issue with the previous mowing company but via a very rapid procurement they were able to make a switch that will now be signed off on at tonight's select board meeting. Cemeteries were top priority. The grass might look a little rough because it gets very tall but as they continue to be cut regularly, the roughness will disappear.

Lee Saperstein inquired about the return of the contractors for cleaning and repairing New North stones and Charlie Polachi stated they were doing some day trips. And once they have more supplies ordered and shipped out here, they will be back in the fall.

Frances Karttunen noted that there is a distinction that was made for the Commission a while ago between preservation and restoration. The work is not to dig up stones that have fallen and re-erect them for the most part. The ones that are on the ground are left in the ground. Charlie Polachi added that we have resurrected some stones that were on the ground, but there are quite a lot that have been left. If more damage than good will be done to a stone by lifting it, it remains on the ground as is. Some of them cannot even be touched. They are very old and many are made of limestone, and at this point, they are basically sugar that is trying to hold itself together as fast as possible.

To bring Amelia Holmes, and Jascin Leonardo Finger up to speed on past decisions about cemetery work, Lee Saperstein stated that the first step in this entire cemetery preservation/restoration/conservation project was a survey of the five cemeteries of which we have a copy stone by stone including their condition and a photograph. A full conditions assessment report was made, broken down by each cemetery, which allowed the Commission to then build the scope of work for each cemetery and then go out to bid for a contractor, specialized in such work, to then be hired to complete the work. The company Ludlow Memorial Company, LMC, provides the Commission with copies of a full report of everything it did to each stone with photographs of the conservation and restoration work.

Further discussion was had about the process and Frances Karttunen also expressed her appreciation for the fact that Lucy Cooper's stone, which had fallen, was re-erected before the ceremony on Juneteenth (at the Historic Coloured Cemetery). She noted that it is a very important stone. She noted it's a little shorter than it once was because of how they had to adjust it to make it stand again.

7. Newtown Cemetery Legal Status Update

Lee Saperstein moved the group to discuss the next agenda item. Since there was no representative from the Town's real estate department, he looked to Charlie Polachi concerning the boundary line discussions. Charlie Polachi said he had not heard anymore yet and Lee Saperstein noted that somewhere in the records there was the division and it may have been approval not required for 40, 42, and 44 Sparks Avenue done by the planning department rather than the predecessor of the real estate department and we should be able to find it in the records. Charlie Polachi said they were going to look into that and that they are also waiting to hear back from Blackwell Associates to finish the boundary survey and install the markers on 46. Once those bounds go in, they can then link the other ones back to that recorded survey. Charlie Polachi also stated that he had reached out to Jeff from Hager Richter to remind him that they have not sent the Commission the ground penetrating report (GPR) for Old North Cemetery.

8. Polpis Cemetery Updates: Layout of New Lots and New Map

Lee Saperstein asked if the Town's real estate department knows about the encroachment on the Polpis Cemetery and its impact on conveyance as related to 268 Polpis Road, the abutter, which is on the market.

Charlie Polachi stated he believes Tracy MacDonald (Town real estate office) is aware and that they talked about the license at one point and the possible land trade between the side and the back of the Polpis Cemetery. Lee Saperstein replied that is all finished and that the license is now the operative item. The license will give the abutter at 268 Polpis Road permission to leave that one foot of their shed on Polpis Cemetery land and the license should be conveyable. It will travel with the land. But without that, Lee Saperstein believes the Town and Commission should protest the sale of 268 Polpis. The owners have been told by the Town to get the license but they have not. So, the acquisition of a license will impact their conveyance to whomever it is that purchases the property at 268. Further, Lee Saperstein felt that for the Commission as managers of the cemetery, we accept the boundaries as they were, and that it's time to clear that out and put a fence up to define the actual boundary of Polpis Cemetery.

Allen Reinhard agreed and noted that the Commission negotiated for 10 years with the family that owns that property and the Commission talked about a land swap because they own land on the other side of the cemetery. Lee Saperstein continued by asking Charlie Polachi where we stand with the shrub clearance on the uphill side (north side) and a fence. Allen Reinhard also noted that there are concrete markers in all four corners of the cemetery and one of them is way down on the lawn, the back lawn, of the abutters at 268.

9. Old, New or Other Business and Final Comments

Frances Karttunen stated she had two things she would like to mention. One, was about posting the QR code in the Historic Coloured Cemetery at each of the three entrances so that people can come with their phones to the QR code and get access to the film so they can do a self-guided tour of the cemetery. Lee Saperstein added that long term we should have a generic QR code for the other cemeteries that would bring the person back to the Commission's webpage on the Town's website. Charlie Polachi had made business cards for the Cemetery Commission with QR codes that would take people to the Commission's webpage. He plans to make a similar card for the cemetery with the QR code and he spoke with John from LMC about how to properly mount them onto the granite posts that are there. The way they are mounted should allow for them to be easily replaced should the signs become damaged or bent. John at LMC suggested small studs that will mount to the stone, not epoxy, so it's more easily replaced if needed.

Frances Karttunen's second item concerned the informational stone to be placed at the Friends Burial Ground and the progress on its completion and where exactly it's going to be put. Charlie Polachi noted everyone had agreed to place it at the Vestal Street entry. Frances Karttunen asked if someone from the Commission could help place it and after discussion of its location, she volunteered to be the Commission member to meet the stone company that is donating the stone and its engraving, to help site it properly.

10. Adjournment

Next Regular meeting: 3:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 14, 2024, DPW Offices, Madaket Road

Lee Saperstein thanked everyone for a good meeting.

He called for the adjournment of the meeting at 4:21 p.m. and asked Allen Reinhard to so move.

Allen Reinhard approved and then the remainder of the Commission approved via a roll call vote.