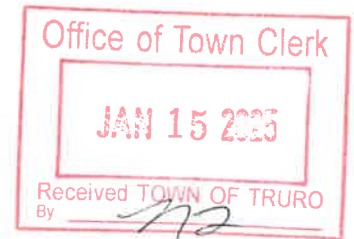


Truro Cemetery Commission
Meeting Minutes
November 21, 2024
Truro Town Hall



Present: Bob Masson, *Cemetery Commission*
Holly Ballard-Gardner, *Cemetery Commission*
John Dundas, *Cemetery Commission*
Jonathan Sperber
Ken Dutra

Called to order at: 8:59 am

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the October 30, 2024 were reviewed. Mr. Masson motioned to accept, Ms. Gardner seconded, all in favor. Minutes signed and passed into the record.

Activity Report

Mr. Masson presented the activity report and noted Ms. Gardner generated a lot of activity. There was one burial at Pine Grove – Robert Cobb – a veteran. There have been 17 burials year to date. The last two years, the pace of burials has been lighter than the historical average. This year is slightly heavier. Regarding sale of lots, we sold a series of lots to three buyers. Ms. Gardner motioned to approve, Mr. Masson seconded, all in favor.

The issue of veteran markers was raised again. Mr. Dundas will check with DPW to see if they received the supply of veteran markers that were budgeted. If in stock, Mr Dundas will place on the Cobb grave at Pine Grove.

Mr. Masson mentioned that sometimes the Town (who is responsible for placing flags by MA law) erects flags on Veterans' Day and sometimes not. Mr. Masson would like to see the flags always placed on Veterans' Day. Mr. Dundas noted that the new markers are plastic and not as durable as the older steel ones. The wood flag sticks expand and get stuck and snap off and break. No action was taken.

Public Comment

Mr. Dutra respectfully raised his request to use his existing Old North plot for green burial. He saw on "Chronicle" a discussion of natural burials in Wellfleet, Mashpee, Cotuit, and Centerville wherein because there is no more land to expand the cemeteries, people who own traditional plots are being given the option to use them for green burial. Mr. Masson said we cannot approve this for all traditional plots as it's a major decision, but in light of the fact the Dutra's purchased their plot in 2013 prior to green burial and their attachment to their existing plot that he would consider allowing them a waiver to use their plot for green burial, without establishing it as a precedent. Ms. Gardner motioned that Ken and Ginny Dutra be allowed to use Plot E-7B at Old North for green burial with Mr. Masson's reasoning. Mr. Dundas seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

Mr. Sperber said it was very interesting what just transpired and wondered how the Commission's decision would affect his situation wherein the Commission had rejected his request for a refund on his natural burial plot. He objects to how the area is managed. He has emailed with Ms. Gardner his complaint about how the landscaping is handled; he finds it objectionable on aesthetic grounds. Ms. Gardner reminded Mr. Sperber that new landscaping is a cost that exceeds the Commission's usual budget and that the area is maintained in the usual way along with the rest of the cemetery. Mr. Sperber wondered if he were to request that he be able to swap his lot O-6 in natural burial for a traditional burial plot and then request a waiver to do a natural burial there. Mr. Masson said that would be taking advantage of the situation.

Mr. Sperber continued to elaborate his other complaints regarding what has been done with burials in the natural section where extra excavated soil has been mounded. He states having made a number of visits to the area and contends the natural slope compounded with natural factors the sand has sloughed off causing extensive weed growth which Mr. Sperber finds unsightly. Mr. Sperber notes that for him personally much of what is important is that the natural burial grave be a meditative space and he feels it is not. Mr. Sperber says he is considering selling the plot and purchasing separately a new plot within Old North. Ms. Gardner restated the Commission's policy of offering unneeded plots to new purchasers on behalf of their owners. Mr. Masson restated that the Dutra decision was a one-time waiver.

Old Business

Mr. Dundas asked if there are any changes to MA law on green burial. Ms. Gardner says there have been none.

New Business

Stating experiences shared by other Outer Cape towns, Ms. Gardner made a motion to implement a policy to require plot owners to request and receive a permit for a gravestone installation. Discussion: this was on account of there now being a wide variety of sources for stones and the Commission no longer can rely on local stone cutters to vet stone design and size which are intended to be "consistent with the cemetery." Mr. Dundas seconded the motion. All in favor.

Commenting on Mr. Sperber's lengthy comments, Mr. Masson proposed implementing a time limit for each public commenter. Mr. Dundas noted that the Select Board has a 3-minute time limit. Ms. Gardner motioned to implement a 3-minute time limit for each public commenter. Mr. Dundas seconded. All in favor.

Ms. Gardner motioned for adjournment at 9:39am. Seconded by Mr. Masson. Adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,


Holly Ballard-Gardner, *Secretary*


Bob Masson, *Treasurer*

