

**Stow Cemetery Committee Meeting 02/24/23**

**Present:**

Jim Wilfong, Patricia Patnaude, Steve Dupuis, Susan Smith, Candice McElroy

| Topic                | Discussion   | Follow up  |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Committee makeup     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The committee needs a chair</li> <li>• Additional members would be welcomed. Susan is interested in helping. Jim suggests 5 total members.</li> <li>• Candice will take meeting minutes</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steve agrees to serve at the committee chair</li> <li>• Jim will request that the town warrant include adding 2 positions to the cemetery committee.</li> <li>• Jim will speak to the selectboard about appointing Susan as an interim member</li> </ul>              |
| Cemetery restoration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Susan is involved with the Daughters of the American Revolution that has done gravestone cleaning at a cemetery in Naples. There is some interest from DAR about working on gravestones in Stow.</li> <li>• Steve’s brother-in-law has experience with gravestone restoration and is in charge of restoring gravestones for Manchester, NH. Steve is a mason and has the skills to do these repairs, which will involve removing broken stones, building a wooden frame around the gravestones and using a high strength mortar to fix the stone, and replacing the stone once repaired.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Susan will speak to DAR about their availability and resources that they would need</li> <li>• The committee will prioritize the headstones for repair and Steve will put together a proposal for the cost</li> </ul>   |
| Tree work            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emerson Cemetery has had a significant amount of damage from old trees and will require professional equipment to remove trees.</li> <li>• Steve has taken initiative to trim trees at the cemeteries in the past when he has had access to equipment so that it would not be an additional cost to the town when the cemetery committee did not have funding.</li> <li>• Steve has estimated \$6-8K for the tree work needed for Hillcrest Cemetery</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steve will get quotes for Emerson Cemetery tree work</li> <li>• Steve will take the lead on the work that needs to be done in Hillcrest and will not charge the town as he can do the work without all of the equipment that would be used by an arborist.</li> </ul> |

|                      |  |  |
|----------------------|--|--|
|                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emerson Cemetery has easier access to take down a tree with a boom truck so will not be as expensive as the work at Hillcrest, which would involve bringing a truck over soft ground that could be damaged so requires additional preparation and protections.</li> </ul>   |  |
| Cemetery maintenance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The state has a lot of regulations about the maintenance of cemeteries including keeping flat grave markers clean and the length of the grass. In the past, there have been complaints when people felt that the cemetery was not maintained to state standards.</li> <li>There is a discussion about how the mowing is paid for? Jim clarified the funds for mowing the cemeteries is a separate line item from mowing around the town hall and comes out of the cemetery budget.</li> <li>Steve and his family routinely do minor maintenance such as picking up branches after storms in the cemeteries.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The committee will make a budget and job list for maintenance to make sure that state regulations are met</li> <li>Tricia will reach out to Nancy about past expenses and vendors</li> </ul>  |
| Veteran graves       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steve has taken responsibility for putting out the flags on the veterans' graves. He purchases them from Trumbulls. They are made in the USA. Once, he tried to use another vendor and the flags were made in China and Steve did not feel this was appropriate so he returned them.</li> <li>There have been a few occasions where there have been disputes when flags have been moved if a veteran was not listed on the town list.</li> <li>Women's Auxiliary markers have not historically been funded for flag placement. Steve has used old veteran flags to mark these. He would like to purchase additional flags for these markers.</li> <li>Sometimes the flags do not last the entire season. There are a few extra flags available to replace if one gets damaged.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Committee agrees that the flags purchased should be made in the USA and will continue to utilize Trumbulls.</li> <li>Committee agrees to purchase additional flags for the Women's Auxiliary markers</li> <li>Plan will be to invite town members to participate in early May to place flags out. Effort will be made to make it educational and respectful. Target date is Saturday, May 6, 2023.</li> </ul> |
| Cataloging graves    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steve has started to transfer paper records of the graves in town onto an excel file.</li> <li>Steve also has a list of the veteran graves</li> <li>Steve has been the point of contact for purchasing plots. Because of the way the records have been kept, it is not obvious how many plots are remaining. Jim mentioned that there can be</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tricia will help with the electronic transferring of records</li> <li>Jim will talk to David Crouse about what records that he has</li> </ul>   |

|              |  |   |
|--------------|--|---|
|              | <p>agreements where if a plot is purchased but not used in 100 years, it reverts to the town. Corner markers likely cost more than the current pricing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steve has lots of other paper records. There is not currently a backup system for this.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tricia will reach out to other towns to see what they are using for this kind of cataloging</li> <li>• The Committee will plan a day to start scanning and organizing records. Tricia will see if we can access the town scanner.</li> </ul> |
| Future plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The town needs to consider additional space to be designated as a cemetery based on future needs. Jim mentioned land that is across from the Emerson Cemetery is already owned by the town and may be appropriate.</li> <li>• Candice questioned if there was any consideration for a green cemetery? Steve says that Maine generally has few rules about how someone has to be buried. However, there are rules about trees in cemeteries.</li> <li>• Address metal pipe fencing at multiple cemeteries</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candice will look into what some regulations are around green cemeteries</li> <li>• Long term plans about future cemetery land will be considered once cataloging of available plots is completed.</li> </ul>                                |

Next meeting:

March 14, 6 pm, Town Hall

**Committee contacts:**

stevendupuis58@gmail.com

mwwpainter@gmail.com

candice.mcflint@gmail.com

ionagunn@fairpoint.net