

HARTFORD CEMETERY STUDY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes

MEETING DATE: August 6, 2018
PRESENT: Ken Parker, Jeff Knight, John Newton
ABSENT: Larry Hudson, Sue Buckholz, Art Peale, Toby Dayman
LIAISONS/TOWN STAFF: Dennis Brown / Scott Hausler
COMMUNITY MEMBERS: Henry Hazen, Christian Street Cemetery
RECORDED BY: Scott Hausler

Call to order at 6:10 PM.

1. Handouts included:
 - Draft meeting Minutes of July 23, 2018 meeting
 - Rules and Regulations from other regional cemeteries.
 - Copy of draft Cemeteries of Hartford Report 8/6/18

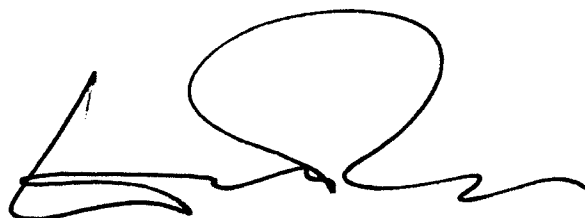
2. The draft Meeting Minutes of July 23rd approved with 2 changes. Scott Hausler was in attendance and Henry Hazen represents Christian Street Cemetery and not Hartford Cemetery as noted in handout summary.

3. Ken presented the draft report Cemeteries of Hartford dated 8/6/18 submitted by Tobias. The committee spent several minutes reviewing the report and discussed the following:
 - Scott mentioned that he is awaiting the results of an RFP for tree care that he has posted. This includes town parks but also town cemeteries. Once the results are in there will be a better understanding of the cost and need associated to the non-active cemeteries within the town. Stone work still needs to be assessed and a number attributed to what needs to be done.
 - Ken reviewed the overall repair needs and estimates from all the private cemeteries as outlined in the draft report. Over \$215,000 of needed repair and maintenance has been identified which a majority is deferred maintenance.
 - Discussion continued related to annual maintenance costs of cemeteries.
 - Dennis discussed the description in the report related to the 4ft concrete bases that are required for stones in cemeteries. Jeff described that was a design requirement due to the amount of clay soil. Previous head stone installations had variations of bases that were prone to clay soils pushing the base out of the ground. That is the main problem with many older stones within the cemeteries.
 - Dennis asked about the volunteer day that was discussed at the last meeting. Scott mentioned that CROH and Vital Communities are interested in partnering with the Town to complete a cemetery cleanup. A representative from Vital Communities spoke with Art Peale to come up with recommendations on which cemetery and what type of work could be done. Date and time for this effort is to be announced.
 - Henry asked if the committee should be reaching out the Historical Society for input on record storing and any other input they could provide for the historical preservation of cemetery records. Ken mentioned he planned to speak with a representative and see about getting someone to attend an upcoming meeting of the committee.
 - Henry mentioned that his sister has volunteered time to reproduce a plot map and verify identity of plots at the Christian Street Cemetery.
 - Jeff discussed volunteer group efforts and that the best project for volunteers would be brush clearing type projects. Work related to stones requires expertise and could be dangerous depending on the stone size and weight. If groups assisted with clearing and identifying boundaries, it would be a huge help to the private and town owned cemeteries.
 - Ken recommended that the committee begin to seek out grant opportunities to assist the committee with its project.
 - Ken asked if Scott could obtain operational costs for cemeteries run by the Town of Hanover and the City of Lebanon.

4. Ken asked the committee how they perceive cemeteries operating within the Town and what would this look like for each association.
 - John felt that West Hartford will have to ask for additional funds to assist with deferred maintenance costs. They have had enough to maintain mowing and trimming but there is not enough funds for all the stone work and other projects needed for the cemetery.
 - John felt that West Hartford could continue to operate but with more financial assistance from the Town.
 - Henry asked if the Town would just take over the mowing and if they did, what would that cost be.
 - Ken asked for information on costs associated to mowing of parks. Scott mentioned that he presented to the Selectboard last year on cost of maintain parks related to the parks operating budget. He said he will share that with the committee but indicated that cemeteries would require less detail maintenance but a different level of care that still requires specialty equipment, labor and grounds maintenance that would likely be assessed differently than parks.
 - Jeff discussed how there could be a Town and Association collaborative that might work moving forward. Not an all at once transfer but a gradual and assisted operation. Some discussion continued about the Town developing a Commission of Cemeteries to run cemeteries in the Town. This could be made up of all private cemetery associations and the Town.
 - Dennis discussed that if the Town took over the cemeteries it would be at a cost.
 - Dennis asked if the funds from the cemeteries could be transferred to the Town for use if cemeteries are no longer able to operate on their own.
 - Dennis also asked the committee how each group operates and how their funds are used. West Hartford said they operate off of interest from accounts but often have to use a savings account for other expenses. Henry said that Christian Street has just enough money to pay for mowing this year and possibly next year and then they have no idea how they will be able to maintain the cemetery. Hartford Cemetery has the endowment and operating funds but are in the same situation with limited funds to maintain mowing.
5. Ken asked the committee to continue reviewing the draft document and bring back to the committee any additions or changes.
6. Ken asked if the private cemeteries carried liability insurance. The only cemetery with insurance is the Hartford Cemetery. Quechee was not at the meeting to report. Ken suggested each active cemetery look into the coverage's available to them.
7. Ken entertained a motion to adjourn at 7:40pm and passed unanimously. Next scheduled meeting is will be Monday, August 20th at 6:00pm, Hartford Town Hall. Room to be posted.

Signed BY: _____

Date: _____



8/20/2018