

HARTFORD CEMETERY STUDY COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes DRAFT

MEETING DATE: September 4, 2018
PRESENT: Ken Parker, Sue Buckholz, Toby Dayman, John Newton, Jeff Knight,
Larry Hudson
ABSENT: Art Peale
LIAISONS: Scott Hausler (Hartford Parks and Recreation Department (PRD))
Dennis Brown (Selectboard)
COMMUNITY MEMBERS: None
RECORDED BY: Toby Dayman

Call to order at 6:04 PM.

1. Handouts included:
 - Draft meeting Minutes of August 6, 2018 meeting
 - Priorities for Cemeteries from John Newton, Sue Buckholz, and Tobias Dayman
 - Cemeteries of Hartford report (Draft), September 4, 2018
2. The draft Meeting Minutes of August 20, 2018 was approved with no changes.
3. Sue updated some information for Quechee Cemetery.
 - Quechee has a total of \$120,902 on hand.
 - Her review of documents indicates that the first by-laws dated 1924, and as best as she can determine, no separate endowment for perpetual care.
 - One person mentioned the cemetery incorporated on August 27, 1920.
 - Quechee has spent \$7,000 on mowing so far this year.
4. John indicated 1922 as the first year for the West Hartford Cemetery by-laws.
 - John knows of no stipulation for a separate endowment for perpetual care.
5. Given aforementioned disclosures, Ken indicated we should assume no endowment funds for perpetual care exists for the Quechee and West Hartford Cemeteries.
 - Ken and Toby speculated that these cemeteries, organized before the 1931 legislation requiring all new cemetery organizations to have a perpetual care fund, simply never created such a fund.
6. Ken reviewed a meeting he had with John Guarino, deacon of St. Anthony's Church, regarding the cemeteries they own and maintain – Mt. Olivet Cemetery and St. Anthony's Cemetery.
 - They have good records for the burials in their cemeteries, but JG indicated they would need approval from the Diocese to combine their records with the others for storage with the Town.
 - Their revenue for maintenance comes from lots sold, some interest income, and a contribution of \$3,800 from the Town.
 - Mowing alone has cost \$15,000 to date.
 - They face same budget crunch for maintenance that plague all cemeteries.
 - Lots sell for \$400. They allow up to four cremation burials over a casket in the same lot. Cremation burials also cost \$400 for each of the first two with the third and fourth priced at \$250.
7. The issue of the Town keeping the burial records remains unresolved.
 - One mentioned the state law requires the deacon to keep the burial records, plans, etc.
 - Jeff suggested that if the official records remain with the deacons, a copy could stay in the Town vault to assure permanence of at least one set of records.

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8. A discussion occurred on the back-of-the-envelope availability of burial plots into the future.
 - John indicated West Hartford had 30-40 lots still unsold. Christian Street still has lots available. Hartford could find room for a number of lots in its area. Quechee has very few lots available.
 - The number sold has remained low. Hartford has had three this year and West Hartford one.
 - People increasing use cremation burials, a practice that can reuse some lots for multiple interments.
 - Thus, with lots untaken and the rate of selling remaining low, availability of plots would remain. Issue needs oversight to stay abreast of status. Toby suggested that a finding, constructing, and activating a cemetery probably requires a lead time, perhaps 10 years.
9. The Committee reviewed the list priorities for the cemeteries as submitted by four individual members.
10. A discussion arose regarding starting to envision in what manner, options, and nature the cemeteries would exist with the Town in the future. The options covered a range on the continuum of Town support.
 - Ken mentioned one option may have the cemeteries do the yearly maintenance with minimal added resources from the Town. How much money would the Town have to add to the Associations' current resources?
 - If the work included the sizable deferred maintenance and repairs, how much would the Town need to add?
 - If the cemeteries all ran out of money, what would the added cost to the Town?
 - This entire topic of future options needs further thought and development.
11. Scott mentioned five people had gone to Potters Field to clear brush. Art will stake the four corner of the graveyard area.
12. Toby commented on the updates included in the draft report dated September 4, 2018.
 - Site assessment descriptions provided for Quechee and West Hartford Cemeteries
 - The yearly maintenance and deferred maintenance costs for west Hartford now more closely reflects John's original lower incurred costs. Toby added a note addressing the reason for these lower costs.
 - The previous individual maps of Christian Street, Hartford, and Quechee Cemeteries now appear in the report along with a new one for West Hartford Cemetery.
13. Ken wanted each member to thoroughly and carefully review the September 4 Draft Report to note any corrections, revisions, omissions, comments, etc. regarding its content particularly the Site Assessment items.
14. Next regularly scheduled meeting scheduled for Tuesday September 18 at 6:00 PM.
15. Motion to adjourn made and passed at 7:41 PM.

John Newton President

West Hartford Cemetery Association

147 Tigertown Rd.

White River junction Vt. 05001

Future Needs For The West Hartford Cemetery

#1 Request an additional ~~\$20000.00~~ per year from the Town of Hartford to cover routine expenses related to mowing and trimming

#2 Obtain funding to fill and seed sunken graves. Total 25 @\$200.00

Total \$5000.00

#3 Recruit new directors, obtain liability insurance, layout new lots, Update bylaws.

#4 Obtain funding to straighten monuments, and repair Headstones

25 @\$400.00 each total \$10,000.00

#5 Funding to install foundations under falling monuments with

Inadequate existing foundations 35 @\$800.00 each total \$28,000

Grade driveway and install driveway stone \$2000.00

I have listed these in order of importance, and expect it will take many Years to complete all of them.

John Newton

Ken Parker

From: Tobias Dayman <tdayman@valley.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 30, 2018 8:37 PM
To: Ken Parker
Subject: Schedules and Priorities

Ken:

The 4th works better for me. I could not have made the 5th. Also, please note I will not attend the meeting on the Monday the 17th as I have a Planning Commission meeting that night.

Five priority items for Hartford cemeteries:

1. Money
2. Solvency
3. Plan moving forward when money runs out
4. Records
5. All the maintenance/repairs, including the deferred, that needs completion

Toby

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Ken Parker

From: Sue Buckholz <sue@buckholzlaw.com>
Sent: Friday, August 31, 2018 1:59 PM
To: Ken Parker
Subject: HCC - 5 points

Jim and I have been here wracking our brains to get five points. Here's what we have so far:

1. My no. 1 issue and hope for what comes from this committee process is that the Town understands that it has to formulate a plan for addressing the care and continuity of the existing cemeteries as money (and interest on the part of individual citizens?) runs out.
2. I also have some concerns about what happens once the existing cemetery space is gone. I do not know how close to that point we are in Hartford; however, forward planning for when that does happen is going to be critical at some point, unless everyone goes to burn and scatter, I suppose.
3. In the interim, what sorts of support can the Town offer to the private associations in order to keep them ticking over for a longer period of time? As Jim just asked: How badly does the Town want to own the cemeteries? If not at all, as it would appear, what is the Town willing to do to postpone that eventuality?
4. We have discussed columbaria in the past. I would like to see a feasibility study done by the Town as to how, whether and when shifting to that sort of structure, or a methodology other than holes in the dirt, would be beneficial - perhaps a cost-benefit analysis relative to traditional methods of disposal.
5. We don't know. We'll let you know if we do.

Cheers,

Sue

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