



Telephone (603) 673-8855
Fax (603) 673-8136

**TOWN OF
BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Cemetery Trustees**

**P.O. BOX 360 – 1 Main Street
BROOKLINE, NH 03033-0360**

<http://www.brooklinenh.us>

***Brookline Cemetery Trustees Minutes
Thursday, August 19, 2021***

Meeting held in person at Town Hall

Attending:

Brian Rater, chair
Ann Somers, secretary
Judy Cook, member
Mike Wenrich, sexton

The meeting opened at 6:46 pm.

There was no public input.

Adjustments: add Discuss mowing PG

The minutes from June 17th were unanimously approved as written.

Update from Sexton

Mike reported that he has been unusually busy with sexton duties lately, with a number of cremation burials that had been postponed due to Covid, and several recent deaths, including Del Porter, the most recent holder of the Boston Post Cane, and Ross Jensen who will be buried tomorrow.

Update and next steps for North Cemetery stone wall

We agreed that we will plan this at the next meeting for some time in the fall, probably October, when the weather is more suited to the work.

Sign for North Cemetery

Judy will follow up with Eric DiVirgilio of Brookline's Historical Society about the possibility of installing a permanent sign identifying North Cemetery.

Update on tree trimmings at Pine Grove and Lakeside

We voted unanimously to complete this year the tree trimmings at Lakeside which we recently discussed and for which we have estimates (dead maple branches and others at the south/east rock wall that are likely to come down in winter storms), and to remove the “woodpecker tree” that presents a risk at Pine Grove on Route 130. Rather than trim any of the old silver maples along the Avenue at Pine Grove, we will discuss at a later time a long-term approach to trees in general at Brookline’s cemeteries.

Mowing at Pine Grove

We had extensive discussion about mowing at Pine Grove. **Judy** expressed concerns about costs and the current frequency of mowing. She questioned the need for regular mowing of the areas where there is little to no actual grass. Some areas are relatively sandy, and in those and some others there are low-growing weeds and phlox, none of which grow as high as grass. **Ann** noted that in her 20 years in town, this is the first year that Pine Grove has looked well cared for. **Mike** said that the frequency is determined by Jerry Farwell of Farwell Construction, the contractor for the work. This year has been very wet, with things growing accordingly, while last year was very dry. **Brian** will research historical billings in an effort to make useful comparisons of costs over time.

Currently the mowing is followed by string trimming around the standing monuments. The flat markers are not treated, and are easily overgrown. Many are hard to read, and over time some of them have been covered by as much as 2” of grass and dirt. **Ann** noted that the sexton for a cemetery in Nashua said they typically did string trimming of flat markers on every third mowing. **Mike** will seek a cost estimate for string trimming of flat markers at Pine Grove, and we will evaluate it.

Update on forms and packet for purchasers

This was folded into the discussion of documentation, as it is likely to be affected.

Update on/discussion of adding gravel to cemetery roads

Mike has done a few additions of gravel where most needed as his time has allowed. He plans to devise over the winter a distributor that will guide gravel from his truck directly into (and only into) the tire track depressions in the ways. We welcomed and applauded the plan, and consider that the results will be nicely in keeping with the appearance of the cemetery.

Discussion of cemetery fence needs at Pine Grove and Lakeside

Mike has an estimate from Gate City Fence to complete the fencing at Pine Grove. Materials and labor to complete all the currently unfenced sides, including where there are rocks piled on Cross Street and including the southern portion of South Main where the sidewalk project could have an impact, is estimated at \$106/foot for 760 feet – over \$80,000. We discussed a variety of other options, and **Mike will investigate costs and report back.** Considerations:

1. **Judy** suggested we complete South main from where it leaves off, ONLY to the north side of where Potanipo Lane, when straightened, will meet South Main, leaving the lower section

untouched until after the sidewalk project has been resolved and allowing for thoughts of a Memory Garden or other approach in that section.

2. **Mike** suggested we remove the fencing from Lakeside and replace it with a stone wall, and re-use that fencing for Pine Grove. He pointed out that the granite posts at Pine Grove have been set in an unusual way, at a slight angle, apparently deliberately but for reasons we don't understand. We would need to take that into consideration in some way in adding fencing.
3. Chain link rather than picket between posts was discussed – for chain the spacing of granite posts could be 10' – for fencing it needs to be 8'. The chain would be stainless steel for minimal maintenance.
4. Any kind of fencing needs some ongoing maintenance; Mike suggested hiring Gate City to do that.
5. **Judy/Ann** – the rocks piled above the west end of Cross Road could be turned into a rock wall for part of the full-enclosure requirement.

Update on Pine Grove documentation/Discuss adding new plots to unused part of PG

Judy expects to complete within the next month or so a “first pass” of the Word file of burial data. Meanwhile she will send **Brian** some excerpts for him to use toward developing an Excel spreadsheet that will become the master file and eventually can be made available on line. **Ann** continues to develop a detailed picture file which will provide a historical visual reference. **Judy** noted that Town Administrator Tad Putney gets frequent calls proposing that we buy cemetery-management software, but feels that we can meet our needs quite well and at far less cost with these files.

It has been some years since the master map of Pine Grove was last updated. Mike, Judy and Ann will work on mapping the areas that are not currently designated (some of which have been used recently), and on aligning some areas where map and ground data conflict. We spoke of a working group with string lines and/or flags to sort things out, including straightening out Potanipo Way toward South Main Street. One issue to address is consistency in numbering new plots and their subdivisions as they are developed, purchased and filled. **A working group meeting to this end, consisting of Mike, Judy and Ann, has been scheduled for Wednesday, August 25th at 9:30 at town Hall.**

Followup regarding planting trees and shrubs as monuments

Mike reported that the plot owners who recently asked to plant a tree had requested a pin oak, and his research suggested that that has a highly undesirable root system, and they will need to reconsider. Discussion ensued about long-term planning for tree care and replacement. **Mike** and **Ann** prefer a 50-to-100-year vision. **Mike** suggested we remove the aging silver maples along Swallow Tucker Avenue next year, rather than prune them further as had been considered, and begin to develop a long-term plan.

Repair and cleaning of monuments

Judy will meet with Kevin Duffy - associated with the Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, MA - regarding how best to repair the broken middle monument of the “Rockwood Five” along the southwest side of Swallow Tucker Avenue. She noted that marble and granite require different types of epoxy, and that corroded copper pins will be replaced with stainless steel ones. **Judy** reported on the successful raising of the pair of fallen Wheeler monuments in the “Ancients” section of Pine Grove, and some cleaning she has done.

Cemetery in the Woods kiosk cleanup

Judy is exploring sealing the wooden parts, and finding a source to freshen the display elements, or replicating them herself, perhaps to be completed by this fall. The weather is currently not suitable.

Discuss recovery of old plots with minimal burials for re-use.

Older plots were purchased as real estate, recent ones as Right to Inter. Records for earlier years are scarce to non-existent; **Judy** is researching, and suggested that initiating legislation at state level might be in order. **Ann will ask the NH Cemetery Association whether others have dealt with this.**

Storage of historical materials

Judy and **Mike** will evaluate the best ways/places to store old paperwork and any other materials not in current use or needed for anything other than historical interest.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m. The next meeting will be Friday, September 17th, at 2:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Ann C. Somers