

Vershire Cemetery Trustee Meeting Oct. 14 2021, Vershire Town Center

The meeting came to order at 2:06. Present Margaret (Peggy) Darrow and Eleanor Zue; absent Rita French.

1. Cheryl Ash's cemetery plot. Eleanor reported that she and Rita met with Cheryl Ash on Oct. 9 at the Town Office to complete the sale to her of a cemetery lot in Vershire Village Cemetery. It is a single 10' X 4' lot located in the left side of the new part of the cemetery, abutting the grave plot of Francis Ryan. Cheryl already has the corner stones and will install them.

2. Tree removal at the South Vershire/Mountain Ash cemetery. The abutting property owners, Kerin and Amy Walka, have not replied to the letter we sent to them in June. Peggy has drafted a second letter requesting permission to have trees removed that are likely to fall on the cemetery. We reviewed the text of this letter and voted to send it, registered mail. If we do not get a response, we will ask the town lawyer, Michael Tarrant, to write to them.

3. Tree removal at the Vershire Center cemetery. Peggy went to the cemetery yesterday to see how many trees need to be taken down and discovered that two dead trees have fallen into the cemetery from the property at the far end of the cemetery that belongs to Donna Goldberg. Fortunately they did not do much damage; one branch pushed askew a footstone. Peggy drafted a letter, similar to the one sent to the Walkas, to send to Ms Goldberg. However, we need a forester's report on the situation there. We were to meet with Bill Murphy from Chippers there in the summer but missed the meeting. We need to get in touch with him to see if he has a report, or, if not, to set up another meeting. Rita has his contact information. Also Peggy needs to go back to the cemetery to take photographs of the fallen trees and the trees that overhang and/or lean over the cemetery. It would be useful to include these pictures in any letter to abutting property owners. We also need to find someone to cut up and remove the fallen trees that are lying across and between grave stones.

4. The Catholic cemetery. After our last meeting on Sept. 9, we visited the Catholic cemetery that is on private property at the corner of South Vershire Road and Mero Road. We found that it had recently been mowed and cleared of brush and trees. Working from the hand-drawn map and listing of gravestones done in the 1970s by Ernest Russell, we were able to find most of the gravestones although several of them are in poor condition. We also noted three new memorials not on the 1970s list and added this information to the map and list: #6: John and Catherine Doyle; #19: David E. Ricker; #20 Irene F (Buskey). Peggy and Eleanor went back to this cemetery later to clear brush. We found two large pieces of an iron fence buried in weeds and moss that had enclosed the Nagle/Richardson family plot.

There is quite a lot of work to do at this cemetery. Two of the gravestones, #4 Katie M. Montgomery and #5 Mary E (Doyle) need epoxy repairs plus both need concrete footings. #1 Isabella (Foley), #14: Thomas (Nagle) and #19 David Ricker also need concrete footings. The David Ricker plaque was loose, presumably torn up by mowing and, although we placed it in the ground, we don't know exactly where it should go. We need to find out the location of David Ricker's grave from whoever was responsible for his burial in 2008, and also ask if the plaque can be set in concrete.

We were unable to find #13 the "fancy iron cross" and suspect that there may be more iron fencing buried in the weeds and moss. A metal detector would be helpful. We might ask Gary Goodrich if he would help with this. Also we need to clear a path to #12 John (Walsh) memorial in the woods at the top of the hill.

About the repair of the other gravestones, we are not sure what our responsibilities are, if any, for the care of these graves or if the property owner, Allen Rowell, has any responsibility. We need to see the deed of this property and talk to Mr. Rowell. Judging by what Green Valley Memorial has charged for repairing gravestones in the Vershire Center cemetery and the South Vershire/Mountain Ash cemetery, the cost of repairing the damaged stones in the Catholic cemetery would be between \$900 and \$1000. If we want to have this restoration done, we don't know if it would be appropriate to use town cemetery funds, or if we should ask the town for a special grant.

5. Bylaw revision. Since our last meeting Peggy and Eleanor contacted people in charge of cemeteries in Chelsea, (Frank Keene); Thetford, (Sam Eaton); Corinth (Norman Collette); and Strafford (Robert Murphy) to see what regulations they have in place about plantings and the number of grave plots that can be purchased at one time. We found that there is no consensus on either issue. In general our neighbors prohibit planting trees, bushes and invasive plants, and reserve the right to trim or remove any plants that overstep the bounds of the grave plot on which they are planted. One town, Corinth, prohibits any planting in the ground, only allowing potted plants.

With regard to the number of plots that can be purchased at one time, the size of a cemetery lot differs greatly from town to town (for example, Chelsea's lots are 10' x 10') and not all towns sell half lots, nor do most of our neighbors sell adjacent lots at a reduced price as Vershire does. None of the towns at this point has restrictions on how many lots can be purchased at one time, but Thetford, which has the same lot size as Vershire (i.e., 4' x 10'), is considering limiting sale to 4 lots.

Our next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday Nov. 4th at 2PM
The meeting adjourned 3:20.

Respectfully submitted;

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Margaret H. Darrow".

Margaret H. Darrow
Vershire Cemetery Trustee