

Vershire Cemetery Trustee Meeting May 12, 2022, Vershire Town Center

The meeting came to order at 2:04 PM. Present: Rita French, Margaret (Peggy) Darrow, Eleanor Zue

Updates on old business.

Vershire Village Cemetery restoration. Eleanor met with Jeremiah Sperry of Green Valley Memorials to view the Vershire Village Cemetery, to see how many gravestones need repair, straightening and/or foundations. Eleanor's impression is that Mr. Sperry knows his stuff. They discussed cleaning the stones. There are several products that we could get however the best one, used at the Arlington National Cemetery, is quite expensive and none of them last very long. Within five years, the stones start to grow lichen once again. Green Valley Memorials sent a new estimate, for straightening and repairing stones, not for replacement or cleaning, of \$9,310. During their work, access to the cemetery by the public will be restricted.

Catholic Cemetery: Our request for \$1000 to restore gravestones in the Catholic Cemetery appears as a separate article in the Warning for the Town Meeting.

Vershire Center Cemetery. Peggy talked with Donna Goldberg who owns land abutting the cemetery where dead trees and large tree limbs fell into the cemetery last fall. Ms Goldberg agreed that we can have the dead trees cut down, but wants to check which trees these are-- Bill Murphy of Chippers marked them with orange tape--to reassure herself that they are indeed dead. She will do this once the leaves appear. Peggy has still not contacted Mark Fogarty, the town's tree warden, to ask his advice about the other trees. The price quoted by Chippers for tree removal all around the cemetery is too high. Rita did contact the tree cutter recommended to her by a neighbor, but he is retired and not interested in a big job.

South Vershire Cemetery. Rita is in the process of cutting up and removing the big ash tree that was taken down near the entrance to the cemetery. She will finish this soon, so that Jacob Mayer can mow the cemetery before Memorial Day.

Memorial Day flags: Gene has ordered them and reports that they are on their way, and should arrive next week.

Bylaws revision: Peggy has drafted the start of a revision of the bylaws that she circulated prior to the meeting. This document discusses acceptable behavior in the cemeteries, the purchase of lots, memorial monuments and markers, and plantings. We reached tentative agreement on some issues, need more discussion of others, and raised some new issues that need to be included.

Purchase of lots: Among the issues tentatively resolved is the designation and price of burial lots. We propose three sizes of lots: a full-sized lot measuring 4' x 10' suitable for one casket burial or up to 4 cremation burials, priced at \$450 (this is the same as in our current

bylaws); a double lot measuring 8' x 10' suitable for 2 casket burials or up to 8 cremation burials, priced at \$700; and a half lot measuring 4' x 5', suitable for up to 2 cremation burials, priced at \$225 (this is also the same as in our current bylaws.). We agreed to the proviso that no one may purchase more than two double lots or 4 single lots, that is no more than 160 square feet.

Memorials and markers: We agreed that burials, whether casket burials or cremation containers, need a permanent marker of some sort over the site of the burial and that this should be installed within one year from the time of the burial. This is particularly important for cremation burials. Since several can be accommodated in a single burial lot, it is crucial to know where each one is. Although a single lot might hold up to four cremation makers, we agreed that, there can be only one monument per full-sized lot. It should be placed at least 6 inches from all the lot boundaries.

Plantings: We agreed that although the owners of grave plots must have the permission of the cemetery trustees to plant any bushes or other perennials in the cemetery, they may plant annuals without seeking permission.

Issues that remain to be resolved are the depth of foundations for monuments; if a foundation is necessary for a marker and if so, how deep; the size, height and depth of corner markers; if we need specific prohibitions against some behaviors in the cemeteries. There is disturbing evidence that an off-road recreational vehicle of some sort has driven around the Village Cemetery. And are we going to broach the issue of natural burials, or leave this complicated subject to a later date? Do we need to include a section outlining the procedures for burial or, instead of including this in the bylaws, write up an information sheet that we can hand out as we have done with regard to natural burials?

New Business

Eleanor and Rita met with Mary Sarazin at the Village Cemetery to discuss, locate and plan out the burial plots that Mary Sarazin intends to purchase. She wants four full-sized plots. They are to be located along the crest of the slope near Cheryl Ash's plot. This is almost the last space available in the Village Cemetery. Rita and Eleanor placed temporary markers--stakes--but intend to go back to true up the dimensions--10' by 16'.

Mary Sarazin intends to bury a cremation container there in early July. We need to make sure that the restoration work does not interfere with this burial (See above.)

Our next meeting will be Thursday June 9, 2PM at Town Center

The meeting adjourned: 3:55

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Darrow
Vershire Cemetery Trustee