

Essex Cemetery Commission
Public Meeting Minutes
2/16/16

Location: Essex Police Department

Members present: Jody Landon, John (Sam) Kinghorn, Fran Kinghorn, Gary Tomlinson

Others present: Tobe Zalinger

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7:05 Meeting called to order by Jody Landon

Agenda passed out. Committee proceeded to discuss each agenda item.

1. *Increasing the cost of burial plots in Mountain View Cemetery from \$250 to the current market value in our area.*

Jody Landon came to the meeting having done some research on what other towns are charging for burial plots (see attached). Members suggested some prices but after a short discussion all members agreed that while we do need to raise our plot price, we felt it would be in the best interest of Essex residents to gradually increase the cost to \$650 over the next few years, as follows:

May 1st, 2016 \$350
May 1st, 2017 \$450
May 1st, 2018 \$550
May 1st, 2019 \$650

There was also a short discussion on whether or not to have two prices, one for Essex residents and another for non-residents. The members unanimously agreed to charge the same amount for both Essex residents and non-residents.

2. *Update on columbarium availability*

Sam reported that the town has sold 3 columbarium boxes for \$2500 each since its completion. Disappointed at the sales so far, Gary reported that people are not happy with the columbarium, in particular, its location. Jody and Sam both mentioned that the town would not agree to place the columbarium in the location they originally chose because a resident who lives on Cemetery Road strongly opposed the idea.

3. *Renewing publicity for the columbarium.*

Previous publicity has included a letter and a supply of trifolds which were sent to local funeral homes after the columbarium was completed. The town office also has trifolds to hand out. Tobe Zalinger made the comment that the funeral homes do not seem to be encouraging people to use the columbarium, and this makes sense, because it is not in their best interest (they won't make as much money).

After a short discussion everyone agreed that to get people to 'like' the columbarium choice we first need to reduce the "starkness" of how the columbarium looks. Maybe then people will be more apt to use it.

- Add landscaping around the columbarium (flowers, bushes, shrubs?)
- Fran suggested contacting UVM to see if their landscape design students are looking for a project to work on. She will contact someone in the Plant and Soil Science Department and report back to the rest of the group.

4. *Maintenance in Mountain View.*

Gary mentioned there are several stones that may need attention soon. There are federal grants to fix up stones.

The grass around the columbarium (and in the entire cemetery for that matter), is in terrible condition. Sam will contact the town and request that they fertilize the cemetery grounds sometime after Veterans' Day.

Gary mentioned the road going into the cemetery needs to be graded. Sam will call the town about this.

5. *Update of the "guidelines for use" book distributed at plot purchase.*

The guidelines were last reviewed by Sam in 2010. They will need to be updated with the new pricing.

Jody suggested we have the guidelines and other information about the cemetery posted on-line to make it easier for residents to access information about the cemetery. She will work with the town to get this done.