

D*R*A*F*T

RIDGEFIELD GRAVEYARD RESTORATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

JANUARY 24, 2021

VIA ZOOM

PRESENT: George Hancock, Susan Law, Jeff Lundberg, Tom McManus, Nancy Selander, Sarah Slavin, Joel Third.

EXCUSED: Sara Champion, Grace Clewell.

Chair Jeff Lundberg called the meeting to order at 4:04 PM.

MINUTES: The minutes of the November 16, 2020 meeting were approved via an email vote.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Plot sales at Mapleshade Cemetery continue to be well ahead of last year. Tom suggested that we submit a budget request for special funding (\$100,000), spread over several years, to cover the heavy expenses for tree care, trimming, and/or removal. Safety issues to both people and tombstones are of concern. Work needs to be done in a number of the smaller cemeteries as well as Olde Town, Mapleshade and Branchville Cemeteries. Tom also suggested we set up a Planning Committee to determine the type of cemetery friendly trees to purchase when replacements are necessary.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Report on Cemeteries. The large trees that came down in August have been removed and damage to a number of tombstones will be assessed. There was a recent burial in Branchville cemetery. A request for information on access to one of the old "in the hill" crypts in Olde Town was made last month. The person was referred to Sexton Bill Bunkoci.
2. No new information on the legal status of Branchville Cemetery. Town Assessor, Al Garzzi, suggested submitting an "Adverse Possession" status to hurry things along.
3. No movement on the mausoleum plan.
4. Sara Champion has been working with Keeler Tavern on a possible June cemetery tour in Ridgebury Cemetery focusing on the Armstrong Family and the Underground Railway stop at their property on Ned's Mountain Rd. It also would include stops at veteran's graves from either the Revolutionary or Civil Wars. The idea was well received and plans will continue.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. No formal request will be made for a grant from the Ridgefield Thrift Shop as their focus this year is on people affected by the Covid 19 Crisis.
2. Sarah reported that she and Sue have documented approximately 300 graves so far in Branchville Cemetery. Nancy will see if the Historical Society has a camera we can use that will sync with their computer system as that is where the gravestones are recorded. A more accurate GPS device is also needed.

3. Nancy will talk to the Town Treasurer to see if a better way can be arranged for our Treasurer, Tom McManus, to follow checks that are deposited into our accounts.
4. The CONNTOURS Program for a walk through Olde Town Cemetery highlighting Revolutionary War soldier's graves appears to be on hold temporarily due to the Covid Pandemic.
5. Dates for the 2021 Committee Meetings are: January 25, March 15, May 17, September 20, and November 15. The time was agreed to change to 5 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:43 PM.

Susan Law, Recorder