

Ridgefield Graveyard Restoration Committee Minutes

May 15, 2023 6:07PM Mapleshade Cemetery

Present: Nancy Selander, Joel Third, Sara Champion, Tom McManus, Mike Harrington ,Sarah Slavin

Excised: Susan Law, Susan Kweskin

The minutes of the March 20,2023 meeting were duly approved.

Several items were raised:

- Chairman Selander emphasized that all plots sold must be registered at Town Hall with the number of the plot and the name of the purchaser, and then coordinated with the payment check.
- Treasurer McManus told the Committee that the tree that fell in Old Town cemetery at Christmas time and caused considerable damage was cleared in February at the cost of \$3000.
- The monies awarded the Town of Ridgefield by the State of Connecticut for use in our old cemeteries should soon be available; the final procedures required by the State are being worked on by Mr Marconi's office.
- The gravestone that has been lodged at the Historical Society will shortly be transferred to its proper place in Ridgebury cemetery. A proper base for it will be constructed.
- The trees planted by a family along North Salem Rd and North Street will be moved to appropriate positions in the cemetery when they are large enough.
- The Treasurer opened his report by alerting the Committee to the fact that, due to our very early Spring this year, the cemeteries have been mowed twice already, and are due to be mowed again right before Memorial Day. Nonetheless, we still have 25% of our budget amount left in ther Town account. The Treasurer noted that he has asked the mowers to weed whack on both sides of the stone walls surrounding the cemeteries.
- It was noted that our sexton had 2 rather sudden burials in Mapleshade this past week, but that all was accomplished with due dispatch.

Old Business:

- The Chairman thanked the Committee for a successful Spring cleanup.

- There was a review of the monies granted to the Graveyard Committee for tree removal, maintenance and replacement. 3 trees were recently planted by the Committee to start replacing the many that had to be taken down. The Committee approved the trees by a vote of 6 in favour and 1 against, with 2 absent. The question was raised as to whether we needed a permit to plant trees on Town property, and, if so, from whom. This is to be investigated.
- The Memorial Day parade is coming up soon. Nancy Selander, Sue Law, Tom McManus, Michael Harrington and George Hancock have volunteered to march in the parade.
- The Chairman asked for ideas for a Fall cemetery tour. It had been previously suggested that we focus on those who died in the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918, if we can find enough people who verifiably died of the flu. This could overlap with the Guilded Age group. Everyone was asked to think of more topics.
- The Chairman said that we need to make some clearly defined guidelines for expenditures. We can get information from the Town Treasurer about how this works town wide. We certainly need a definite rule about what amount of money would need a pre-approval before being expended. Sara Champion will review the findings for legality.
- We need to clean gravestones this summer in our two cemeteries and in Branchville. Sara Champion told us that the DAR would like to join us and learn how this is done. It was agreed that a class would be held.
- Our gravestone repairer/restorer, Dave Selander, has some physical problems that will limit his work this summer; Tom McManus and Mike Harrington both offered to help. It was noted that Shelton Ct. cemetery, which has a large number of Revolutionary War veterans, has put out a booklet about them; it was suggested that that we might focus on our many Revolutionary War people, making sure that their stones were in good order, and think about also doing a booklet.
- The documentation at Branchville will continue this summer. Tom McManus mentioned the considerable tree work that has been accomplished on the East side of this cemetery, and that the flagpole in the middle of the cemetery has had its lock changed to facilitate raising and lowering the flag by the American Legion.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:10PM

Respectfully submitted by Sarah Slavin, Temporary Recorder