

NANTUCKET CEMETERY COMMISSION
Posted Meeting of April 12, 2023, at 3:00 pm
DPW Conference Room, 188 Madaket Road, with Zoom Connectivity

DRAFT MINUTES FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Attendance: Commissioners: Frances Karttunen, Scott McIver, Allen Reinhard (Chair), Lee Saperstein, and Barbara White; Charlie Polachi and TaKyra Renner (DPW); Ken Beaugrand, Real Estate Specialist (by Zoom; left at 3:25 pm).

1. Call to Order.

Allen Reinhard called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm. He reminded participants that the session was being recorded : <https://youtu.be/28KQbz9xnNw>. A roll-call of attendees showed that a quorum existed.

2. Public and Commissioner Comments.

A. Allen Reinhard said that he had been called by Elizabeth Whalley of 52 Center Street for permission to inurn a set of family remains in their plot in New North Cemetery (“Edgerton,” plot WW-1). Scott McIver moved approval, Barbara White seconded, and all approved unanimously by roll-call vote. It was noted that additional applications will be needed for the actual inurnment and a memorial stone.

B. Frances Karttunen asked for Commission approval of the inurnment of her husband’s, Al Crosby, cremains in their plot, G-19 at Polpis Cemetery. She noted that she has scheduled this for May 2, 2023, at 11:00 am. Scott McIver and Barbara White moved and seconded a motion to approve and the Commission voted unanimously by roll-call vote to approve it.

C. Frances Karttunen suggested that the entire Commission visit Old North Cemetery to view the restoration work done on the monuments; she said that several had toppled and that the sign at the cemetery had deteriorated and that the Commission needed to decide whether to renew it or remove it. Because of travel commitments from several Commission members, this visit needed to occur quickly. An agreement was reached quickly that the Commission would hold a site visit on Monday, April 17, 2023, at 10:00 am, at the cemetery.

3. Approval of Minutes from March 8 and March 20, 2023.

Allen Reinhard noted that there are two sets of draft minutes to be approved: one from the regular meeting of March 8th and the other from the site-visit meeting of March 20th. With no comments or suggestions, Frances Karttunen moved approval of both sets, Barbara White seconded, and the vote to approve was by roll call and was unanimously in favor.

4. Approval of Lot Sales Since the Last Meeting.

Allen Reinhard said that there had been no actual sales but that he continues to receive calls for information about such sales. Kathleen Matthews has said that her family intends to buy a plot and will do so once they are back on Island. Allen Reinhard has sent her the requisite application. To the others who inquired, he has suggested that they wait until the new lots are laid out, when they can visit and choose a specific location.

5. Discussion: Potential Land Swap at Polpis.

Allen Reinhard said that the surveyor had prepared an option for the swap that he hoped would be acceptable to the abutting neighbors. Lee Saperstein displayed Option E (attached) while noting that the length of the acquired Parcel A would be 105 ft., not the 107 as shown. This modest change was done so that the permanent corner bound would be far enough away from the mature white oak tree so that it can be installed without damage to the tree.

Ken Beaugrand reported that he had shared the latest proposal with the attorney for the abutting neighbors and that he, the attorney, seemed pleased with it. Unfortunately, the attorney has not yet met with his clients so news of their consent is not yet forthcoming.

6. Monument Restoration Project: Status and Next Steps, Funding, CPA Application.

Allen Reinhard began by saying that the Town had received five printed copies of the monument survey and shared one with the members. Lee Saperstein asked if one copy could be archived at, say, the Town Clerk's office or the Research Library of the NHA. It was noted that the Research Library building is undergoing extensive renovation and that they probably would not want a copy at this time. Barbara White suggested the Atheneum. Allen Reinhard will check with the Clerk's office and the Atheneum. Charlie Polacci said that he will arrange for a digital copy to be posted to the Commission's web page.

It was mentioned that the Commission had already agreed to a field visit to Old North Cemetery to look at the restoration work there.

With respect to choosing the next cemetery for restoration work, Allen Reinhard said that we had already determined that it should be the Quaker Cemetery. We may not consider a contract for this work until we have a definitive value for the Commission's budgetary balances. If there is enough money in the budget, Charlie Polacci will confirm from Ludlow Memorials their proposed price and then proceed to a contract. He said that he will invite the contractor to attend a future meeting of the Commission, presumably by Zoom but live attendance would also be welcome.

Allen Reinhard then noted that we will need more funding if we wish to renovate memorials in the three remaining cemeteries (Historic Coloured, New North, and Newtown). With the costs for Old North and Quaker in hand, an estimate of the cost of restoration in the three remaining cemeteries should be relatively accurate. Thus, an application to the Community Preservation Fund could be made with an accurate budget in it. Also, the fact that this work is on-going means that, if the application is successful, work could begin shortly after approval. Lee Saperstein said that he would contact the CPC to ask for information on an application. Charlie

Polacci said that it may be possible to re-submit the previous application with an up-dated and accurate budget and, of course, a future proposed schedule. [Action: Pursue new funding from the CPC.]

7. Long-Term Vision for Polpis and the Eight Other Town Cemeteries. A Suggestion for Developing a Cemetery Improvement Plan to Develop this Future Vision of Our Town Cemeteries.

Allen Reinhard began this segment of the agenda by reflecting on the book, “Over my Dead Body,” by Greg Melville, which has been shared by Frances Karttunen. Reading it led him to the understanding of the need for a long-term plan for the cemeteries and their improvement. Hardscaping and landscaping commensurate with the nature and history of the cemeteries are two broad areas of improvement concern. Frances Karttunen mentioned that at one time portions of Prospect Hill Cemetery had irrigation and that she felt that this would be inappropriate for the Town cemeteries. A number of commissioners chimed in with supporting sentiments. Lee Saperstein, returning to hardscaping, said that we need to lay out walkways and laneways that avoid graves. After Allen Reinhard noted that we are running out of space, Lee Saperstein said that our next legal challenge will be to get the Town and its legal advisors to declare that the historic boundaries of Newtown Cemetery are current and valid. With that in hand, we may clear space toward the Cow Pond for a further ground-penetrating-radar survey. In his opinion, considering the results of the earlier surveys, that is the only place left for full-body burials.

Scott McIver asked the critical question of whether or not we should consider an entirely new cemetery on vacant Town-owned land. Allen Reinhard said that this is an excellent question to research with the Planning Department. He noted that the Land Bank has done swaps with the Town, which suggests that there may be other vacant plots. He will talk with Andrew Vorce, Planning Director, about this possibility. He will also invite Andrew Vorce to a future Commission meeting to discuss the need for a new cemetery. [Action: Invite Andrew Vorce to a future meeting.]

Frances Karttunen spoke then about requests that she and Barbara White have fielded for walking tours, particularly of the Historic Coloured Cemetery, HCC. She has attended a collective organization with representation from many of the Island’s civic groups that is interested in publicizing the 200th birthday of the African Meeting House on York Street. The Nantucket Historical Association, NHA, is interested in creating a walking tour of the HCC. She believes that it should be done professionally as a video. Charlie Polacci and Florencia Rullo have discussed such a video. Perhaps, she suggested, that Florencia Rullo could attend the May meeting of the Commission to share ideas on how to create such a video. If there is consensus that such a video should be produced, Frances Karttunen would be willing to lead the effort. Allen Reinhard added that the Nantucket Island Land Bank is identifying each of 19 properties by name and on their signposts is placing a QR (“quick response”) code to allow smart ‘phone users to tap into maps and brochures.

9. Old, New, Other Business and Final Comments.

Charlie Polacci was pleased to report that the corner markers for new lots to be laid out at Polpis have arrived. He circulated some to the group. Allen Reinhard said that we should plan on installing them in May; it will be an agenda item in our next meeting.

10. Adjournment.

Adjournment came at 4:01 pm by acclamation.

Next regular meeting: Wednesday, May 10, 2023, at 3:00 pm, in the DPW conference room at 188 Madaket Road. For those who wish to attend virtually, a Zoom link will also be sent to Commissioners.

Respectfully submitted: _____; Date: _____
Lee W. Saperstein, Secretary

Nantucket Cemetery Projects List.

- Cemetery monument condition survey (completed); awarding of four more contracts for monument conservation.
- Split rail fence at Polpis Cemetery: installed in existing cemetery; needed in newly acquired land.
- Survey to lay out additional lots at Polpis.
- Toe and lot corner markers for new Polpis lots when laid out (purchase order in progress).
- Consolidation of lots at Newtown Cemetery with recordable ground survey.
- Fencing at the Historic Coloured Cemetery: sections installed, needed against Vesper Lane.
- Fencing and brush removal at New (fencing installed) and Old North Cemeteries.

