

MINUTES OF MEETING
THE PROVINCETOWN CEMETERY COMMISSION
SEPT. 8, 2008 2:00 PM

JUDGE WELSH ROOM, PROVINCETOWN TOWN HALL
PROVINCETOWN, MA

Members In Attendance:

Richard Olson, Chair
Gregory Howe, Vice-Chair
Dwayne Raymond Prickett—secretary
Astrid Berg—member

General Public and Town Officers In attendance—

Ms. Sharon Lynn: Provincetown Town Manager
Alex Heilala —town money manager??
Mary Henrique—Former member of the old Cemetery. Commission
Tony Lemme—Groundskeeper and manager of the Provincetown Cemetery

2:04 pm Mr. Olson brings meeting to order

Minutes from previous meeting (July 8, 08) are approved.

Mr. Olson asked Alex Heilala about the fee structure. Ms. Heilala says the fees for all plots go into the General Fund but should be in the perpetual care fund. The exchange goes on wherein Ms. Heilala also says that the fees are the same presently as noted on the 2002 print out that all members have been given.

Mr. Olson then asked about Article 15 of the Cemetery rules and Regulations which states: “*All lots sold in the Provincetown Cemeteries must be sold with perpetual care in addition to the price of the lot.*”

Ms. Heilala said that anything taken out of the perpetual fund requires a town vote. Only interest is an “expendable” portion of any funds related to the Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund which is to be used for upkeep of the Cemetery.

Ms. Henrique asked about the numbers detailed on the town report sheet she passed out to the members before the meeting. Ms. Heilala said the numbers, in different categories, are perpetual, expendable and non-expendable. However, to be sure she left the meeting for a moment to go check on this.

When she returned to the table questions arise as to why the Historic Commission has anything to do with the Cemetery Commission Funds

FOR RICHARD OR OTHER MEMBERS:(Note: In transcribing this I am unclear as to exactly why this came up and in relation to what—please advise if you can).

Ms. Heilala said that from the 2006 Town Report there is \$6, 350.00 and then in 2007 the numbers jumps back up to \$190,000. This odd alteration also happened in 2002.

There is discussion again about Article 15 and Mr. Olson again asked Ms. Heilala to expound on the pricing for plots and the monies garnered from sales to which Ms. Heilala reiterated that the funds go into the non-touchable fund and interest goes to perpetual care. Mr. Olson reads a note from Babe Silva which says “Upkeep” is separate from the purchase price of the plot. But it is noted that there is not a

difference between monies which are designated purchase price and the amount that goes into perpetual care. In other words, ostensibly there should be a difference between the actual price and an amount that goes to care. (i.e. the perpetual care upkeep fund)

Ms. Heilala said that the answer must be somewhere in the rules and regulations and she will check on this and get back to us.

Mr. Olson pointed out (as all members have copies of the Cemetery Rules and Regulations) that it is not. He then remarked that Mr. Bill Gately who runs the local funeral home in Provincetown has information about other town's charging practices.

Mr. Olson remarked that Cemetery upkeep is out of "General Town Funds" not the Perpetual Care funds. Ms. Heilala agreed and says that is correct.

Mr. Howe remarked that in 2003-2007 there is no capital growth and asks for an explanation. In other words, is the commission supposed to assume that there were no deaths and sales of plots in this period?

Ms. Heilala said it was a mistake and that all the funds (10,000) which was garnered in that period will be put back as they should be.

Mr. Howe then asked if funds were used from "the wrong fund?"

Ms. Heilala says the 10K in question will indeed be put back. Mr. Howe then asked if the monies came out of the "expendable" or "Non-expendable" portion of the funds. Ms. Heilala said that it was an oversight and that it happened twice.

Ms. Henrique then remarked that she was on the previous Cemetery Commission when it happened before.

Ms. Lynn then entered the conversation and said she expects that in the future we would ask for Reports if we have any questions. Ms. Berg then asked where all the funds are presently. In other words, is there an updated report? Ms. Berg then notes that the rates in 2000-2001 are all we have for reference as to fees.

It is agreed by all that all accounts and all fund distributions pertaining to the Cemetery will be brought to the next meeting.

The Next meeting, it is suggested, should be held at the Cemetery Building and Grounds Department in the Provincetown Cemetery. The members agree to this.

At this juncture, Mr. Tony Lemme came to the table. Mr. Lemme is the overseer of the Cemetery Building and Grounds at the Provincetown Cemetery. He Tells the commission that he has copies of all receipts (which were created in triplicate) of everything pertaining to funds taken in by the Provincetown Cemetery in the past 9 years. He pointed out to the commission that all monies first go through him which are then passed on to the town treasurer. He noted that the funds that come in are still based on the fee schedule that we had discussed before. He noted then as well that we are in need of reclaiming more land to be used for burials. At present, available burial plots are as follows: 30 doubles and 18 singles. He says we have plenty of land at our disposal but it must be reclaimed and groomed for burials and we must get moving on this as it is obvious that the space will be needed in the future.

Mr. Howe asked about the depths of graves which is a question which came up in the previous meeting of the Commission. At the time it struck Mr. Howe that the depths were insufficient but Mr. Lemme told the commission that the graves are indeed to a proper depth and the thought that they were too shallow is incorrect. They are indeed deep enough and meet all standards required. Mr. Howe's concern was based

on a rather unclear description of the standards noted on a sheet referred to in a previous meeting.

Mr. Prickett then brought up the subject of the Columbarium that was broached in the July meeting for storage of ashes. Mr. Lemme informed the commission that we do indeed have a place for ash storage but it is not taken advantage of very often. The idea of an “artistic” columbarium is not dead, but will be discussed again at a later date as the concept of one wherein people are aware of the project might indeed be worthwhile as an artistic addition to the cemetery.

Ms. Lynn then noted that the 3.5 acres presently owned by the town for cemetery purposes will suffice for perhaps 3-5 generations to come. Mr. Lemme agreed and states that the land in question needs to be groomed, loamed and seeded properly for future use.

It is then brought up that when a burial happens the check is given by the funeral director to Mr. Lemme who then passes the funds on to the town.

Mr. Lemme then points out that there will be need for a new tractor in the future as the one that is used now is running down rapidly. Tractors, he noted, run about ten thousand dollars each and last for about 6 years.

All members of the commission agree that there has been confusion over the past years regarding funds and distribution of those funds as well as the destination of them insofar as whether they ended up in the Perpetual Care fund for legitimate use or not. It is agreed that from this time on, at Mr. Olson’s suggestion, we draw a line and begin anew as far as accounting and overseeing of any and all funds.

The Winthrop Street Cemetery is then brought up and Mr. Lemme says that it is indeed overgrown and needs to be attended. He told the commission that each spring a “walkthrough” happens to insure that any potential visitor to the Cemetery can get to every stone. He said that the Americorps Students have, in the past, been good help with this but they last were involved in 2003.

Mr. Lemme then also pointed out after questions were asked about the parking situation in the “Main Cemetery” that the “problem” has been taken care of.

The committee then asked Ms. Henrique if she would consider re-joining the cemetery commission. Ms. Henrique said she is not sure if she would be able to and the topic is passed.

Mr. Olson then begins to end the meeting by readdressing the minutes of the previous meeting and it is unanimously agreed that we will begin our fiscal oversight as a committee from this point forward.

Mr. Olson asked Mr. Prickett if he would contact Ms. Heilala in the coming days to write a letter which explains the use and distribution of funds for the period of 200-2007 as the minutia of the business is confusing to all. That explanation from Ms. Heilala will be put into the minutes of this meeting as an addendum.

Mr. Prickett then showed the members pictures of “artistic” columbarium in other towns and cities and all agreed that the idea was worth investigating for the future.

All members agreed that the next meeting of the Cemetery Commission will be held outside on the cemetery grounds and Mr. Lemme is invited to join again.

Ms. Berg motions that the meeting be adjourned.

The Members agree and the meeting is adjourned at **3:30 pm**

Minutes scribed and submitted for consideration on September 30, 2008.

Dwayne Raymond-Prickett
Secretary
Provincetown Cemetery Commission