

April 2, 2104 Ripton Cemetery Commission Meeting

In attendance: Cheryl Larocque – term 4 years, Liz Walker - term 3 years, Charles Billings – term 1 year, Sally Hoyler – Ripton Town Clerk, Lisa Knickerbocker- term 2 years , Bonnie Swan – term 5 years

An agenda was distributed. Introductions were made. The new commission members agreed to hold meetings the 1st Wednesday of each month at 7:30 PM. An email reminder will go out before the meeting. Bonnie does not have an email so she will need a call. These will be “Open Meetings”. An agenda will be posted on the Ripton website and outside the town office door 5 days prior to the meeting.

Sally will continue to be the treasurer for the cemetery commission as part of her Ripton Town Clerk/Treasurer position.

The budget for the cemetery according to this year’s Town Report is \$ 2250 for 18 months.

Liz Walker was nominated as secretary for the commission by Lisa Knickerbocker, Cheryl Larocque seconded the motion and vote was yes. Liz Walker is secretary for the Ripton Cemetery Commission.

We discussed the fact that Perry Hanson, whose family may donate some land to extend the Cook cemetery, has been working on setting up a meeting with someone at Middlebury College to discuss getting land from them to expand the Galvin on Route 125. Lisa made the motion that Perry continue this pursuit and Charles represent the cemetery commission and go with Perry to the meeting. Cheryl seconded the motion and the vote was yes.

It was mentioned by Bonnie that there may be a pet cemetery as part of the Upson Deed of the Land to the College. Cheryl will research the covenant at the town office looking for this from the 1960’s or 70’s.

Charles and Liz physically measured the Cook and Galvin Cemeteries. Cook is presently 1 acre, Galvin is 0.5 acres. We discussed whether we need a landscape architect familiar with cemetery layout when purposing addition land for the 2 cemeteries. Charles had the name of John Benson from Randolph and will get a quote for his services.

The subject of “green” burial vs. vaults was brought up by Bonnie. Vermont has a publication called “Digging Deep” that covers Vermont laws for burials so we will get a copy of that for reference. A copy was provided for members and each will review the document for the next meeting.

Bonnie DeGray, before moving out of Ripton last year, gave the balance of the Cemetery Fund to the Ripton Historical Society, which she had no authority to do. The total was \$294.86. Bonnie made the motion to return the money back to the cemetery commission. Lisa seconded the motion and the vote was yes. Liz, as secretary, will write a request to Sally, the Town Clerk, requesting that a check for the

sum of \$294.86 be written to the Ripton Cemetery fund. The letter needs to be signed by a quorum of the commission.

A copy of the Ripton By-Laws was distributed to committee members.

Maintenance – Bonnie says it has been costing \$1300 to mow the cemeteries. Bids need to be posted, and soon for 2014, for mowing.

Perpetual Care has been a separate fee when selling burial plots.

Sale of Plots – Bonnie Swan has been selling plots for the past 20+ years. Charles suggested that Bonnie continue as “Sexton” to continue to be able to sell plots. Cheryl nominated Bonnie and Liz seconded the motion. Vote was yes. Bonnie Swan is the “Sexton”.

Charles was nominated as Chairperson by Bonnie Swan, Lisa seconded the nomination and the vote was yes.

Committee members examined the questionnaire results regarding the desires of Ripton residents to continue to use the Ripton cemeteries for burials. It was agreed that the cemetery commission should consider these results when making decisions about the cemeteries.

Next meeting was set for May 7th at 7:30 PM rather than 7 PM at the town office to accommodate Bonnie’s ACTR work schedule.

Bonnie suggested that the grass needs to be mowed on the cemeteries for Memorial Day. Veteran’s Flags are usually put out by Bonnie but it would be nice to have school kids put them out. If we wanted Ripton school kids to do this it should probably be tied into a lesson, perhaps tied into graves of Ripton residents who fought in the Civil War. It could also be considered community service for the school kids. Lisa will look into getting the kids to help. Bonnie will get the actual number of flags needed to Lisa.

A sheet containing topics for the Ripton Cemetery Commission was handed out. Members were asked to spend some time thinking about these topics and to put their ideas on paper for the next meeting.

Attachments : 1) agenda for today’s’ meeting prepared by Charles Billings, 2) Wikipedia definition of Sexton 3) Considerations for the May 7th 2014 meeting 4) Ripton Cemetery Association By-Laws from years past 5) VLCT Handbook for Vermont Town Officers, March 2014 edition, pages 13-16 of Chapter 7. Cemetery Commissioner Roles and Responsibilities 6) Digging Deep, Unearthing the Mysteries of Burial and Cemetery Law published by Vt. Secretary of State’s Office 2010, reference page 11 for cemetery law 7) drawing of Galvin cemetery – current size and proposed expansion by Charles Billings.