

Ripton Cemetery Commission Meeting June 4, 2014

In attendance: Cheryl Larocque, Liz Walker, Charles Billings, Bonnie Swan

- 1) Approve the minutes from May 7, 2014 meeting –A motion was made by Cheryl, seconded by Bonnie. Minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

- 2) A) Charles gave an update from Middlebury College Thomas Corbin regarding land gift to expand the Galvin Cemetery - Middlebury College agreed to gift 1.04 acres in the L shape that Charles's drawing showed. See letter attachment 2A-1. Ask Alison to forward attachment 2A-1 to the Select Board. A survey is the first thing that needs to be done so a Quit Claim deed can be drawn up between the college and the town. Attachment 2A-2 L drawing from proposal to college.

Note: There was some more discussion about trying to find the pet cemetery at Galvin as we work on getting the property surveyed, etc.

B) Tracy Harrington talked to Charles about getting the older RES kids involved in placing Memorial Day flags on graves next year. She suggested that they could start talking about Ripton war veterans as part of their Community Unit in the fall of 2014, and then they will be prepared to help out in May with the flags. Bonnie suggested that veteran's graves need to be marked so that the school kids would be able to find the correct graves, older stones can be very hard to read. We discussed metal flag holders that exist on newer veteran's graves, and that we may be able to get more from the Legion in Middlebury. They would help identify which graves need flags. There was some discussion about having a central memorial with one flag instead of placing small flags on all of the veteran's graves, like some towns have. We could consider this for the future, but money would need to be raised for a memorial. Bonnie suggested that someone from the Legion would be happy to talk to the kids at RES.

C) Sally Hoyler wrote a check for \$294.86 to the Ripton Historical Society to clear up that issue.

D) Budget feedback came from the Select Boards through their assistant Alison Dickinson. The Select Board hopes to find money to pay Bonnie for 2014. Stipends for commissioners would have to wait for voter approval for the 2015 budget at town meeting. We need to let Alison know that we'd like that to get onto the town meeting agenda for 2015.

E) Charles looked further into deeds for the Galvin and Cook cemeteries. There is no known deed for the Galvin, no known deed for the older (lower) part of the Cook, but there is a deed for the newer (upper) part of the Cook cemetery. See attachment 2E. Ripton's lawyer will know how to describe the original part of the cemeteries going forward. New surveys need to include the old parts of both the Galvin and Cook cemeteries.

3) A) Proposals from Phelps Engineering for both the Galvin and Cook cemeteries were received. Attachments 3B-1 for Galvin and 3B-2 for Cook. Charles will get copies of both proposals to Alison for the Select Board.

B) Charles will ask Phelps to further break down the proposal costs so that we know how much money is needed for the surveys. The commission will request that amount of money from the Select Board to get the surveying done, at least for the Galvin, to be able to complete the land gifting. Surveying is an integral part of the proposals from Phelps Engineering and it makes sense to use the same company both surveying and site design.

Note – if we expect to sell more lots in Upper Cook cemetery, then we'll need additional measuring and lay out of plots since there seems to be some curvature to the boundary line. We may need help from a survey to do that. The existing plot plan for the Cook cemetery needs to be copied over onto a computer drawing and made more legible. The existing map is vulnerable to damage and the information could be lost.

C) Review, again, the Certificate of Burial Rights document that Charles proposed we use in the future to replace the current "deed". Document is similar to one used by Stowe Vermont. A suggestion was made that we have separate documents (specific cemetery in title) for the 2 cemeteries. Charles will make that change. The commission will vote on approving the documents at the next meeting and then have them reviewed by Ripton's attorney.

D) We'll table further discussion of Ripton Cemetery Rules and Regulations for another meeting.

E) Bonnie has new information regarding fees that other towns are charging for burial plots and services. We will review those at another meeting.

F) Bonnie has reviewed the description of the Sexton's responsibilities but would like a little more time to respond with a proposal. We'll discuss at a future meeting.

G) Work Orders for burials – we discussed what the procedure is when Bonnie gets a request for burial in an existing plot, or is asked to sell a new plot for a burial. Charles suggested that a work order should be filled out so there is a written record of the request and a check list, so someone other than Bonnie will be able to do this in her absence.

Notes – currently Leo Gorton digs the graves, families are responsible to installing corner stones before burial, vaults are installed by the vault company, and they stay through a burial to place the cover on the vault before the grave is backfilled. We need to do more research on work orders – something that could be filled out when a request comes in to purchase a plot, dig for burial, whatever. We should also appoint a backup for Bonnie, an assistant, to help or be able to fulfill some of these functions if Bonnie is not available. Cheryl offered to be that person and Bonnie will provide some training.

H) Seeking donations or and fundraising for the Ripton cemeteries will be discussed at a future meeting.

Green Burial, no use of vaults, was discussed again since it may be the preferred method for some people. Green burial is allowed in Vermont but could cause some issues with land sinking or stone shifting over time. Cheryl and Charles will further research Green burials.

Vault sizes will be taken into account during site design for new land additions to the Galvin and Cook cemeteries. Plots need to be wide enough to have space between vaults, especially between adjacent plots. Cement vaults are 38 inches wide by 8 feet long (96 inches), and 3 feet (36 inches) high. Vault burials require only 18 inches of soil on top.