

Village of Skaneateles
Cemetery Board of Lakeview Cemetery
Regular Meeting – January 17, 2013

Present: Robert Gray, President
Patricia Blackler, Commissioner
Mary Sennett, Village Trustee
Dennis Dundon, Clerk to the Boards

Absent: Gary Trenti, Commissioner

President Gray called the meeting to order at 9:00.

1. Investments – President Gray said that the Village Attorney, Mike Byrne, has given his opinion that the Board cannot invest perpetual care funds in products other than money market accounts or time deposit accounts of short duration provided by NYS banks. While the interest income being generated on these funds is not very good, this is a situation that the cemetery must live with.

2. Potential Reburial Fee – Pres. Gray said that Mr. Byrne has found nothing to prohibit the Board taking action to establish a fee or to change fees. The Board may want to explore this option further. President Gray explained that certain cemeteries, facing the prospect of depressed interest earnings on perpetual care funds, have considered and instituted a new fee covering additional burials made in an existing grave. This fee is approximately one-half the cost of a new grave. Fees for opening and closing the grave remain an additional cost.

We have allowed two burials in a grave (one full burial and one cremation, or two cremations), as long as it is possible to do so. In order to do so, the staff may have to do probing or research to determine the precise location of past burials. So there is cost justification for the imposition of such a fee. Comm. Blackler and Trustee Sennett expressed reservations over the magnitude of the fee and the effect of a retroactive change of terms on an owner. But they acknowledged that a fee of some magnitude may not be unreasonable. In the absence of Comm. Trenti, Pres. Gray suggested tabling further discussion or possible action to the February 21, 2013 meeting. This item will remain on the agenda for serious consideration of policy change.

3. Upkeep – The Village crews did a great job in keeping up with maintenance during 2012. Pres. Gray said that the new small digger works very well, and does not disturb the landscaping in the way that a full backhoe does.

4. Report from Barbara Spain – The Commission acknowledged the December update report from Ms. Spain. Pres. Gray believes that what she is doing is pretty much what the Commission wanted. Trustee Sennett announced that the title for the position has been changed to Cemetery Archivist, and that she thought that Ms. Spain made good points in her email to Mr. Dundon.

Additionally, Ms. Spain, Comm. Blackler and Trustee Sennett met with the Village's office staff on December 24. During that meeting the updating of the computerized records was discussed, as was the advisability of purchasing a software package. Trustee Sennett reminded the group that one of the reasons for engaging Ms. Spain was to provide better information to people who have inquiries, and to relieve Ms. Shappell of the need to cover that activity. Trustee Sennett said that Ms. Spain is trying to get everything computerized all the way up through 2012, so you can go into the records and search by name.

A complete computerized record of all past cemetery activity should be the objective. Comm. Blackler asked who would decide which software package to buy. Trustee Sennett suggested that it should be a recommendation made after committee review; she is requesting that funds be provided in the upcoming 2013-2014 budget. The Trustees agree that the software is necessary. Comm. Blackler suggested that perhaps the software that the Village has reviewed should be purchased. Mr. Dundon suggested that any package should be capable of handling a mass migration of data. The goal for 2013 will be to have one updated source for historical information.

5. Shepard Issue – Apparently there have been some questions regarding the guidelines for transferring ownership of graves within or without the same family. Village Attorney Byrne wrote a letter to Mr. Shepard's attorney covering the guidelines for ownership transfer. In that letter he confirmed that lots that are owned were originally purchased by Edward Shepard in 1972 and were sold to Burleigh Shepard in 1978. Mr. Byrne then described the occupancy of each grave on the lot; one lot in the center #2, south is not occupied. He enclosed a sketch showing that. NYS law allows a cemetery lot owner to resell a burial plot, provided that appropriate written statement signed by the seller and notarized, is filed with the Village Clerk. If the State wishes to find an interested buyer it may do so; if he wishes to advise the Village of the availability of that lot for resale, the Village will advise any interested person. He noted that our experience has shown that individual lots in a family plot are difficult to sell.

6. For-Sale Signs – Pres. Gray noted that there is a sign on a lot in the cemetery offering its availability for sale. The Commissioners expressed their displeasure over this practice. **Comm. Blackler said, "I move that the Commission adopt a rule prohibiting the placement of "For-Sale" signs within Lakeview Cemetery."** **Pres. Gray seconded the motion.** Upon the unanimous vote of the members present in favor of the motion, the motion was carried 2-0. Pres. Gray said that he would handle the removal of the sign.

7. Transactions –

Section 11A, Lot 239, 2 south graves, monumented
Deed 242, Book 8
Trust Deed 3254

Sharon & Brian Jackson
9 Spring Street
Pelham, NH 03076

Section 11A, Lot 271, 2 north graves, monumented
Deed 243, Book 8
Trust Deed 3255

Arby Robinson
61 Maple Drive
Skaneateles Falls, NY 13153

8. Other Business -- Pres. Gray suggested that if the Village is hiring Burt Jordan as a seasonal worker for the cemetery, that he would like him to attend a commission meeting; hopefully in March.

Comm. Blackler asked about budget items for submission this year. Pres. Gray suggested that \$1,500 be budgeted for tree/shrub replacement. Comm. Blackler requests \$500 for additional road signs be budgeted. Other costs are included in other budget line items.

Pres. Gray noted that the Chapel has received quite a bit of use this past year. Using parties should be asked to consider a voluntary donation.

Next Meeting – The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on February 21, 2013 at 9:00 am.

The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 9:44 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Dundon, Clerk to the Boards