

PRINCE GEORGE'S CHAPEL CEMETERY COMMITTEE

NOVEMBER 8, 2015 MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 p.m. by President Melody Chandler. Members present were Patti Adams, Friends Representative Meri Jo Montague, Gayle Chandler and Council Representative Brian Baull. A sign-in sheet will accompany the minutes.

A motion was made to approve the November 8, 2015 agenda. Gayle moved to approve the agenda; it was seconded by Patti. It was unanimously approved.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of May 31, 2015. Meri Jo moved to approve the minutes; it was seconded by Patti. It was unanimously approved.

Brian read the treasurer's report and the budget. There was discussion on a charge of \$16.50 for office supplies/checks/deposit slips which was not on the check detail. Stacey Long, town administrator, will be asked what this was.

There was no correspondence.

There were no reports by the officers; Meri Jo discussed recent events at the Chapel; all of which went well. The committee wondered if the Friends could increase their marketing as well as charge more for the chapel's use. Brian offered to help the Friends with free marketing websites. The administrator's report is attached to these minutes.

Old Business:

Fencing was a big topic since it involved two issues. The fencing fronting the Kollock family graves had been removed without the town's knowledge. They did this in order to install sod on their gravesites. Stacey Long, town administrator, has contacted the town attorney but not the family. A photo showing the removed fencing accompanies these minutes.

After much correspondence between the state and the town over the repositioning of the split-rail fence separating the two properties, the state has agreed that the fence can be placed on their property; a photo of the Option 2 realignment accompanies these minutes. The town received this agreement in an August 19, 2015, email from Cherie Dodge-Biron of the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. A discussion followed regarding the cost of removing and reinstalling the fence. In her report, Stacey Long, town administrator, has estimated a cost of approximately \$320.00. Gayle made a motion that we remove and reinstall the fence according to the state's choice of Option 2 but capping the cost at \$500.00; it was seconded by Patti. It was unanimously approved.

There were no complaints about DDOC's maintenance of the cemetery.

The Chapel and cemetery section on the town's website needs revision. Melody gave suggestions to improve it. Gayle reported that Autumn Gardner, town clerk, is now responsible for updating the website. The committee is looking forward to working with Autumn on improving the Chapel and cemetery section.

The problem with the tombstone and cornerstone placement on the Spicer and Lewis families' plot has been resolved by Melson Funeral Services and Lloyd Memorials. A photo of their plot accompanies these minutes.

Following a May 31, 2015, motion by the cemetery committee to amend the Rules and Regulations, the town council subsequently approved the addition of rule 9, the amendment of rule 7, and switching the order of rules 8 and 9 for clarity. It was suggested we discuss switching the numerical order within the Rules and Regulations at the May 2016 meeting.

New Business:

The State has not resolved the handicapped signage placement or the possible handicapped ramp for the Chapel. Our town administrator, Stacey Long, is corresponding with Cherie Dodge-Biron at the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs and awaits her decision.

Trees and shrubs growing on cemetery plots are forbidden. Four plots were affected. After trying to locate any living relatives responsible for the plots, it was determined there were none for three (Vickers, Leffler, and Alvaro); maintenance removed these shrubs. A contact letter was sent to the Baker family, but no response from them has been received; maintenance will remove the shrub on this plot. In August the State was to trim the yew tree along the back of the Chapel to keep it from rubbing against the building; Meri Jo is not sure if this has been done.

There have been two accidents affecting the brick wall facing Vines Creek Road, one on August 3, 2015, and the second on October 10, 2015. Our insurance company required us to pay the \$500.00 deductible for the first accident since it was considered a hit and run; the cost to repair the wall by Czapp Masonry came to \$1750.00. The second incident was caused by a drunk driver, and the total responsibility was borne by USAA Insurance; the total cost was \$7200.00 to repair the wall, which is being performed by Czapp Masonry. A discussion ensued on how to keep the wall intact, the potential depletion of the cemetery's finances, and requesting DelDot and state legislators to intervene to resolve the intersection's problems. A question arose about whether the wall was on state or town property; Stacey Long has a survey of the property and will be asked if the brick wall is on state or town property.

The town council voted in March 2015 to require four corner markers per plot at a cost of \$225.00 and to set the price of a plot at \$600.00, for a total cost of \$825.00. In addition, each time a grave is opened there is a \$250.00 burial fee. This led to the development of new forms for the funeral homes to follow. A letter with copies of the two new forms was sent to six funeral homes (Hastings, Melson, Watson, Torbert, Short and Parsell) on July 21, 2015.

The General Dagworthy monument requires repair; a photo showing the damage accompanies these minutes. The Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs said they do not own it, even though it was erected in 1908 by the State of Delaware. Dick Carter, chair of the Delaware Heritage Commission, was mentioned as being knowledgeable about such things; the state legislators could also be asked to fund its repair. Gayle volunteered to contact Mr. Carter for assistance. The committee is afraid that repair of the monument will be quite expensive and will involve using heavy equipment to fix it.

The agenda items Episcopal Diocese of Delaware and Hudson and Gray Family Plot can be combined. The casket of Mr. Gray was interred in the wrong plot, that of Mr. Hudson's. After a Hudson family member noticed a disturbance at the plot, he contacted the town hall; it was later discovered that Mr. Gray's casket had been interred in the same plot as Mr. Hudson's urn by Torbert Funeral Chapel. Both plots had corner markers, but they were difficult to find. Mr. Gray was reinterred in his correct plot. This unfortunate circumstance led the town to ask the local Episcopal minister of Selbyville and Millsboro, Rev. Glen Duffy, and the Archivist of the Episcopal Diocese of Delaware, Carolyn Bowman, for their support in finding old plot surveys of the cemetery. This was unsuccessful since the Diocese does not have any records of past plot sales. Brian suggested asking volunteers to help find burials using 'dowsing' rods; he said that old graves are only three feet beneath the earth and are much easier to find than modern burials. It was suggested we contact Mr. Melson of Melson Funeral Services and ask if he would be willing to help start the project. It would help us determine if there are any empty plots that could be sold.

Since Mr. Hudson's urn was removed from his grave and luckily was not damaged in the process, it brought up the issue of the durability of urns and how best to protect them in the event they are mistakenly disinterred. Gayle asked Doug Melson of Melson Funeral Services for his advice, and she learned there are now many types of durable urns for purchase. Our Rules and Regulations only allow marble. Gayle passed out paperwork (included with these minutes) that explained the types of urns and urn vaults available. A discussion began on whether urn vaults should be required for durable urns, and it was thought they should be optional. Gayle made a motion that rules 2 and 3 should be revised to read:

2. Cremated ashes must be buried within a metal, bronze, marble or simulated marble urn, which then may be buried in the person's cemetery plot. All other biodegradable container types (plastic, porcelain, glass, wood, etc.) must be placed in a burial vault before interment.

3. Casket burials shall be in a standard concrete, copper, bronze, etc. vault or liner.

It was seconded by Meri Jo. It was unanimously approved.

The Delaware Preservation Fund grant is due December 13, 2015. Grants are usually limited to \$1000.00. This year the committee decided to request a grant to prune the cemetery trees. Meri Jo made a motion that the cemetery committee apply for funds to have an arborist prune the cemetery trees, as recommended by the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs; it was seconded by Patti. It was unanimously approved.

With no other business to discuss, Gayle moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:50 p.m.; it was seconded by Patti. It was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Gayle Chandler