

Calais Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

October 27, 2021

Town Hall & via Zoom

Present: John Simanskas, Fletcher Dean, Juanita Nunn, Randy Koch (Zoom), Laura Dailey (Zoom)

Guests: Diane Simanskas, John McCullough, David Schutz, Kurt Janson, Don Hawkins, Olivia Gay (Zoom), Cindy and Mack Gardner-Morse (Zoom)

John called the meeting to order at 7:10

Design Advisory Board: John Mc. reported that the DAB had made a site visit on Oct. 22 to assess the fence situation at Old West Church and Robinson Cemeteries. He asked what the cemetery commission proposal is to replace the fences. Diane made a pitch for installing maintenance-free fencing (granite post and chain) to save taxpayers money and because volunteers are hard to rally for fence repair and painting every 5 years. In 2019 the Cemetery Commission had submitted a proposal for such a fence at OWC but had never received a written response from the DAB or DRB. Recently, the commission paid Kirkyard Services to remove and dispose of the rotting fence boards at Robinson. A discussion followed regarding acceptable materials and appearances for changes or repairs in the town's historic district. While many spoke in favor of traditional granite posts and chain, David maintained that, according to the district's rules, materials must be the same as the original to be historically authentic. Don suggested that posts may last longer if one drills with a jackhammer into any ledge and inserts rebar for mounting the fencepost just above the ground. John Mc. offered to consult with Ryan Edwards and research the fence posts and boards costs for both cemeteries and report back to the commission. He added that the OWC can help with expenses. David also mentioned the Vermont Old Cemetery Association as a resource for grants, and that he can rally volunteers from Historic Kent's Corner Assn. for any work days.

Old Fairview Bliss Section Trust: Don presented a letter from Diane Vieweg and himself as Trustees in response to a letter Fletcher had sent on behalf of the commission regarding the existence of the trust which was established long ago to pay for maintenance. In their letter, they stated that the former sexton had been paid by trustees to maintain the cemetery for a number of years but he told Don and Diane that the town paid him to mow all town cemeteries. They asked how much would be expected to compensate the town for the maintenance. Fletcher will ask Joe Mangan to summarize seasonal costs to mow and maintain that section as well as cleaning and restoration of headstones completed a few years ago.

Minutes of the August 25th meeting were reviewed and approved.

Sexton's Report: Joe had reported via email that mowing is finished. He has expanded the Green Burial section in Robinson and interest in buying plots continues to grow. He recommends purchasing and planting six more trees next spring. He has straightened four badly leaning stones in Fairview.

Financial report and Fiscal Year 2021/22 budget: Commissioners reviewed the budget and expenses. The endowment balance as of September 30 was \$229,387.95.

Other business: John reported that the annual hedge trimming at Fairview has been completed. Fletcher reported that Paul Hannan had emailed that a delay in inscribing the proposed stone bench will put the project off till 2022. Juanita will ask Joe what becomes of a badly broken headstone in Shortt Cemetery that is replaced by a flat grass marker.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55.

The Cemetery Commission meets on the 4th Wednesday of the month in summer (except July) and bi-monthly thereafter.

Next meeting

November 17, 7 PM

Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Fletcher Dean

October 31, 2021