

Town of Springfield – Cemetery Commissioners
Minutes
Selectmen's Hall - 96 Main Street - Third Floor
Wednesday, October 4, 2023

Commissioners present: Scott Page, Gerry Patch, Hugh Putnam, Beth Gray, Catheryn Feickert and Barbara A. Courchesne, Ex-Officio and Town Manager, Jeff Mobus. Beth Gray left the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Meeting called to order: Called to order at 5:08 p.m. by Chairman Page.

Oakland Tree Update: Commissioners agreed to move this item on the Agenda from number 6 to number 1 so that it could be discussed with Town Manager Mobus in attendance. Town Manager Mobus presented a second estimate for the removal of the 98 large pine trees that border Oakland Cemetery. Luckily last year's and the most recent storms caused minimal tree damage and without stone damage, however, the expectation is that the trees are poised to cause real and costly damage to stones. The second quote is from Lariviere Forest Products in the amount of \$89,670.00, which is lower than the Crown Point Excavation LLC quote in May 2023 of \$117,000.00. The pine trees are intertwined and require complete removal rather than tree-by-tree over time, which would de-stable the whole group. There is a break in the line of trees, due to an old road, which would allow the removal to be completed in two phases. Town Manger Mobus encouraged the Commissioners to consider using part of the growth earnings in the Cemetery endowment fund to pay for half of Guy Lariviere's quote. Specifically, splitting the quote over the current budget year and the next 24/25 budget year. The request is for the Cemetery Trust Fund to contribute approximately \$22,500 this year and again next year. The expectation is for this project to be completed as soon as possible in an effort to mitigate winter damage to stones. The section of trees from the Catholic to the Russian section would be removed first with Gurney's pit as a landing point. Commissioner Putnam mentioned that this request is a big hit to the trust fund and the importance of a 30% cushion of the growth be retained. He wondered if the cost could be a special appropriation or the second half of the quote (45K) be put into the town's next budget. Commissioners discussed whether it was possible for Crown Point Excavation to meet the second quote. Could either removal company guarantee a timeline to get the job done? It was decided that further discussion and a vote would be necessary at the November meeting.

Additions to the Agenda: None

Approve Minutes of September 6, 2023: Commissioner Patch moved and Commissioner Gray seconded to approve Minutes of September 6, 2023. All in favor.

Commissioners Feickert & Patch report on VOCA meeting: Commissioners were unable to attend due to funeral at the VFW on the same date as the VOCA meeting. Catheryn will contact VOCA regarding Nichole Vecchi's assistance with inventorying Summer Hill and about the small grant that they offer. Town Clerk Courchesne will get D2 and supplies ordered and stored for stone clean up in the Spring. Catheryn spoke with Ludlow's Sexton, Doug Sheehan, regarding inventory practices and she expects to have the Summer Hill inventory of repairs completed for the November meeting.

Summer Hill Project Discussion: The Commissioners watched a short YouTube video from Lazarus Mapping. Town Clerk Courchesne explained that separate from the inventorying of stone repairs in Summer Hill, there has always been the idea of having a software program that provides an online searchable database of our cemetery lots and burials. The town has many cemeteries and this is a huge project that would involve creating a system simple enough for all types of users, entering of data and a sustainable hosting fee in addition to a project fee and would need to be provided by a reputable company. At one time our land records provider Avenu & Insights provided an estimate of approximately \$40,000.00.

Public Comment: None.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:01 p.m. Next meeting will be Wednesday, November 1, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara A. Courchesne

Barbara A. Courchesne
Cemetery Commissioner, Ex-Officio