

APPROVED

RIDGEFIELD GRAVEYARD RESTORATION COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 15, 2025 6 PM RIDGEFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MINUTES

PRESENT: Kevin Claesgens, Michael Harrington, Susan Law, Tom McManus, Nancy Selander, Sarah Slavin, Joel Third. Sara Champion arrived at 6:08.

EXCUSED: Susan Kweskin

GUEST: Gus Olsen

Chair Nancy Selander called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

MINUTES: Sarah Slavin motioned for approval of the May 19, 2025 Minutes. All approved except Tom McManus who abstained.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Tom reported that the State grant for Neglected Cemeteries for \$8,000 was approved in June. These monies will be used for the maintenance and repair of unused cemeteries. Plot sales in Ridgebury Cemetery totaled 4 plots and Mapleshade Cemetery has sold 5. Proceeds from the Mapleshade Cemetery sales are used to fill the shortfall from the Town Budget allowance. Ridgebury Cemetery has its own funding.

LIAISON WITH THE SEXTONS: Bill Bunkoci will oversee the placement of the town purchased gravestone for a retired Town employee whose remains were recently buried in Mapleshade Cemetery. She had no family to provide these services.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Sara Champion stated that the Revolutionary War veterans markers in Olde Town and Ridgebury Cemeteries are being cleaned by members of the Cannon Ridge Chapter of the DAR. Pictures of the markers and a brief bio of the soldiers are to be included in a booklet to be published as part of the 250 anniversary of the Battle of Ridgefield. Most of the work has been done with only approximately 13 stones remaining to be cleaned.

2. The sign for Ridgebury Cemetery is to include the name and contact phone number of the Sexton.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. "Here Lies the Body", a lecture by Jack Sanders and interview by Ira Joe Fisher is planned for Sunday, October 12. A fee will be charged for the talk at the Lounsbury House. A walk through several cemeteries will follow on Monday, October 13. Help with the parking is needed as a number of cars are expected. Gus Olsen and Dave and Nancy Selander have volunteered so far.
2. The question arose if a formal statement should be added to the Committee By-Laws regarding not charging for guided Cemetery walks. The Committee agreed this was not necessary.
3. A request for a possible future burial near an existing family plot was recently made. Again the problem of not having any sales records to prove ownership and availability was brought forward. In this case, if the remains are cremains, they could be placed easily within the known family plot. The possibility of having an "Open House" event at Branchville Cemetery to encourage people with proof of purchase to attend so as to begin to establish a documented record of ownership was discussed.
4. A sign for Branchville Cemetery needs to be erected at the entrance lane.

FALL CLEAN-UP DATE: Tom stated that the Cemetery complex is in very good shape and a clean-up party is not necessary. Thanks to Tom for his attentiveness and efforts.

Sarah Slavin moved to adjourn the meeting and all approved.

Susan Law, Recorder