

DRAFT

RIDGEFIELD GRAVEYARD RESTORATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

MARCH 18, 2024 4PM RIDGEFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PRESENT: Susan Kweskin, Susan Law, Tom McManus, Nancy Selander, Sarah Slavin, Joel Third

EXCUSED: Sara Champion

Nancy Selander called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM.

The Minutes of January 22, 2024 were unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report: \$26,950 was requested in the 2024-2025 Town of Ridgefield Budget. This is to cover expenses for the four non-revenue cemeteries owned by the Town....Branchville, Olde Town, New Florida and collective the pocket cemeteries. Tree removal in early March included work in Mapleshade and New Florida which cost \$2,560.

Liaison with the sextons: Bill Bukoci reports no issues. No plots have been sold in Ridgebury Cemetery but there have been a few burials.

Old Business:

1. Cemetery Update ..The Adopt a Street sign on Rte. 116 states the Graveyard Committee as the caretaker. No one knows how this was assigned and the responsibility of caring for that section of roadway was not agreed upon by anyone at the meeting. Nancy will try to determine the history and steps taken to remove this responsibility.
2. The Ye Old Burying Ground yearly maintenance has been accomplished by Tom. Future clean-ups can include safety precautions provided by the Town if needed.
3. Spring Tour.. Dates are May 4th with a rain date May 5<sup>th</sup>. "It was the Worst of Times" will primarily focus on the victims of the Spanish Influenza Epidemic and those personally involved in World War I. Several other notables will round out the Tour. The biographies are being finalized and the publicity is being handled by the Ridgefield Historical Society.
4. Work on the moving of Anne Weed's tombstone will commence as soon as the weather is warm enough for proper setting of the epoxy glue.
5. The Branchville flag light issues has been tabled for now. George Besse of The American Legion does not feel it is necessary but some members of this Committee feel that goes against the published protocols for the care of the American Flag.
6. Recipients of the Thrift Shop Grant will be notified sometime in the next few weeks.
7. Election of Officers..Nancy and Wendy Lionetti, Town Clerk, reviewed the 2022 regulations and elections are to be held once a year, at any time.
8. Tom noted that the Charge of the Ridgefield Graveyard Restoration Committee reads "to maintain and restore old town cemeteries". The current Mission reads, "to preserve and protect our Town owned cemeteries, to provide historical resources for the public, and to maintain the safety and accessibility for our visitors." This change will be noted.

New Business:

1. Spring Clean-up is scheduled for Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, rain date the following day. Susan Law will notify the DAR and several other volunteers who like to participate.
2. The Mapleshade sign at the corner of North St. and Mapleshade Road needs to be refreshed. The Town will be notified.
3. Communications to be noted:
  - a. In Mapleshade Cemetery, a small columbarium to hold 3 cremains will fit on the single gravesite that was purchased.
  - b. A funeral Director made contact regarding any paperwork that might exist concerning a widow who is to be buried beside her husband in Branchville Cemetery.
  - c. A person in Cooperstown inquired about placing a monument in honor of a friend in Branchville Cemetery.
4. Nancy will request a letter to be sent from Town Hall to Bouton Funeral Home in Georgetown stating that the Sexton, Bill Bunkoci and the Committee be notified if ANY person or cremains are to be interred in Branchville or any other Town cemetery.
5. It was decided to hold a Branchville Cemetery "Open House" on Sunday, June 9<sup>th</sup>. The purpose is to encourage people to present any deed or other proof of ownership or burial as there are no records that have been found to ascertain possession. Notices will be published three times in the preceding weeks in the Ridgefield Press, Danbury News Times, and on Hamlet Hub to publicize the event. As we also do not have any plot maps, it is hoped this might help in the constructing of the same.

The next meeting will be May 20, 2024 at 4PM to be held in Mapleshade Cemetery, weather permitting.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:23 PM.

Susan Law, Recorder