

Princeton Cemetery Commission Meeting – Saturday, November 20, 2020
On-Site Cemetery Inspection Meeting
Minutes

Present: Lynne Grettum, Paul Constantino, Amy Holwell, Andy Brown, Greg Miranda, LouTrostel

Absent: None

Purpose of the meeting was to tour and survey the Princeton cemeteries to assess needs and projects.

Woodlawn Cemetery:

The tour began at Woodlawn at 1:00pm. Commission members walked the grounds led by Superintendent Andy Brown. Andy pointed out items needing immediate attention and those for future work:

- Rotted tree in 1850 section needs to be removed sooner rather than later
- Stone wall in same area could use rebuilding and removal of underbrush
- Memorial rock for Dorothy Kendall Preston needs to be reset
- Potential for more burial spots possible but would need ground-penetrating radar to survey the area and stake-out boundaries. Purchasing a radar unit would cost around \$6000. Less certain about upkeep cost or need for experienced operator?

South Cemetery:

- Replacement of broken guardrail along Ball Hill Rd.
- Removal of semi-truck across from property
- Pauper's section of cemetery should have definitive markings/edging as well as a monument/plaque commemorating it. Maybe the monument/plaque could be provided by the Historical Commission considering its importance.
- Open spot opposite the Pauper's section has valuable burial space available. Radar would need to be used to survey.
- Curb appeal of South needs improvement which might lead to more sales. A focal point, benches or some sort of beautification would greatly enhance the cemetery.
- Several monument stones have been repaired recently by A. Brown. One remains broken in half.
- A little fill is needed after some ground sinkage at newer grave (P. Bennett).

West Cemetery:

- Access to West is difficult; there is only rough ground leading up a steep slope at the entrance. The Commission would like to see the addition of some stone steps.
- Decorative stone pylons on either side of entrance need to be reset in the ground; would better delineate the main entrance and add to curb appeal.
- There are several broken headstones, some of which are historical, requiring repair.
- Several stumps need removal with possible replanting of maple trees.

Boylston Cemetery:

- Boylston is a private cemetery; the funds for maintenance are nearly depleted, current expenditures come mainly from the general maintenance budget.
- There was discussion of the town legally securing ownership of the land to convert to public cemetery, which would create much-needed burial space. To maintain the aesthetics of the area, plots could be limited to cremation only with flush mount stones - no vertical monuments allowed.
- There is an area that will need cleanout of brush and cutting back of bushes in the spring.

Meetinghouse Cemetery:

- Meetinghouse has several stumps that need to be removed.
- There are a number of broken or fractured headstones. Some of them are old slate and difficult-to-impossible to repair.
- Some repairs are necessary to secure the underground crypts at back corner, including holes developing in 'roof'.
- Installation of a flag pole and electricity for lighting was discussed. The ultimate goal of the Commission is to eventually install lighted flag poles at every town cemetery.

North Cemetery:

- Cobblestone walkway up the hill could use further repair despite recent attention. Difficult to prevent water erosion of fill material around stones due to steepness of hillside. Discussion about possible replacement of eroded sandy material with something harder and cement-like.
- There are a number of broken and/or fallen headstones in need of repair.
- Discussion regarding the type of memorial appropriate for cremation burials in this hillside environment. A. Brown recommends flat in-ground markers to prevent unsightly 'overcrowded' visuals; members agree this should be considered. Concerns were also expressed about several monuments which are aesthetically out of character with the general historical appearance of the majority, with thoughts about potential greater regulation in the future.
- Some fill needed for slightly sunken grave on upper level.
- Discussion of stump removal in front of stone wall at bottom entranceway raised concerns - the walls that stand behind the stumps might risk collapse if taken out.
- Potential for 40 additional cremation lots could be realized if the front left section could be filled. Fill for this project seems cost-prohibitive; up-front costs might outweigh income gained from eventual lot sales.

Parker II Cemetery:

- There are several broken or fallen headstones in need of repair.
- There are two large monument towers which are leaning and could use securing before they eventually fall over and are damaged. This cannot be done in-house and may be expensive.
- Some previously cut logs/branches disposed just outside of perimeter could use removal.