

DURHAM CEMETERY COMPANY

May 6, 2009

MINUTES

Vice-President Barbara Olsen called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. in the Durham Town Hall third floor meeting room.

Officers and Directors Present: Greg Burritt, Kim Garvis, Laura Francis, Simone Howe, Mary DiMella, Lynne McKenna, Barbara Olsen, Tom Palmieri, Dolores Caturano, Peg Atwell, Bob Atwell, Gerald Brown, Richard Olsen, Ken Jay.

Secretary's Report: All deeds have been processed and mailed. Cemetery maps have been notated. A sympathy card was sent to Shirley Bielefield on the passing of her husband, Arthur, former member of the Durham Cemetery Company. Sandra and Terrence Lynch returned their original deed for the purchase of Block 5, Lots 67 & 68. The Lynches asked for permission to swap these lots for Block 7, Lots 3 & 4 so they could be near their son who was buried at Mica Hill this past year. Block 5, Lots 67 & 68 have been returned to inventory and the map has been corrected accordingly.

Motion by Barbara Olsen, seconded by several to accept the secretary's report as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Tom Palmieri, seconded by Barbara Olsen to accept minutes of the March 4, 2009 minutes with the following correction:

Page 1 – Treasurer's Report, third sentence should read, "Income from dividends and interest for the first six months is below what was earned during the same period last year."

The motion passed with Laura Francis in abstention.

Sexton's Report: Sexton's Report for the period ending 5-6-09. There was one burial, three cremations, and five lots sold at Mica Hill Cemetery. Christmas decorations were removed from graves on April 1st, and spring clean ups were performed as needed. All three cemeteries have been mowed.

Motion by Tom Palmieri, seconded by a few, to accept the sexton's report as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Interest and dividends are down but income should still be sufficient to cover expenses. The financial advisers have reported that interest income has leveled off and is no longer decreasing. Lot sales include \$2,000, with another \$2,000 in sales the first week in April which is not reflected in this month's report. Expenses are following the same pattern as in the past; nothing out of the ordinary.

The portfolio is up from the last report which includes money for operating expenses. Stock purchases include Kraft, Kellogg, ConEd and GE. Dick asked if it would be a good idea to invest some money in CD's. Tom responded, not at this time, because return is so low. Greg asked if Zygo shares will be sold. Tom answered not at this time.

Motion by Dolores Caturano, seconded by a few to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

President's Report: No report.

Old Business

1. **Cemetery Sign Project:** Dolores reported the sign project is complete! The big sign looks very nice. She added the sign company did more work than planned, including installing 4x4 posts instead of 3x3 posts, and did not charge any additional fees. Barbara suggested everyone visit the cemetery as it is beautiful this time of year with the trees all in flower. Members gave Dolores a round of applause for all the work she's done on this project.

New Business

1. **Memorial Day:** Barbara asked the secretary to put an ad in the Town Times regarding the removal of all artificial decorations, however, members were mixed on this and discussion ensued about whether all decorations should be removed. Mary stated the regulations refer only to artificial flowers and suggested that perhaps the regulations need to be amended to include other artificial decorations.
2. **Boy Scouts:** Barbara spoke with Lou Hinman and he asked if there is a project the boy scouts can work on. Members suggested cleaning the brush in the cemetery in the back of town hall that has grown back.
3. **Wimler Property:** Ken Jay reported that Ken Wimler called him about debris being dumped into the ravine, i.e., leaves, grass, etc. Ken Wimler asked that the debris be deposited near the shed at Mica Hill Cemetery and he will take it away.
4. **Town Hall Cemetery:** The maple tree on the north side by the stone wall should be taken down. Barbara stated she will talk to Terrence Keenan, Tree Warden. Bob stated Lou Hinman received permission to remove this tree quite a while ago. First Selectman Laura Francis stated she will talk to Terrence about removing this tree. Barbara reported dirt has accumulated in the grass, on the left-hand side as you enter. She asked Ken Jay to take care of this and any other areas with this problem. Peg asked if Ken can fix the big stone that has toppled over. Ken replied he will fix this and other stones in need of repair.
5. **Headstone Sub-committee:** Barbara stated the sub-committee will commence work on their project. She will call Fran Korn for information. Members of the sub-committee include Barbara Olsen, Simone Howe, Greg Burritt, and Bob Atwell. Simone asked for clarification of this sub-committee's charge; to identify

historically significant head stones. Discussion continued regarding responsibility of stone repair/replacement, perpetual care meaning maintenance of the grounds, etc. Mary stated some people paid for perpetual care. Regulation # 10 under MONUMENTS, MARKERS, GROUNDS of the Cemetery Regulations states, "The Durham Cemetery Company will repair, or reset, any monument damaged by reason of its negligence. Repair or damage from any other cause is the responsibility of the lot or monument owner, or family." Laura commented repair or replacement of headstones is of concern. Where does the responsibility of the Durham Cemetery Company end; the Cemetery Company could go broke fixing stones.

Mary added that in years past the sexton took care of resetting stones. Perhaps the stones that are falling over weren't set correctly. Barbara stated issues with headstones are not a problem at Mica Hill because it is a newer cemetery; all the problems are located in the old cemetery behind Town Hall. Gerald added the problem exists in the old cemetery because the headstones were not set in cement. Laura commented that the history of our town needs to be preserved by taking care of historically significant stones. Discussion continued about whether family members should be responsible for stone repair, and that the Cemetery Company has repaired stones in the past regardless of whether or not family members exist. Comment made that family members should be responsible for repairing headstones. Durham Regulations #5 states, ".....The present cost of the Mica Hill Cemetery lots includes perpetual care of the cemetery grounds. Perpetual care funds for other cemeteries cover the care of those grounds."

Ken stated that footing is key to the installation of the headstone as far as firm setting is concerned. Flat markers are a solution and soil make-up as well is key.

6. **James Kwieraga**. Barbara reported on a call she received from Jim Kwieraga. His brother-in-law passed away and Jim wanted to know if the brother-in-law could be buried in the plot he purchased at Mica Hill Cemetery. The Regulations state that burial rights may be sold only to Durham residents, or former residents. Discussion ensued as to whether or not the Cemetery Company has the right to dictate "who" is buried in a plot. As long as a resident, or former resident purchases a plot does it really matter who is buried in the plot? Cemetery Company members agreed to let Mr. Kwieraga's brother-in-law be buried at Mica Hill.
7. **Fees**. Ken stated the need to increase fees for cremation burials because of the recent incident with Art Bielefield's burial. The size, shape and weight of urns varies greatly. Art Bielefield's wooden box was bigger than the cremation hole that was dug. Gerald radded some cemeteries also require cremation containers to be of a sturdy constitution in the event family members want the urn moved at a later date. Tom asked if the rest of the current fee structure is acceptable. Gerald responded other cemeteries charge extra for Saturday burials and the sexton should be compensated for weekend burials and winter burials. Ken added he does charge extra for frost burials. Laura recommended that the fee schedule be reviewed at the next meeting and Barbara suggested some

research be done regarding fees. Gerald offered to do the research. He will bring information regarding fee structure including prices on lot sales.

Discussion continued as to whether there should be two prices for cremation burials; one small, one larger. It was agreed that for consistency, one price should be charged. Ken added it isn't always just of case of the urn size; often times families want to bury other things with the urn, so a bigger, consistent size hole would be able to accommodate changing situations.

Motion by Tom Palmieri, seconded by Simone Howe to increase the cremation burial fee from \$100 to \$175 with \$150 of the fee to be paid to the sexton, effective immediately. Motion passed unanimously.

8. **Trees**. Greg Burritt reported that tree work needs to be done at Mica Hill. He spoke with David Slade and if the Cemetery Company pays him \$1,000, he will match this figure with \$1,000 worth of work. Suggestion made that a written contract be drawn up and the Treasurer can handle the billing. Discussion continued about the various trees, many of them cherry trees, and the need for consistent pruning to keep them healthy, as well as pruning to let the light through to the grass.. Dave has the necessary equipment to reach the top of the trees. Since tree care is expensive, discussion continued as to whether or not trees should continue to be planted. Comment made that the original intent of the Mica Hill Cemetery was for it to be a floral cemetery. Greg reported that he and Dave have already looked at all of the trees and Dave did not indicate there were any major problems. Greg stated he will be present when the pruning is done and he will keep track of the work. Since there were so many questions about tree pruning, i.e. cost per tree, etc., the suggestion was made that Dave come to the September meeting to give a more detailed report of the work that needs to be done at Mica Hill.
9. **Vacancy**. Barbara reported that Hugh's job responsibilities are changing and he will need to resign from the Cemetery Company. The vacancy will need to be filled as well as the officer position of President. A special meeting will be scheduled to fill the vacancy.

Adjourn: Motion by several and seconded to adjourn at 9:02p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kim Garvis
Secretary