

Town of Canandaigua

5440 Routes 5 & 20 West
Canandaigua, NY 14424

ORDINANCE COMMITTEE

Monday, November 1, 2021, at 9:00 AM

Rev. 11/7/2021

MEETING REPORT

MEETING CALLED BY: GARY DAVIS

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: GARY DAVIS CHUCK OYLER TOM SCHWARTZ
JOHN CASEY

SECRETARY: KIMBERLY BURKARD

GUESTS: TERRY FENNELLY LIEF HERRGESSEL

TOWN STAFF: DOUG FINCH SHAWNA BONSHAK

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Mr. Davis opened the meeting at 9:04 am.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Cemetery Committee Document Review

- Mr. Davis opened the discussion on the Cemetery Document review and welcomed the guest Lief HerrGessell, Town Historian.
- Town Cemetery information can be found at:
 - <http://www.townofcanandaigua.org/documents/files/Town%20Cemeteries.pdf>
 - <http://www.townofcanandaigua.org/documents/files/Preston%20Pierce-Remarks%20at%20Woolhouse%20Cem%202019.pdf>
- Town Cemeteries are:
 - Academy Cemetery, East side of Seneca Point Road & South of County Road #16
 - Cooley Cemetery, Northeast side of Cooley Road. Near intersection of Short Road.
 - Lucas Cemetery, East side of Route 21, south of Lucas Road.
 - New Michigan/Tilton Cemetery, East side of New Michigan Road, north of Yerkes Road.
 - Pine Bank Cemetery, South side of Wells-Curtis Road at Cheshire
 - Benham/Red Dock/Wolverton Cemetery, on abandoned road west of County Road 16 just north of Wyffels Road and 1000 ft. west of West Lake Road
 - Root/Remington Cemetery, Corner of Nott and Middle Cheshire Roads
 - Sandhill Cemetery, south side of Emerson at Sandhill Road
 - Hunn Cemetery, Corner of Woolhouse and County Road 32 (aka Bristol Road)
- Presentation by Mr. HerGessell on the Town's cemeteries. Facts shared follow.

- The cemeteries used to be run by an “association.” When that association dissolved for the various cemeteries, the Town assumed responsibility of the cemetery.
- Ray Henry, previous Town Historian, did a lot of work on Hunn Cemetery.
- Parks & Rec have taken care of the mowing.
- All the cemeteries except Academy and Pinebank are closed.
- Jean Chrisman, Town Clerk, manages the on-going interments at Academy.
- Hunn has the largest number of old grave sites.
- They vary in age and number of internments.
- A lot of headstone degradation. Mowing can and does sometime cause damage to the headstones. Stones are fragile. Bluestone headstones date to the 1790’s. There are marble headstones with varying amount of limestone. The ones with higher limestone content “melt.” Acid rain also degraded some headstones.
- Why does it matter? These are the oldest public monuments we have. There is nothing older in Canandaigua. There is a lot of data and information on the stones – historic and genealogical.
- The historic headstones are similar to those found in the Lexington - Boston - Concord area.
- These are valuable to our community and it is more than the Historian can do in maintaining the headstones. The Historian has been doing some cleaning and repair work on the headstones.
- Committee will disperse workload of oversight and management of the Town’s cemeteries.
- Civil War soldiers and other veterans interned.
- Room in any of the cemeteries? Only the Academy. People own plots in Academy—approximately 16 but no new plots sold. Pinebank has an association and is still open. They still have room and the Town is in contract with them but it is still managed by the association. This is the only cemetery in the Town accepting plots.
- The Town has a small budget line for cemetery repair and maintenance of the headstones. Cemeteries are included in the Capital Improvement Plan. Biggest expenditure in the last 5 years was the new fence at Hunn Cemetery. Other requests have been small. Historian is currently identifying things for inclusion in the Capitol Plan and they will have to be budgeted for. 2022 budget - \$21,000. 2021 budget - \$11,000. 2020 budget - \$8,000. 2019 budget - \$12,000. These budgets have a wide range of things they are funding.
- Headstones need annual surveys and repair for they can degrade quickly.
- Why do we need a committee? One person (the Historian) cannot do everything. Annual surveys are needed but shouldn’t be given to an existing staff (overburden). Stewardship should be by volunteers.
- There was a “loose” committee 4-5 years ago of volunteers that lived near cemeteries and wanted to keep an eye on them. They would contact the Town when things went on. People like this could be on the proposed Committee and take a more active role in the care and management of the cemeteries.
- Nothing in Town code about cemeteries currently.
- Some of the proposed code is written like the cemeteries are accepting burials. Why? This is because Academy is still doing burials plus in order to be prepared if the Town has to manage Pinebank some day.
- Peter Ellison does paid headstone restoration work for the Town.
- How many on private property? Only one but there is another (Root/Remington) that is “land-locked” and only accessible via private property.

- Can the History Team take this on? Many of the members are “aging out.” The History are also passionate about telling/educating about history and not necessary specific cemeteries. History Team also has many projects already.
- Grants available? Yes, but you have to identify the problem before looking for a grant.
- Could seasonal people be hired and trained? Yes. Can train volunteers as well. Committee could oversee and mitigate costs.
- Tree Team marked trees earlier this year in the cemeteries that need to come out.
- Two large oaks in Hunn Cemetery that are from maybe 1790’s. Wants to list these historic trees.
- Hunn and Lucas cemeteries—footstones were pulled years ago to enable modern mowing access. Some footstones have been recovered. A lot of headstone degradation and some headstones are missing.
- Any contact from decedents? No, but before Covid there was some people paying for upgrades to headstones. “Find a Grave” is an online database that answer many cemetery questions.
- Hunn Cemetery could be developed as an outdoor museum.
- Are the headstones or the data on them important? Both as the headstones are an art form.
- Town does the digging for burials at Academy.

Upcoming Meetings:

November 17, 2021 @ 9:00 am

Adjournment @ 10:15 am