

# *Town of Canandaigua*

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*Established 1791*

## **CEMETERY COMMITTEE**

Monday, June 6, 2022 at 9:00 AM

### **MEETING REPORT**

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**MEETING CALLED BY:** Karen DeMay, Chairperson, Town Board Member

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Dave York                      Judy York                      Doug Stone  
Mary Schneiter (R)    Ray Henry                      Dennis Brewer

**STAFF MEMBERS:** Kate Silverstrim-Jensen, Staff Liaison

**GUESTS:** Ellen Chirco, Town of Jerusalem Historian  
Richard West, History Team                      Donna West, History Team  
Nancy Goodnow, History Team                      Sharon Hook, Pine Bank Cem.

(R) notates remote participants.

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Ms. DeMay opened the meeting at 9:00AM and led introductions for the committee members and guests. She then invited the Town's History Team members to present on the past and present projects they have worked on regarding Town Cemeteries.

Mr. West passed around a brochure that was made for the ceremony at Hunn Cemetery from several years ago. A map of the headstones in the cemetery was updated for this brochure. Mr. & Mrs. West also distributed a map they have created for Academy Cemetery to better identify headstones. They have used a special technology to identify and map gravesites from above. There was discussion of adding this data to a town website page and connecting it with the website Find a Grave in the future. Also, the possibility of creating QR codes to link to this info. History Team members discussed how landscaping has been a challenge in the cemeteries. In the past, contracted mowers have not treated gravesites with overwhelming care, often chipping into stones with the weed eater, tipping over or damaging flags and other decorations around

headstones, and in some cases even offsetting or tipping over the headstones themselves. Currently, there was a problem with the grass getting too long, so when it was cut, the clippings were wet and stuck to the headstones, which causes both short-term and long-term damage. Many people were aware of a non-toxic cleaning solution that can be used on headstones and Mr. Brewer recalled that the town had purchased some of this several years ago which may still be floating around. Mr. Stone shared that Woodlawn Cemetery uses excel to track gravesites and that it works well because it can be sorted and edited easily. Mr. & Mrs. West shared that they have also worked with the genealogy group at the Ontario County Historical Society to help connect information from our cemeteries with names on Find a Grave. Ms. DeMay thanked the History Team members for sharing, and for all of the hours they have volunteered to complete these projects.

Next the committee reviewed the Town Code, Chapter 45, which detailed the intent and purpose of the Cemetery Committee. There is a clear overlap with the History Team's mission when it comes to increasing public awareness and creating educational programs, which could lead to potential partnerships in the future. There was also discussion of potential ownership issues regarding the cemeteries and cleaning headstones. Ms. Silverstrim-Jensen shared that the cemeteries which have been abandoned and are now the property of the Town of Canandaigua are no longer considered private. It is not up to family members to maintain these gravesites, that is for the town to determine in those locations, and by designation, the Cemetery Committee's responsibility. Mr. Henry shared that in the past he has worked with many different organizations and individuals on projects for the cemeteries, including the Ontario County Historical Society, Eagle Scouts, DAR, and students from FLTCC. Mr. Stone shared that there are programs through Ontario County Sherriff's Office and the Ontario County ARC which could help with clean-up at cemeteries as well.

Discussion then turned to budget, the Cemetery Committee has funds in the 2022 town budget, of which some amounts have been earmarked for certain purposes like the agreement in place with Pine Bank Cemetery Association. Peter Ellison, of Ellison Conservation, submitted a proposal to perform headstone repairs for this season. The proposal was reviewed and approved on motion of

Mr. Brewer, seconded by Mr. Henry. Historically, the Town Historian has identified the scope of work for these repairs, going forward this will be a task of the Cemetery Committee.

In order to get everyone familiar with the cemeteries, the group wants to schedule a tour to see all of the cemeteries. This will be the purpose of the next committee meeting on Tuesday, July 5, 2022, at 9AM. Everyone will meet at Town Hall and carpool to the cemeteries.

Mr. Brewer reminded everyone about the Tree Team's next event on June 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:30PM. They will be walking Tilton, Cooley, and Sandhill cemeteries, as well as the Peanut Line trail, to identify trees in need of maintenance.

Meeting adjourned at 10:35AM

Next Meeting: July 5, 2022, 9AM