Minutes of the TOO Cemetery Committee Tuesday February 21, 2012 at 4:30 in the Firehouse conference room

Present: Martha Hamilton, Beth Howe, Gail Miller and Joan Robinson
Ex Officio: Dick and Dianne Calder, Susan Campbell
Absent: Sylvia Ross

1. Election of Chair, Secretary and Vice-Chair
Beth suggested that we may not need a vice-chair, given how small the Committee is. She said she is willing to be Secretary. She asked who would be willing to be Chair. Silence. Someone asked what the chair does. Beth said the Chair sets the agenda for the meetings and posts it on the Town website and around the island. Beth said she would be willing to do the agenda, and maybe the committee can just manage with a Secretary rather than a Chair. This was agreed to.

2. Discussion of Committee roles and Responsibilities
Beth asked if there is a Cemetery Committee Ordinance that defines these things. Susan said that the Committee is advisory to the Selectmen. Gail said, as a member of the previous round of the Committee, she thought there was something that spelled out what the Committee was supposed to do but she wasn’t sure it was an ordinance. Dianne read out the wording of the article at a Special Town Meeting on December 9, 2007 that accepted the transfer of monies from the Cumberland Cemetery Association. But there was no mention in the article of a Cemetery Committee. Beth said we will have to look further to see if there is any Committee Ordinance. Susan said that Deb had given her a notebook with her materials since before 2007. She had put all the previous minutes on the Town website.

3. Regular Meeting Time
Beth asked whether the third Tuesday of each month at 4:30 would be convenient for people. Dianne asked if the Committee has to meet every month, especially in the summer. Beth said no, but it is useful to have a regular meeting time. The third Tuesday was agreed to.

4. Minutes of the meeting of December 7, 2011.
Beth said she was not sure that they need to be accepted since there was no quorum at the meeting. But someone said that, since they were sent out, the Committee should accept them. Gail moved, seconded by Joan that the minutes be accepted. Approved unanimously.

5. Action on ownership of a Cemetery Lot
The spouse of the owner of a cemetery lot was asking to assume the ownership of the lot. The lot had been bought by the spouse’s father. Susan reported that Eric had asked the Town’s lawyers how this should be handled. The response was that the lot could not be transferred without the permission of all the heirs of the father. This letter was sent, to the person who requested the change along with a letter from the Town indicating that the petitioner would have to do the work to get the permission of the heirs. The petitioner declined to pursue the issue.

6. Proposal by Erin Quigley to create a map and GIS data base for the cemetery
Gail asked what a shapefile is. Beth explained that it is the computer representation of a shape on a map – like a cemetery plot or a road in the cemetery. Dianne asked whether this first round
of work would lead to the need to spend additional money on the project. Do we have to buy expensive software for this? Beth said that we do not have to buy additional software. Erin will create a program that will run on our existing GIS software. that Erin Quigley will only create the map and the framework of the database for us. We will have to enter the data ourselves. She will teach us how to do it.

Dianne asked whether the basic unit of the database will be the cemetery plot or the individual grave space. Beth said she thought the latter. But we can talk with her about providing us with a framework that would go to the next level of individual graves – which may have more than one burial in them. Dianne said that we do not have a complete written record of who is actually buried in the Cemetery. She and Dick have recorded this information but Ethel did not. Susan suggested writing to the owners of record of each plot to ask who is buried there. Gail said that might project an image that we don’t know what we are doing. But further discussion indicated that this is important information and families may be pleased to have the Town inquiring.

Gail moved, seconded by Joan to accept the proposal from Erin Quigley and to send it to the Selectmen for final approval.

7. 2012-13 Cemetery Budget
Beth said that at the workshop on the budget tomorrow, the Selectmen will be discussing the Cemetery budget. It is penciled in as the same $5000 that it has been before. It was clear from the discussion that the Committee has no information on the Cemetery income or expenditures. Susan said she would print out reports from Trio tomorrow for Beth to look at before the meeting. She will also get out the folder with the Cemetery perpetual care fund checkbook. When a grave site is sold the money goes into the Town accounts, but is then transferred to the Perpetual Care fund account. However, Susan said that, as she understands it, the money that comes in for the administrative fee for a burial just goes into the Town general fund and is not set aside for Cemetery expenses.

Dianne said it would be nice if some of the administrative fee could be set aside to build up an account for cleaning/fixing gravestones. Susan said it is possible to create such a reserve account that carries over from one year to the next. North Yarmouth does this. We can explore doing this.

Beth asked what items the Cemetery may have that should go in the Capital Budget. This will not be discussed at tomorrow’s meeting. She thinks the threshold is $5000, and most things are likely to cost less than that. Some building projects like replacing the roof of a building would come in this category. Mowers may. The most recent was bought in 2009. The other one was used in Cumberland for 3 years before it was sent over to Chebeague in 19???. Dick said he thought the useful life of a mower would be about 10 to 15 years if it is maintained. But the older mower is getting toward the end of its useful life. Beth said she would talk with John Wilson about whether these should be included in the capital budget.

For tomorrow’s meeting Beth said she will review expenditures and revenues in recent years, and say that the Committee has begun to work on some specific proposals. For this year the $5000 budget item works for us.
8. **Proposal to Selectmen to be sold or given the land behind the Cemetery.**
Dianne suggested mentioning at the budget meeting that we want to request that the Town either give or sell the Town-owned land behind the Cemetery to the Cemetery. This is part of what was the old dirt pit where the brush dump and the Public Works Garage are. This is not a new issue, they will know about it.

Susan said she had talked with Michael Stultz at Maine Municipal Association about how such a request would work. Both the existing Cemetery and the proposed addition must be surveyed and a title search needs to be done to see if Cumberland conveyed any of the land to abutting property owners, and to make sure the title is clear. We can use CICA’s recent experience with the conveyance of the School House Road land for year-round housing to estimate the cost of this legal work. And we need to make a proposal to Town Meeting for the transfer to occur.

9. **Other business:**
Susan said that the Town is now a member of the Maine State Cemetery Commission. Dianne asked if that means she need not be a member any more. Susan said that we just need one membership to be able to get the materials that they send out. Dianne said she would cease to be a member.

Dianne reported that the Cemetery had purchased a lot from someone who had bought it earlier but no longer came to the island. They were paid the full cost of the lot. But Dianne said that the State Statute specifies that the full amount should not be paid back. Instead the amount placed in perpetual care [or used for perpetual care??] should be taken out, and the rest sent back.

At the next meeting we need to discuss:
- Flags and stands for May
- Signs about Cemetery regulations – there were some but they were taken.
- The amount of the Perpetual Care Funds interest and what proportion of it might be used for Cemetery operations.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Howe