Town of Springfield – Cemetery Commissioners

Minutes – Organizational Meeting

Selectmen's Hall - 96 Main Street - Third Floor

Wednesday, April 26, 2017

Commissioners present: Hugh Putnam, Ron Griffin, Scott Page and Barbara A. Courchesne, Ex-Officio.

Called to order at 5:00 p.m.

Additions to the Agenda: Charlie Blish from Assembly of God was in attendance and the Commissioners agreed to add his request to discuss the removal of pine trees along Oakland Cemetery and Assembly of God border as 7a on the Agenda.

Public Comment: None

Nominations /Vote for Chair and Vice-Chair: Motion made by Ron and seconded by Hugh to nominate Scott Page as Chairman and Gerald Patch as Vice-Chairman. No discussion. All voted in favor.

Adopt Rules of Procedure: Motion made by Hugh and seconded by Ron to adopt Rules of Procedure as presented (see attached). No discussion. All voted in favor.

Setting of 2017 Meeting Schedule: Motion made by Ron and seconded by Hugh to set the 2017 meeting schedule for the first Wednesday of each month starting with June 7, 2017. No discussion. All voted in favor.

Approval of Minutes dated November 2, 2016: Motion made by Chairman Page and seconded by Hugh to approve November 2, 2016 Minutes. No discussion. All in voted in favor.

Oakland/Assembly of God Pine Trees: On behalf of the Springfield Assembly of God, Charlies Blish presented a letter regarding broken pine trees, along their shared boundary with Oakland Cemetery, which were brought down with heavy snow (see attached). Discussion ensued with Mr. Blish regarding the Church's request that the town remove 5 pine trees. All expressed safety concerns and potential liability. Prior to the meeting Chairman Page had visited the site and made a request to Public Works for some barriers/cones marking off the unsafe area be put up, which was done on Friday, April 21st. Chairman Page recalled that previously the removal of trees was too big of a job for Public Works and that Miller Construction had been hired to do the work.

Motion made by Ron and seconded by Chairman Page to advise the Selelctboard in writing of the Commissioners' recommendation to remove the 5 trees and reference the Assembly of God letter dated April 26, 2017. Charlie Blish requested a copy of the Commissioner's letter be sent to the Assembly of God for their records.

Winter/Spring update: There were no winter burials until March 11th. Public Works reported that they have removed asbestos shingles from the tomb and it will be water tight by the end of today and completed within a few days. Public Works has picked up and chipped a great amount of branches from town cemeteries, especially Summer Hill and Oakland. Discussion ensued around posting of rules and regulations at each cemetery. Ron discovered a large hole in Oakland and Chairman Page will check with the Sexton; may need to request police patrol. Water is expected to be turned on mid-May. Ron requested a sign for Pleasant Valley Cemetery. Chairman Page advised against it

reminding the Commission of the neighbor's requests for privacy. Section signs are needed in Summer Hill and Oakland. A simple post with an alpha letter attached would suffice. Chairman Page will look through maps given to him by Carl Swanson to see if there are any he can give to Historical Society to help weekend researchers. Ms. Cooper is wanting to donate money if she can be assured that it will be used only in support of the Gill and Walker Cemetery. Hugh has explained to her that cemetery funds are not separate from the town and at this time any donation is co-mingled with town funds. Hugh reminded the committee of his report in November that his research on the Day and Lockwood Cemetery confirmed its complexity and requires an attorney' opinion as to ownership, its inactive status and why the town maintains a right-of-way. Commissioners authorized Chairman Page to send a letter to Steve Ankuda requesting assistance.

Green Burials: Chairman Page reported on his research regarding green burials. Green burials use materials such as wicker, grass or pine with no nails; no vaults. Perpetual care for green burials is expensive and labor intensive with of sunken graves, difficulty mowing, etc. Out of state green burials are $2,500 to $3,500 and come with GPS coordinates unlike a traditional cemetery. State of Vermont doesn't regulate vaults, however, Springfield ordinance does. A compromise would be to invert a vault to create a "dome" over the burial. State legislature has not yet addressed green burials, even still Springfield's cemeteries do not meet the requirements of either a hybrid or a green cemetery nor does the town have the finances or manpower to create and maintain one.

Hugh suggested that anther land site, other than at Assembly of God, be considered for cemetery expansion. The Assembly of God land would be costly to prepare for burials. Relocating the dirt pile in Oakland and surveying out that area was discussed.

Adjourn: Motion made and seconded to adjourn at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara A. Courchesne

Barbara A. Courchesne
Cemetery Commissioner, Ex-Officio

SPRINGFIELD VERMONT CEMETERY COMMISSION

2017 RULES OF PROCEDURE

A. **PURPOSE.** The Cemetery Commission of the Town of Springfield is required by law to conduct its meetings in accordance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law. 1 V.S.A. §§ 310-314. Meetings of the Cemetery Commission of the Town of Springfield must be open to the public at all times, except as provided in 1 V.S.A. § 313. At such meetings, the public must be afforded reasonable opportunity to give its opinion on matters considered by the Cemetery Commission so long as order is maintained. Such public comment is subject to the reasonable rules established by the chair of the Cemetery Commission. 1 V.S.A.§ 312(h)

B. **APPLICATION.** This policy setting forth rules of procedure for Cemetery Commission meetings shall apply to all regular, special and emergency meetings of the Town of Springfield Cemetery Commission.

C. **PROCEDURES.**

1. Each year following Town Meeting an organizational meeting shall be called by the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk is an ex-officio commissioner and has a non-voting capacity. At the organizational meeting the Town Clerk will accept nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair for which a vote will be held to elect those offices. Once a chair has been elected, that person will resume control of the meeting.

2. At the organizational meeting, Rules of Procedure will be adopted each year and a meeting schedule established. Meetings shall be noticed at least 5 days in advance and posted in at least the three Town of Springfield (as of July 1, 2014 by a Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen) designated "posting locations" at Town Hall, Town Library and North Springfield Post Office as well as the Town Website. The agenda shall be prepared by the chair and the town clerk and posted along with the meeting notice.

3. The chair of the Cemetery Commission, or in the chair's absence, the vice-chair, shall chair all meetings. The Town Clerk will take the minutes and may nominate someone in her absence to take the minutes.

4. The chair shall rule on all questions or order or procedure and shall enforce these rules as required by 1 V.S.A. §312(h).

5. A majority of the members of the Cemetery Commission shall constitute a quorum. If a quorum of the members of the Cemetery Commission is not present at a meeting, the only action that may be considered by the Cemetery Commission is a motion to recess or adjourn the meeting.

6. At the beginning of each cemetery meeting, there shall be 15 minutes afforded for open public comment. By a majority vote, the Cemetery Commission may increase the time for open public comment and may adjust the agenda items accordingly.

7. Public comment on issues discussed by the Cemetery Commission, if not offered during the open public comment period, may be offered during the meeting with the permission of the chair. Such comment, if permitted, shall be limited to 15 minutes, unless by majority vote, the Cemetery Commission, increases the time for public comment.

8. Each Cemetery Commission meeting shall have an agenda, with time allotted for each item of business to be considered by the Cemetery Commission. Those who wish to be added to the meeting agenda shall contact the chair and/or town clerk to request inclusion on the agenda. The Cemetery Commission chair shall determine the final content of the agenda.

9. All business shall be conducted in the same order as it appears on the agenda, except that by majority vote of the Cemetery Commission, the order of items to be considered and/or the time allotted may be modified.

10. Motions made by board members require a second, discussion and vote.

11. There is no limit to the number of times a Cemetery Commissioner can speak to a question. A member may speak or make a motion without being recognized by the chair. Motions to close or limit debate will not be entertained.

12. Any cemetery commissioner may request a roll call vote.

13. Meetings may be recessed to a time and place certain.

14. These rules shall be made available at all meetings, and procedures for public comment shall be reviewed at the beginning of all meetings.

15. These rules may be amended by a majority vote of the Cemetery Commission, and must be readopted annually at the organizational meeting.

ADOPTED:		04-26-2017
		4-26-2017
		4-26-2017
	Signatures	Date

SPRINGFIELD ASSEMBLY OF GOD

April 26, 2017

Dear Cemetery Commission Board Members:

On April 1, 2017 we had a snow storm that had a lot of wet and heavy snow. The pine trees that are on your property line had some branches that broke and fell on our property. I had two volunteers cleaning the church and they had just went to the garbage dumpster with some trash. About 5 minutes after they walked to the dumpster a large branch broke and fell right where they walked by. Fortunately nobody got **hurt** or **killed**. There were many branches that fell that day. There are still broken branches hanging in the trees that can fall at anytime. We are writing this letter because of liability concerns. I am asking that you finish cutting the trees that were agreed to be cut down on January 2001. Back then someone's car got damaged. Our storage shed got damaged once in 2006. Both of these accounts are recorded in our board meeting minutes. Some of the trees were cut down at that time but for some reason the town decided to stop cutting the trees that were agreed upon to cut back then. There are five trees that we desire to see cut down. I notified the Town Manger of our concern and he directed us to this committee. I am hoping that you recommend to the Selectman to finish the job they committed to cutting down in 2001. I hope we can get a positive outcome with this request. I intend on sending a certified letter to the select board as well. I am putting this in writing requesting you put this in the minutes of your meeting and keep this letter for your records.

Sincerely,

Rev Marc A Aubé 4/26/17

Rev. Marc Aube
Senior Pastor

Head Deacon of the Church Board

Charles Bloch

269 RIVER STREET • SPRINGFIELD, VT • 05156
PHONE: 802-885-4261 • FAX: 802-885-4742