

PRINCE GEORGE'S CHAPEL CEMETERY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MAY 1, 2010

The Prince George's Chapel Cemetery Committee met at the Dagsboro Town Hall on Saturday, May 1, 2010. The meeting was convened at 2:03 p.m. by President Gayle Chandler. Attending were members: Patti Adams, Gayle Chandler, Jo Montague, Sandie Gerken, and Linda Ward.

Agenda: A motion was made by Sandie Gerken, seconded by Linda Ward to approve the agenda as presented. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Minutes: After review of the minutes of November 21, 2009, a motion was made by Patti Adams and seconded by Jo Montague to approve the minutes. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Treasurer's Report: Patti Adams, representing the Town Council reported on the current Assets of the committee. Total current assets \$121,626.77 with no known outstanding debt. Jo moved to approve the report seconded by Linda Ward. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Correspondence: Gayle Chandler reported on four recent correspondences. First, Melody was contacted by Mike DiPaolo of the Lewes Historical Society, who met with Rae, Patti, and Melody about one year ago. Regarding Preservation Delaware, he mentioned an employee who was interested in finding out more about the cemetery. Melody forwarded him the link to the Dagsboro Website where her paper and bibliography are posted. Secondly, Melody was contacted by Bobby Wingate of Wilmington, DE by email regarding possible Wingate burials in Prince George's Cemetery. Upon determining that there were no Wingates buried at PGC, Melody emailed him with this answer. Third item was a letter received by the town from Kim Frye, of the Friends of PGC. Her husband, Chris had surveyed the chapel and grounds following the winter storms, noting that there were numerous branches down and tree limb damage. The email was also forwarded to Lynn Riley and Cherie Dodge-Byron of the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. Mayor Adams responded by having the prisoners do some debris cleanup on the grounds. Some large branches were piled to be hauled away later. The town cannot do anything regarding trimming the trees, etc. without the consent of Diane Crom, state arborist. Lastly, as proposed in Nov. 2009 meeting, the letters to the funeral homes regarding the dirt pile were sent out. The surplus dirt from digging and covering a grave must be removed from the cemetery property as there is no place to store excess dirt. Melson Funeral Services were the only ones who had a concern as they like to do repair work to recent sunken gravesites and the dirt on hand was convenient. There has been no dirt left behind since the notification. It has been a concern that there are grave sites and stones beneath the ground in the area where the funeral homes had been piling excess dirt.

OLD BUSINESS:

Publicity: Gayle reported that she has contacted the following regarding publicity for the cemetery committee proceedings and news: Coastal Point newspaper, the town newsletter and website, WMDT-TV online, emails, Bethel Church bulletin, notices in the Dagsboro Post Office. She would like to have contacts to email other local churches and other interested parties. As of this date, no phone tree has been established. There was discussion about whether the town has any list of living kin or those who have plots at PGC so we could contact them for possible interest in our committee. Patti advised she would call Susan Collins as a possible contact for the Church of God newsletter and as an interested plot owner at the cemetery.

Town Website: Gayle Chandler has contacted Alice Guerrant of DE Division of Historical/Cultural Affairs re: the lack of bibliography for Melody's cemetery research paper on the town website. An error had posted the paper's content under both headings and the bibliography missing. Gayle sent Ms Guerrant the bibliography and had the website corrected.

Maintenance: Gayle reported that grasscutting began at the cemetery in April by the prisoners. We agreed that they were doing a great job. Gayle and Patti inspected the cemetery grounds and noted that they found 2 missing fence rails in the back of the property. Patti has noted to replace rails. Also, she reported another missing rail where there is a small tree growing. She will check with Diane Crom of the state to see if the tree can be cut down and a rail put up.

Signage: Gayle noted that there are NO parking signs on Chapel Lane, nor Ward Lane. While they noted that there is no room to park on the cemetery side of Ward Lane without parking partially in the road, they felt that the present practice of parking on the cemetery side of Chapel Lane was okay. After much discussion, the consensus was that there should be no parking on the east side of Chapel Lane (residential side). The discussion centered around recommendations to town council regarding a parking sign, possibly 2 signs, stating "Parking this side of Street only. Sandie brought up the problem that the Friends face for their functions, particularly the Ice Cream Fest and Olde Christmas regarding limited parking. If there is to be no parking on the grounds nor on Ward Lane, then parking is a real problem for events at the chapel. Gayle stated that the fire company has an issue with parking on both sides of the street since the road needs to be passable at all times in case of fire emergency. Linda mentioned sufficient space for parking about 3 cars at the dead end of Chapel Lane. Further discussion centered on the fact that Diane Crom of the state has stated that the state prefers that no vehicle traffic at all enter the chapel grounds. Sandie remarked that the Friends do have guidelines for weddings that address parking and require the lessees for weddings provide at least 2 parking attendants to direct parking. If not able to provide, an additional charge is made to accommodate paying a town policeman for parking. We discussed a need for a sign for the "Ward"/Town lot to indicate overflow parking for chapel events.

Patti mentioned that more signs may be necessary for handicapped parking slots. She stated that the state had documented during their study prior to the installation of the water lines that there are no graves on the east end of the chapel, so handicapped slots inside the chapel grounds could be possible in this area. The state officials would need to be consulted on this matter.

Sandie brought up the question of allowing the bride's car to enter from Ward Lane driveway, deliver her to the front of the chapel prior to the ceremony and wait there for the bridal couple leaving either by front gates or exit again to Ward Lane. In addition, Sandie requested that we discuss also the dropping off of handicapped /elderly persons at the front door, then parking car elsewhere. Should this practice be allowed, cars would only drive onto existing driveway areas used by funeral processions. Previously, the bride's car has parked next to the west end door... Jo mentioned that Cherie Dodge-Byron of the state would be coming to meet with the Friends on May 26 at 3:15 p.m. to discuss handicap access, condition of chapel steps, among other issues. Gayle thought it might be a good idea to have one of our committee members attend as well.

Motions made on signage were:

1. Sandie Gerken moved that we recommend that handicap parking be made with signage within the chapel grounds at east end of chapel with number of slots to be determined after consulting

with the state about feasibility and who would provide signage. Linda Ward seconded the motion and all present voted in favor. The motion passed.

2. Sandie moved that we recommend one or two signs be put along the chapel side of Chapel Lane indicating “Parking this side only” Jo seconded the motion. The vote in favor was unanimous and the motion passed.
3. Jo moved to recommend that a sign be placed on the “Ward”/Town Lot to indicate overflow parking for PGC. Linda Ward seconded. With all in favor, the motion passed.

It was agreed that we would wait until these recommendations were implemented to see if we need to recommend NO Parking signs for Ward Lane.

Trees:

Gayle brought up that the state Horticulture Expert, Diane Crom needs to be contacted re: tree damage during the winter months. All the trees need to be re-evaluated so that the bidding process can begin on the trimming and maintenance of trees. Patti Adams reported that the town did not get any funding from the Delaware Preservation Tree Grants.

Parking:

This issue was discussed at length under Signage issues. Another issue would be the buses that bring people for Hymn Sing in summer. It was suggested that it could be written into Friends guidelines that buses drop off people at Chapel Lane entrance. then park in overflow lot.

NEW BUSINESS:

Gates: Linda Ward suggested that we consider recommending a gate be erected on Chapel Lane entrance/exit onto chapel grounds. She and Calvin have observed people using the cemetery property as a cut-off or short-cut from Ward Lane to Chapel Lane. She feels there is one person who is doing this regularly. Such gate could be opened for chapel functions. As an aside, to address the parking issue, Linda also suggested extending the fencing into the chapel grounds on north (left) side of the chapel “driveway” to discourage parking where we feel there are unmarked graves and that signs could be put along this fencing. Sandie mentioned that the state would have to be consulted for permission to put additional fencing within chapel grounds. Gayle restated that the state of DE would prefer NO Parking within grounds altogether. Patti Adams felt that a gate on both Chapel Lane side and Ward Lane side would be a solution to all problems. Smaller walk-in openings could be put alongside gates for pedestrian access. Gates could be opened for functions, for maintenance, but would block access for all other traffic. It was agreed that such gates would need to be of wood and matching in design with post and rail fencing as possible. .

In addressing the impact of gates on the Friends, Sandie pointed out that gates could well be closed to public during Ice Cream Fest, but workers/volunteers would need to park close as well as be able to bring in freezers, equipment, ice cream dropoffs. Patti suggested the Friends workers could possible park only in the designated driveway or lane. Jo further stated that service vehicles could be allowed within gates, opened by a Friends rep. Only security alarm firm has its own key to the building, so a rep. from Friends would be there to admit the service personnel. It was agreed that these types of vehicles be allowed to “pull in, but not pull up”.

Jo Montague moved that we recommend putting up two gates—one at Ward Lane and one at Chapel Lane to block off chapel property from thru traffic. Linda Ward seconded. With all in favor, the motion passed.

Rules and Regulations:

Gayle read into the minutes the new regulation that has already be approved by town council, namely that cremated remains be placed in a marble urn and then buried in cemetery, but all other container types would need to be placed in a vault before burial. She also mentioned that the burial permit fees had already been passed by council.

Gayle mentioned that the tree planted on the Leffler plot is against regulations. Rae now has to contact living relatives to have tree removed. Also, Christmas decorations are still on some graves. We have recommended that these seasonal decorations be removed at an appropriate time, but were not sure that council had adopted this as a regulation. Sandie asked if the town had authority to remove these outdated decorations, should the living relatives not be able to be reached. Other cemeteries have strict rules regarding this. This point was followed by long discussion on recommendations made at May 2008 meeting and whether these had been formally adopted. Leaving this issue to be determined, the motions regarding the Rules and Regulations passed at this meeting were:

1. Sandie Gerken moved that after attempting to contact living relative regarding removal of outdated seasonal decorations in a timely manner, the town would then dispose of such decorations. Jo Montague seconded and the motions passed with all in favor.
2. Sandie moved that we place into the Rules/Regs the adopted provision that cremated remains should be buried within a marble urn or within other type of container within a vault. Linda seconded and the motion passed with all in favor.

In order to try to clarify what should be in the Rules/Regs., it was suggested that the final approved document be placed on the Dagsboro website.

Monuments:

Gayle brought up the fact that there are monuments in disrepair or fallen over in the old part of the cemetery as well as part of concrete curbing around the old Steen plot in the rear. In addition, there is a sunken footing for Cannon monument in the front part of the cemetery. We discussed who was responsible for fixing these problems. The issue was tabled pending consultation with the state officials.

With no further business for the good of the order, Jo Montague moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Linda Ward. The motion passed with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned by President Gayle Chandler at 3:55 pm. The next meeting date for November to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,

Cassandra H. Gerken
Recording Secretary