

PRINCE GEORGE'S CHAPEL CEMETERY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 21, 2009

The Prince George's Chapel Cemetery Committee met at the Dagsboro Town Hall on Saturday, November 21, 2009, at 2:05 p.m. Attending the meeting were: Patti Adams, Gayle Chandler, Linda Ward, Margaret Morris, Meri Jo Montague, Jane McComrick, and Connie Moore. President Gayle Chandler convened and presided over the meeting.

Agenda: A motion was made by Patti and seconded by Margaret to approve the November 21, 2009 agenda. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Minutes: A motion was made by Patti and seconded by Meri Jo to approve the minutes of May 2, 2009. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Treasurer's Report: Patti reported that the Cemetery funds were in good shape with a bank balance of \$120,778.88.

Correspondence: The Town received a grant application letter from the Delaware Preservation Fund for grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$4,000; the application is due by December 18, 2009. The Town and Committee members have been in contact with Diane Crom, Horticulture Manager with the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, in regard to the removal, pruning, and spraying of the Cemetery's trees as well as with Alice Guerrant, Research Center Manager at the Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, in regard to a ground penetration radar survey to locate the Cemetery's unmarked graves.

Old Business:

Publicity and Town Website: Notice of this meeting was placed in a local newspaper, the Town's website and newsletter, Bethel United Methodist Church's newsletter and Sunday bulletin as well as WMDT TV. A 'phone tree' would be ideal so that members could spread the word through phone calls, letters, or emails. An error was found on the Town's website by Alice Guerrant who wanted Melody Chandler's research paper and bibliography. The paper was entered twice but no bibliography given. Gayle will provide the bibliography to Stacey and Alice Guerrant.

Maintenance: Several fence railings are down and need to be replaced. The State Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs inspected the trees; Diane Crom, Horticulture Manager, said the State had no money to help. She is soliciting bids from firms with a certified arborist; companies that have responded are Cut'Em Up Tree Care of Delaware and F. A. Bartlett Tree Expert Company. Local tree removal businesses or individuals, however, may cut down some trees. Other companies to possibly contact are Clark Tree Expert Company and Sussex Tree. Sussex Correctional Institution cuts the grass ten times a year, and there were no complaints about their work.

Signage: The Town installed a new sign inside the Cemetery entrance facing Ward Lane. It reminds visitors that Ward Lane is one-way.

Burial and Permit Fees: Patti explained that Parsell Funeral Homes and Crematorium called asking for the Cemetery's procedures on the burial of urns. There is nothing in our Cemetery rules. Stacey called the State's Board of Funeral Practitioners for advice; they did not even

know what an urn was. It was decided upon the advice of Parsell's that burials should only be done using marble urns or having urns placed within a vault. A motion was made by Meri Jo and seconded by Linda that human ashes should be buried within a marble urn or within an urn placed inside a vault; the vote in favor was unanimous. A motion was made by Linda and seconded by Meri Jo that burial fees should be \$250.00; the vote in favor was unanimous. Gayle reported on her conversation with Watson Funeral Home. This funeral home only has one or two funerals per year in Prince George's. Watson's subcontracts with a grave digging company that digs the grave, fills it in, puts the dirt in a pile somewhere within the Cemetery, and then leaves. They thought that a caretaker was responsible for the leftover dirt since they do not come back to place extra dirt on the graves. This information is contrary to what Doug Melson of Melson Funeral Services said of his grave diggers. Mr. Melson stated that his grave diggers come back later to check on the graves and to place extra dirt on them if needed; they use dirt from the piles within the Cemetery. The concern of the Committee is that dirt is being piled onto possibly unmarked graves. A motion was made by Patti and seconded by Linda that the Town should write a letter to the local funeral homes saying that no dirt can be dumped inside the Cemetery; the vote in favor was unanimous.

New Business: Alice Guerrant of the State Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs said that the State has no money to pay for a ground penetration radar survey for Prince George's. The State believes that the University of Delaware has the equipment and may do the survey. If not, the firm of John Milner Associates of West Chester, PA could do it. The State would provide an archaeologist, maybe Chuck Fithian, to verify if there were any unmarked graves. When the water and sewer lines to the Chapel were installed, the State checked to see if there were graves; there were none. Gayle received a copy of the Chapel's and Cemetery's lease agreement with the State from Mayor Baker. Parking is still a problem around the Chapel and Cemetery. When there are weddings or religious functions, people park too close to the graves. The State does not want any parking within the fenced-off area; this makes it hard for the handicapped, funeral processions, and members of wedding parties to enter the area. The 'Ward' lot, owned by the Town, could be used for parking if signage was provided. The Friends of Prince George's Chapel will help police the parking at their functions.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Margaret and seconded by Patti to adjourn the meeting; the vote in favor was unanimous. The meeting ended at 3:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Gayle Chandler
Acting Secretary