

Brattleboro Cemetery Committee  
June 30, 2015  
Morningside Cemetery/Town Clerk's Office

A meeting of the Brattleboro Cemetery Committee was convened at 5:15 PM by Chair Marshall Wheelock near the flagpole and mausoleum in Morningside Cemetery. Members present were: Debra Collins, Edna Fletcher, Jane Fletcher, Jackie Stromberg, Marshall Wheelock, Chris Zappala and Annette Cappy. Absent with regrets: Judith Price.

Jane Fletcher moved to approve the minutes of the June 21, 2012 meeting. (There were no meetings in 2013-14.) The motion was seconded by Debra Collins and the minutes were approved as presented.

The state of disrepair of the mausoleum at Morningside Cemetery, especially the condition of the roof, was discussed by the committee and it was decided that the issue should again be brought to the attention of the Selectboard. Some of the committee members have not seen the inside of the structure. For our next meeting, the key to the mausoleum will be obtained from the Department of Recreation and Parks and members will gather to inspect the interior.

It was noted that there were limbs and a downed tree across a cemetery road which prohibited vehicles to drive through. It was also noted that the wooded area toward the back section of the cemetery adjacent to the Vermont Bread Company had been opened up, allowing unauthorized vehicles to enter the cemetery grounds by means other than the official entrance. It was suggested that large boulders could be placed in such a manner as to prevent vehicles from accessing the cemetery from the Vermont Bread Co. property entrance. Also, the gate and fence between the cemetery and condominium complex was in disrepair.

Jackie Stromberg requested that a copy of the maintenance contract for the mowing of the cemeteries be provided to the committee. The clerk stated that she would obtain a copy and email it to the members.

While at the cemetery, the committee reviewed an area for the creation of a new section within the cemetery specifically for the burial of cremains. The committee unanimously voted the following:

- The area would be established around the flagpole in front of the mausoleum
- It would be designated for cremations only

- Plot size would be one-half the size of a burial plot, measuring 40 inches wide and 5 feet long. Each would sell for \$250.00 each
- No more than three cremains burials would be allowed in each plot  
Stone markers will be flush to the ground and be no wider or longer than 30 inches
- A bed of flowers will surround the flagpole
- No plantings or decorations of any type will be allowed in this section with the exception of the garden surrounding the pole.
- Plots will be numbered and sold in numerical order only
- The name of the newly established cremains burial section will be Walsh Section. Michael Walsh was a prominent business person in Brattleboro who passed away on March 25 of this year. He owned and operated Abbiati Monument Co. for many years and was a member of this committee at the time of his passing. In 2010 Mr. Walsh donated the funds for the purchase and oversaw the installation of the flagpole in the cemetery. The committee felt it fitting that the new section be named for Mr. Walsh.

Any artistic members of the committee were charged with sketching a design of the new section and bringing their designs to the next meeting for discussion.

At 6:00 pm the meeting recessed and reconvened in the town clerk's office at 6:15pm.

It was suggested that perhaps a \$100 opening fee be charged each time there is a burial since in most instances, an agent of the town is required to go to the cemetery and mark off the plot to be opened. The meeting will research other municipalities' procedures to determine if an opening fee is customary and will discuss it further at the next meeting.

Jackie Stromberg expressed concern that when a body is buried, those in attendance at the graveside service, including the funeral directors leave the site unattended prior to the closing of the grave. It was noted that the person responsible for closing the gravesite following the departure of the family is generally present in the background waiting to complete his job. However, he is not necessarily an employee of the funeral home. She suggested that a letter be sent to area funeral homes stating objections to this practice. There was no vote on this issue.

The committee then unanimously voted to amend its guidelines by adding the following:

- The office of the town clerk shall be notified in writing and a permit shall be issued by the clerk's office prior to the removal and relocating of buried cremains.

- The placement of all headstones will conform to the direction of those already in place in a given row. When beginning a new row of burials, all headstones will be placed on the west end and face east.

Members also discussed the creation of a section to be used for natural burials. Burials in this designated area would not require a vault. Only embalming fluids that are non-toxic would be allowed and only non-toxic, non-hazardous, plant-derived burial containers or shrouds, if any, would be allowed. Requirements would be in line with those mandated for natural burials as described in 18 V.S.A. §5302. The committee will meet in Morningside Cemetery for the next meeting to further explore this option.

The issue of indigent burials was briefly discussed and will be further discussed at the next meeting when more information from other Vermont municipalities has been obtained.

The committee was reminded that actions of the committee are not final until approved by the selectboard.

At 7:34 PM, with no other business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned until the next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, July 21 at 5:15 p.m. in Morningside Cemetery.