

Whately Cemetery Commission
Meeting Minutes
7/21/21

Present: Neal Abraham, Darcy Tozier

Public Comments: None

Center Cemetery shed:

The center cemetery shed was discovered to have a sizable hole at the back ridgeline and a fallen tree branch leaning on the north side of the roof. Keith Bardwell has been informed and is in communications with a contractor to repair this roof and remove the fallen tree branch.

Yellow Barn: A number of shingles have blown off the yellow barn. Keith Bardwell has been informed and he is working with a contractor to replace the missing shingles.

North Entry of Center Cemetery:

An old deed has been uncovered transferring a parcel of land to the town for the creation of the north entry road to the Center Cemetery. This deed stipulates that the fencing running along that border must be maintained by the town/Cemetery Commission. Kieth Bardwell and Neal Abraham have surveyed the present condition and identified trees that need removal and portions of fencing in need of repair/replacing. This will take place after the pumphouse project is completed. The Cemetery Commissioners will write to the Select Board for their approval of the Highway Department providing assistance for the removal of those trees and the replacing of missing fencing.

Headstone Guidelines:

A request has been received for the creation of guidelines around size and placement of headstones within family plots. There are no guidelines at the moment. The Commissioners agreed to update the current cemetery guidelines to include a maximum headstone size of 30" wide x 24" high for individual plots and 48" wide x 24" high for group plots.

Request for benches:

In keeping with Whately's aim to be a more age friendly community, a request has been raised for strategically placed benches within our cemeteries. We will explore quotes and grants for potentially up to 6 benches to be dispersed among the three cemeteries.

Highway Department Assistance:

The Cemetery Commission is seeking the assistance of the Whately Highway Department to remove some trees and restore some roads in both West and Center Cemeteries. Darcy will send an email to the Select Board seeking authorization for this work.

Fee Schedule:

A review of the Cemetery fees has raised awareness that an update has not occurred in over 20 years. The Commissioners will research the rates of plot sales and burials from neighboring commissions and reevaluate the Whately Cemetery fees based on our findings.

Updates to Cemetery guidelines:

- Add signs to deter trash dumping over the embankments of the Center and West Cemeteries.
- The Cemetery Commission will trim plants within the cemeteries as needed to maintain ease of cemetery upkeep.
- The Cemetery Commission is not responsible for any damage to miscellaneous plantings or installed objects from maintenance and/or excavation equipment.

Records and Maps:

An update is critically needed for the preservation of the cemetery records and maps. The Commissioners will research grant opportunities for digitizing the current records and acquiring a software program that allows digital record keeping and mapping of future burials and plot sales. In the meantime, we will look into updating our current paper maps which are deteriorating.

East Cemetery:

Research continues for expansion and fence repair of East Cemetery. MDAR is currently saying no to acquiring a tenth of an acre from the adjacent farm which is in APR without another tenth of an acre or more replacing under APR. Neal is in communication with the current owner of the neighboring property. The fence repair is on hold until the expansion project has been fully explored but research is under way for replacing the current chain link fence with something more historically appropriate.

Headstone Repair:

RFP's are being sent out soon to continue the CPA-funded repair of the remaining damaged headstones in East and West Cemeteries.

Next Meeting: TBD