

Town of Wheelock, Cemetery Task Force

Meeting Minutes

July 13, 2021 04:00 PM

Wheelock Village Cemetery
Rte 122, opposite Town Hall

Present: Steve Amos, Liz Muckerman, Norma Twombly, Patti Baker. Ann Lawless (Selectboard)

No notes or minutes of prior meetings were adopted.

The group used the checklist to assess this cemetery's needs. Liz will follow up and provide details.

No location for the next meeting was set. Date to be July 27, 4pm.

notes by Ann Lawless

CEMETERY TASK FORCE

2021-07-13 MEETING NOTES, Wheelock Village Cemetery

2021-07-15, NOTES, Training with Joan Alexander, VT Old Cemetery Association

Notes by Liz Muckerman

Wheelock Village Cemetery

Hi friends,

I'm not sure whether to call these minutes since this was more informal and we didn't do any approving or seconding, although we did have a quorum, I believe.

We continued to do walking tours of the cemeteries with our 4th visit being to the Wheelock Village Cemetery. Below are notes about its condition. Present were Stephen Amos and Liz Muckerman of the cemetery committee, Ann Lawless of the Selectboard, local South Wheelock cemetery expert and historian Patti Baker and South Wheelock and Wheelock Village family member and local expert Norma Twombly.

From the checklist of the condition of the Wheelock Village Cemetery:

Not active for additional burials.

Measurements to be done later.

Fencing has white wood in front but no gate. The fencing was replaced within the past year by the town. There is chain link fencing on the sides but it is too close to some of the stones at the north end. We are not sure of the boundary with the adjoining property but it looks like it was further back, given the placement and orientation of the Heath family gravestones. The back of the cemetery does not have a fence and has many large bushes.

There is a sign with the name of the cemetery.

The grounds are mowed, however there is some vegetation encroaching on some of the flat stones.

There are many headstones which are leaning, some broken. There is also some damage to the stones. Flags for memorial day did not appear to have been placed this year.

At some time, brass plaques were attached to stones of veterans of the Revolutionary War and War of 1812. Although these provide information, they are placed such that they cover up information as well as artistic detail on the headstones.

There do not appear to be significant security issues, however, the possible of a solar game camera was discussed briefly.

Cleaning Training with Joan Alexander, VT Old Cemetery Association

In addition, Joan Alexander of West Wheelock joined Norma, Patty and Liz at the South Wheelock Cemetery on Thursday, July 15 for an instruction and cleaning session on the family stones that Norma received selectboard approval to clean.

We first walked around to identify stones from Norma's family. Joan identified different types of stones used, including marble, granite and slate.

Then Joan reviewed the techniques that she has used. She first gently cleans surface dirt with a straw hand broom. Patti demonstrated tapping the stone to make sure it is solid and not likely to fall apart during the cleaning. A plastic scraper or wooden pain stirrer is used for this tapping (not scraping). She also mentioned the importance of making sure that the stone is not in danger of falling over as this can cause additional damage as well as injuries.

The stone is then wet with water and surface dirt is removed with plastic brushes including toothbrushes. A hand sprayer, pouring water or a gentle non-commercial power sprayer can be used (pressure less than 500 psi). This revealed inscriptions which were not previously visible and also reduces further damage to the stones.

As recommended in the Best Practice Recommendations for Cleaning Government Issued Headstones of marble (<https://www.ncptt.nps.gov/blog/best-practice-recommendations-for-cleaning-government-issued-marble-headstones/>), <file:///C:/Users/alawl/Downloads/Best-Practices-Final.pdf> from the Vermont Old Cemetery Association (<https://voca58.org/index.html>), the biologic solution D/2 was applied, left for 15 minutes, then gently scrubbed and rinsed.

[Added after these notes: D/2 is widely available. One site that also sells brushes, plastic scrapers, is <https://atlaspreservation.com/collections/d-2-biological-solution>]

We cleaned several stones and saw a very nice improvement in their appearance as well as much more information able to be learned from their inscriptions. Norma will return to continue cleaning the family stones for which she has received permission.

We thanked Joan for visiting to teach and work with us.

Next meeting

Our next meeting is planned for July 27th (to continue on a 2 week schedule, if possible), however we have not decided on a location or topic. We have more summer visits scheduled and then will make a list of winter topics to plan to address.

Also, here is the State of Vermont's most recent (2017) publication on rules and laws that apply to town cemeteries.

<https://sos.vermont.gov/media/0q5flghk/digging-deep-2017.pdf>

We can use this to guide our future agendas.

Thank you for joining us and contributing your ideas and efforts. Please let me know if I have any of this recorded incorrectly.

Liz