

Vermont Cemetery Association
Wednesday, October 14, 2015
Green Mountain Cemetery, Montpelier, Vt.

Annual Meeting Minutes

- I. Meeting called to order by Patrick Healy, President, at 9:35 am. – Welcome and description of the beautiful chapel housing the meeting. Introductions were made around the room – 35 attendees from around the state.
- II. Treasurer’s Report by Stuart Alexander, Treasurer – See attached report for the fiscal year ending 9/30/15. Motion made by Dolly F. H. Stevens to accept the report as presented. Seconded by Jerry Griffin (Stowe). Passed.
- III. Election of Officers: The following slate of officers was presented –
 - a. President – Patrick Healy (Green Mountain Cemetery)
 - b. Vice President – Burton Lindholm
 - c. Treasurer – Stuart Alexander
 - d. Secretary – Jane Paine (Morristown Cemetery Association)Motion made by Arthur Goodrich to elect the slate as presented. Seconded by Jerry Griffin (Stowe). Passed.
 - e. Volunteers were solicited as additional Board members – Gloria Rapalee (Duxbury) accepted the role of director.
 - f. Patrick commented on the purpose of the VCA bi-annual meetings. He needs input from membership as to what educational topics they would find helpful. All members are in different stages of learning about cemetery operations. The input will help him plan the meeting speakers and agendas. The goal is to move the meeting location around the state, preferably close to a cemetery for tours.
- IV. First Presenter – Jess Robinson, State Archeologist
 - a. His duties include:
 - i. discovering and caring for historic cemeteries and unmarked burials across the state;
 - ii. monitoring legislation that impacts burial grounds;
 - iii. excavating, removing and preserving remains found in unmarked burial grounds.
 - iv. Assisting associations, towns or anyone uncovering a site, abide by the State Statutes and remove remains legally and respectfully.
 - b. Two Examples of the Excavation/Restoration process of Historical Unmarked Cemeteries were detailed:
 - i. Mount Pleasant Cemetery in St. Johnsbury
 1. In 1850, town cemetery was moved to make room for the new Court House.
 2. In 2000, court house restoration project encountered human remains. There were hundreds of bodies that were not originally moved to the new cemetery. Theories are that the contractors did not have a good tracking mechanism and that the gravediggers moved the headstones, got paid, but did not actually excavate the bodies.
 3. Excavation team worked around the clock as the sites could not be left unattended.
 - ii. War of 1812 Cemetery (near Battery Park, Burlington)
 1. At the end of the war, 500 – 600 bodies were buried in this cemetery.
 2. 2002-2005, the North Street redevelopment project uncovered remains in lawns and close to residences.

3. The archeology team carefully and expeditiously recovered bodies of soldiers who were remarkably intact (identifying them as soldiers by their buttons and leather shoulder straps from rifle)

V. Second Presenter – Chris Ingram, Subterra Locating Services, Colchester, Vermont

- a. Demonstration of Ground Penetrating Radar – See attached brochure
 - i. Picks up different densities of soil
 - ii. Modulates depths to see anomalies
 - iii. Allows for non-intrusive location projects
 - iv. Increases the likelihood of finding burial sites
 - v. Although, results are not definitive until final excavation
 - vi. Works with cemetery associations to keep cemeteries from becoming unmarked burials, finding sites after marble stones have broken, crumbled and become illegible over time.

VI. Questions/Comments from the Membership

- a. How do we increase the vitality of the organization and generate activity?
 - i. Currently, have 40 paid members at \$25.00 per year.
 - ii. Should we consider increased membership dues to \$100 per year to generate more income to cover the costs of updating the website to be a more useable tool, paying a stipend to an officer to stimulate vitality and work with the legislature for statute review?
- b. Discussion/comparison of lot prices – concern that revenues are decreasing due to the popularity of cremation lots. It was agreed that burial options were necessary, but lot prices may have to be adjusted.
 - i. Some cemeteries treat “resident” and “non-resident” sales differently.
 - ii. Definition of “resident” – purchaser must have lived and paid taxes in the town of the lot sale. If not, a “non-resident” surcharge would be added to the total sale price.

VII. Meeting adjourned at noon with lunch to follow.

VIII. Next Meeting in June 2016 in Peacham.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jane Paine

Secretary