

Caroline County

Burial Sites Preservation Board



Chip Winters, Chairman
Sandy Hayman, Member
Dr. Christian Jensen, Member
Jean Kelly, Member
Jeff Porter, Member

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MEETING MINUTES BURIAL SITES PRESERVATION BOARD FOR CAROLINE COUNTY, MARYLAND

DATE: JUNE 3, 2015

PLACE: CAROLINE COUNTY DISTRICT COURT HOUSE
207 SOUTH 3RD STREET
DENTON, MARYLAND 21629

**BOARD MEMBERS:
(PRESENT)** H. F. "CHIP" WINTERS, CHAIRMAN
JEAN KELLY, MEMBER
SANDY HAYMAN, MEMBER
JEFF PORTER, MEMBER

ALSO PRESENT: KATHELEEN FREEMAN, DIRECTOR
MATT KACZYNSKI, DEVELOPMENT REVIEW
MELANIE SMITH, RECORDER
DANA JARRELL, ADVISOR

Chairman Winters called the meeting of the Caroline County Burial Sites Preservation Board to order at 6:00 p.m.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

CEMETARY BEHIND BETHLEHEM STORE/POST OFFICE

Chairman Winters notified the members that he visited the site of the Bethlehem Cemetery. It is a 9,000 square foot parcel owned by John Milligan. Two neighbors called in to report that Mr. Milligan had disturbed the cemetery and removed headstones, stacking them in a pile. The County including the Sheriff's Department, Planning and Codes and Chairman Winters responded by visiting Mr. Milligan at the site. During the visit Mr. Milligan admitted to removing headstones and stacking them up in a pile. Mr. Milligan stated he was cleaning up the area to erect a pre-fabricated vegetable stand. He also poured footers to replace the old Community Center which has been stored by another citizen of Caroline County. Chairman Winters pointed out there are no utilities on the lot.

No one knows the extent of the cemetery. Ms. Hayman referred to a book of headstone sketching's that proved at least eight gravestones were standing there several years ago. Ms. Kelley, who did the sketching's, remembered there was a pile of stones at the site then. For that reason not all the stones were sketched. Chairman Winters believes 10-15 graves are a more accurate figure. Chairman Winters explained the goal of the Board is to have Mr. Milligan return the site to its respective order as best as possible at this point.

Ms. Hayman cautioned the Board to be aware that all the disturbance was not the responsibility of Mr. Milligan as is evidenced by the stacked headstones that were present prior to Mr. Milligan's ownership of the property. Chairman Winters stated that even the eight that stood when Ms. Kelley sketched them thirty years ago were stacked in a pile. He expressed concern that the way they are stacked will likely cause the stones to crack.

Ms. Freeman had been talking to Mr. Milligan the last few days and wanted to share with the Board what he had to say. She brought several aerial photographs of the property that spanned several years. There was a white spot in the disturbed area that likely depicted a headstone. Chairman Winters added that during the tour Mr. Milligan had a pistol displayed on his hip. Ms. Freeman stated he was much more amiable the second time she visited with him alone and no pistol was visible. He showed Ms. Freeman a stack of approximately 15 headstones dated as far back as 1894 that he placed along a row of trees to the right of the property line.

Among the row of day lilies were indentations where headstones had recently been removed. The ground was sunken down like one sees in old cemeteries where the coffins were buried. Five to ten feet from the day lilies is where his disturbance was. Ms. Freeman talked to Towers Concrete who stated they delivered cement to that location on April 28th but Mr. Milligan used a wheel barrow to move the cement from the truck to pour the footers. Mr. Milligan told Ms. Freeman that he has historical pictures of the graves as well as an 8mm wedding video that shows the Community Building that was once there. The Methodist Church that was originally located there has since been moved across the street and down a few lots.

Since the tour, Mr. Milligan has become a member of the Preston Historical Society. He has told Ms. Freeman he wants to restore the graves, put mulch around them and cordon the area off. He stated his own great-great-grandfather Christopher's grave is located there. He is amiable to the Board returning to tour the site. Mr. Milligan stated he liked Mr. Porter therefore Ms. Freeman suggested he be one of the members to tour the property.

Ms. Freeman reported the Sheriff's Office is investigating the situation but has not made any charges. While it is up to the Board, she explained that the Sheriff's Department is agreeable if the Board chooses to work with Mr. Milligan to restore the cemetery.

Ms. Hayman feels this would be good opportunity to educate citizens the requirements and violations of owning property that contains a cemetery. Ms. Jarrell pointed out that Mr. Milligan has been working totally outside of legal boundaries by moving headstones and not obtaining required permits before beginning work, etc. Ms. Hayman stated that he had a vested interest to resolve the issue. His family has been in the area for several generations, his great-great-grandfather is buried there. He has turned around in a short period of time.

Chairman Winters stated that ideally the graves could be located with ground penetrating radar or by probing the soil with a rod. Randy Moore is familiar with this process and Mr. Winters

volunteered to talk to him. There is a cost to the service that should certainly be absorbed by Mr. Milligan. This would not resolve who is buried where; but the headstones could be lined up in familial order along the graves that exist. Ms. Freeman asked if this would reveal if an existing grave had been disturbed. Ms. Hayman offered to do a title search of the property to help with their investigation. She feels that in the interest of restoring the site the Board should allow him to restore the site if he is willing to.

The Board agreed they needed to do more research. Chairman Winters will contact the local Mortician to discuss the process and cost to search the area for existing gravesites. Ms. Hayman will research the property deeds and Ms. Kelley should sketch the remaining gravestones. Ms. Freeman will attempt to get the pictures and films that Mr. Milligan claims to have and ask him to provide a written explanation of his intended use of the property, which may include proving its historical standing.

Ms. Freeman explained to Chairman Winters that the footers were originally being poured to found a shed. It was being delivered at the same time as the "Stop Order"; therefore, the shed is on the property but was not placed on the footers.

CEMETARY ON 404 BY THE OLD CENTREVILLE NATIONAL BANK

Ms. Kelley advised the group that she is concerned about the cemetery on 404 by the old Centreville National Bank where State Highway is dualizing the road. The State owns the cemetery and she has been noticing the construction is getting dangerously close to the gravesites. The Board was familiar with the site and Chairman Winters suggested he and Ms. Kelley visit the site the next day.

OPEN MEETINGS ACT DESIGNEE

Mr. Kaczynski informed the members that Mr. Calloway no longer works for Caroline County Planning and Codes. He introduced Melanie Smith as his replacement and suggested the Board vote to have her be the Open Meetings Act Designee for the Board.

Motion: Mr. Winters made a motion to appoint Melanie Smith as the Burial Site Preservation Boards Open Meetings Act Designee.

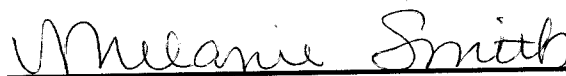
Second: Ms. Hayman seconded the motion.

Vote: The members of the Board voted in approval of the motion (4-0).

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Winters adjourned the meeting at 6:55 PM.

BURIAL SITES PRESERVATION BOARD
Chip Winters, Chair



Minutes prepared by: Melanie Smith