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Sinking Spring Cemetery Interim Committee

Town of Abingdon

Minutes, June 6, 2006

The Sinking Spring Interim Cemetery Committee met on Tuesday, June 6, 2006 at 7 P. M. in the Town Hall. Members of the committee present were Jack Frost, Kitty Henninger, Anne Hutton, Gene Matthis, Ed Morgan, Thomas C. Phillips, Jr., Charles Seaver and Greg Kelly, Town Attorney. Francine Ivery, committee member, was absent.

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, May 23, 2006 were approved with changes requested by Anne Hutton in the third and eighth paragraph on Page 1.

Greg Kelly reported that he received a response to an e-mail inquiry to the local government attorney association concerning acquisition of title to abandoned cemeteries. One response advised that rather than condemn the land their choice had been to acquire the fractional interest of an heir since it had not possible to acquire the total interests of the owners. This gave a legal right for access and control. This is to be discussed with the Town Manager, Mickey Newman by Greg Kelly and Tom Phillips to see if some action could be taken on this.

Charles Seaver distributed copies of the Marion, Va., Round Hill Cemetery Rules and Regulations and extracts from the Town Code which he obtained from the City Clerk of the Town of Marion. The cemetery had been conveyed to the Town by the Royal Oak Presbyterian Church some years ago and since maintained by the Town of Marion. The establishment of the cemetery pre-dated the establishment of the Sinking Spring cemetery.

Anne Hutton distributed copies of Section 57-27.3 of the Code of Va., "Authorization for interment." This section provides for a cemetery to accept a notarized signature from next of kin of a decedent for burial purposes as more particularly set forth in the code. The consensus was to bring this code section to the attention of the Town Manager for possible use in the future.

Anne Hutton also distributed copies of the "Rules and Regulations pertaining to "Section I" of the Greendale Chapel Cemetery, dated September 30, 1996" together with a copy of the form of the deed used to transfer burial sites. These had been prepared for the Chapel by Anne Hutton, attorney.

Tom Phillips cited Sec. 57-35.36 of the Code of Va., providing that a county or city shall keep accurate records of the ownership of cemetery lots and make a good faith effort to ensure prior to interment that the ownership of a cemetery lot is vested in the decedent's estate or that permission for the interment has been granted by a person holding such ownership.

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Sinking Spring Cemetery Interim Committee

Town of Abingdon

Minutes, Tuesday, July 18, 2006

The Sinking Spring Interim Cemetery Committee met on Tuesday, July 18, 2006 at 7 P. M. in the Town Hall. Members of the committee present were Kitty Henninger, Anne Hutton, Gene Matthis, Ed Morgan, Thomas C. Phillips, Jr., Charles Seaver and Greg Kelly, Town Attorney. Francine Ivery and Jack Frost, committee members, were absent.

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, June 21 2006 were approved with one change suggested by Charles Seaver.

Tom Phillips reported that he and Greg Kelly met with Mickey Newman, Town Manager, to discuss replacing the sign at the entrance to the cemetery regarding contacts before burials and other matters. Charles Seaver and Tom Phillips also met with Greg Kelly regarding the proposed rules and regulations.

Greg Kelly displayed proposed language for a new sign to be placed at the entrance to the cemetery regarding contacts with the Town prior to any burials in the cemetery. The consensus was to leave the final wording of and the choice of materials for the sign up to Greg Kelly and the Town.

The consensus was that the Town should not undertake to sell spaces in the cemetery.

Greg Kelly displayed the proposed Sinking Spring Rules and Regulations which were discussed. Mr. Kelly incorporated into the document changes proposed by the committee and will bring revised copies to the next meeting. Included in the changes was a paragraph prepared by Anne Hutton based on section 54.1-2825 of the Code of Virginia.

Ed Morgan distributed a plat on which he had indicated sections of the proposed chain link fence be replaced with metal fencing matching the fence along Russell Road. The consensus was in favor of the recommended change though Tom Phillips suggested that it would be expensive to make the change and perhaps the original plan for chain link fence should not be changed. Greg Kelly suggested that an estimate of the cost to make the change should be obtained before a final decision be made.

Thomas C. Phillips, Jr., Chair

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Sinking Spring Cemetery Interim Committee

Town of Abingdon

Minutes, Wednesday, June 21, 2006

The Sinking Spring Interim Cemetery Committee met on Wednesday, June 21, 2006 at 7 P. M. in the Town Hall. Members of the committee present were Kitty Henninger, Anne Hutton, Gene Matthis, Ed Morgan, Thomas C. Phillips, Jr., Charles Seaver and Greg Kelly, Town Attorney. Francine Ivery and Jack Frost, committee members, were absent.

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, June 6, 2006 were approved with changes.

Greg Kelly distributed copies of suggested "Sinking Springs Cemetery Rules and Regulations" for consideration by the committee.

Since the Town does not have the legal title to or a legal interest in the Scott Cambell and Penn additions the Town would not be able to sell cemetery lots. Accordingly the section in the proposed rules and regulations regarding purchase of lots would be removed and parts incorporated into the section on Interment Regulations.

There was a general discussion about the meaning of *appropriated* in the April 19, 1944 resolution by the trustees of the Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church. The consensus was not to undertake any further definition.

A question was raised about whether the privately owned sections of the cemetery were subject to real estate taxes or were exempt as a non-profit corporation. If not exempt then the Town could foreclose on property for non-payment of real estate taxes. This will be checked.

The consensus seemed to be that the sign at the entrance of the cemetery should be changed by inserting the "Town of Abingdon" in place of "Church" and replacing church telephone numbers with Town of Abingdon telephone numbers.

There was discussion about the fact that at one time there had been a fence separating the Hop Scott addition from the church cemetery and the fence had been removed by agreement of the parties.

The consensus of the committee was that there should be a requirement that vaults be required for all burials. Reference was made to the section in the Greendale Chapel rules and regulations which could be adapted for use in the Cemetery rules and regulations.

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Charles Seaver reported that he had met with Kathy Scherer about starting to work on a brochure about the cemetery. He passed around a brochure with photographs of different types of signage that might be used.

Gene Matthis agreed to conduct a tour of the cemetery on Thursday, July 6, 2006 at 7 P. M.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 18, 2006 at 7 P. M. in the ground floor of the Town Hall.

Thomas C. Phillips, Jr., Chair

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Sinking Spring Cemetery Interim Committee

Town of Abingdon

Minutes, Thursday, October 26, 2006

The Sinking Spring Interim Cemetery Committee met on Thursday, October, 26, 2006 at 7 P. M. at the Town Hall. Members of the committee present were Kitty Henninger, Gene Matthis, Ed Morgan, Thomas C. Phillips, Jr., Charles Seaver and Greg Kelly, Town Attorney.

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2006 were approved.

The proposed Report to the Town Council was reviewed and changes made as shown on the attached copy.

Gene Matthis submitted a revised copy of the Historical Sketch which is to be attached to the Report to the Council and a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

The proposed cemetery ordinance was reviewed and changes made as shown on the copy attached.

Greg Kelly reported that installation of the chain link fence had been proceeding. The town is waiting for a response to the request for costs to install the wrought iron section. Dan Caldwell, speaking for the William King Regional Arts Center, had suggested that the Center convey to the Town some of the Center property to be enclosed by the new fence if the Town would agree to make improvements to the road leading to the Center off of Main Street. The Center is considering arranging for a new survey of their property lines. Mr. Kelly also reported that one complaint had been received about the new fence. People attending Little League games had been parking in an area which will now be enclosed by the new fence. No action was deemed necessary by this committee.

Greg Kelly also reported that the Town would connect to the electrical outlet at the Cummings Cabin for Halloween purposes - Sleepy Hollow!

Kitty Henninger suggested that an inventory be made of the contents of the Cummings Cabin and a permanent record be maintained. Charles Seaver suggested that photographs be taken as part of the inventory.

Tom Phillips distributed a copy of a letter written to George Penn about the possibility of the Town acquiring a partial ownership interest in the Penn Addition.

Tom Phillips distributed a copy of a deed which would convey a partial ownership interest in the Scottt Campbell Addition from Sammy Campbell to the Town. The committee was agreeable for this to be submitted to Anne Hutton, attorney representing the Campbell estate and interests. Charles Seaver suggested that the question be raised with Anne Hutton about the right of the Town to close and lock

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the gates to the cemetery when it did not have an ownership interest in the Campbell addition.

The next meeting of the committee is set for Thursday, Nov. 30, 2006.

Thomas C. Phillips, Jr.
Chair, Interim Committee
Sinking Spring Cemetery

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REPORT TO COUNCIL BY INTERIM CEMETERY COMMITTEE

At the meeting of the Town Council in March 2006 the Council approved an interim cemetery committee. The Committee was directed to report back to the Council with its recommendations regarding the future care and operation of the cemetery. The members of the committee were to consist of one member from the Town Council, one member from the Historical Society of Washington County, Va., Inc., one member from the Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church, one member from a funeral home located in the Town of Abingdon, three members from the community at large. At least one member from the community at large should be related to a person buried in the cemetery.

The council appointed the following to the Committee:

Jack Frost, Frost Funeral Home,
 Kitty Henninger, Session of the Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church
 Anne Hutton, community at large with relatives buried in the cemetery,
 Francine Ivery, community at large,
 Gene Matthis, community at large,
 Ed Morgan, Town Council,
 Tom Phillips, former Town Council,
 Charles Seaver, President, Washington Co. Historical Society.

Greg Kelly, Town Attorney, served as advisor and participated in the meetings with the committee. Tom Phillips served as Chair.

The Committee met a number of times and submits the following report.

I. History

Gene Matthis has prepared a brief history of the cemetery which is attached as Exhibit A. Also attached is a plat of the cemetery titled "Cemetery Acreage," copy of a GIS photograph and a plat showing the separate sections for the Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church the Scott Campbell addition and the Penn addition.

II. Rules and Regulations

Attached for the information of the Council is a set of Rules and Regulations, Exhibit B, which the Committee recommends be followed by the Town in the operation and maintenance of the cemetery. Since it is anticipated that these Rules and Regulations may need to be changed from time to time the Committee does not recommend and the Council is not being requested to enact these Rules and Regulations as an ordinance at this time.

III. Draft Ordinance

The Committee has prepared and recommends and submits for the approval and enactment by the Council the ordinance attached as Exhibit C. This ordinance

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would establish a permanent committee which would meet not less than twice yearly and report annually to the Council about visitors to the cemetery, activities in the cemetery, maintenance and operation of the cemetery during the past year and its recommendations for the future operation, care and maintenance of the cemetery and other pertinent matters.

IV. Record or Deed Title to the Cemetery

The cemetery consists of three sections which are generally known as the Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church section, the Scott-Campbell Addition and the Penn Addition.

The Presbyterian Church conveyed its title to the church section of the cemetery by deed dated Feb 3, 2006. Deeds have not been obtained for the Scott Campbell Addition or the Penn Addition. In the minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held on March 2, 1981 the Town Council agreed for the Town to take over maintenance of the cemetery. The Town has been maintaining the cemetery since 1980. The minutes further show that George Kreger was reported to be handling the legal ramifications applicable to the two cemeteries free of charge and he hoped to have it finalized soon. There is no record that Mr. Kreger completed the legal work prior to his death. (Anne Hutton to rewrite this part.) Thus the Town does not have ownership title of record to the Scott-Campbell and Penn additions.

Some effort has been made to obtain partial title interests from the Bundy heirs and from the Scott heirs and the Penn heirs. These interests would grant the Town some authority to exercise some of the rights of ownership for the protection of the cemetery and existing burial or family rights of individuals in the cemetery. One of the Penn heirs has indicated that he would favor a quitclaim deed which would convey a partial interest in the Penn Addition. Efforts for the Scott-Campbell Addition have not been successful to date.

V. Cemetery Association

The Historical Society has copies of the minutes of the Sinking Spring Cemetery Association. The Association stopped meeting when the Town began maintenance and funds in the amount of \$XXXXXXXX were turned over to the Town. These funds were used to help with the purchase of the metal fence placed along both sides of Russell Road.

VI. Walking Tour Brochure

At the request of the committee the Historical Society of Washington County is preparing a brochure that can be used for self-guided tours of the cemetery. The Visitors Center is assisting in the production of the brochure and the Town will be requested to pay the printing costs. At this time photographs and a narrative have been obtained and prepared. The new brochure will be similar in format and size to the current one entitled *A Self Guided Walking Tour of Abingdon's Downtown Historic District*.

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VII. Cummings Cabin

The Committee recommends that use of the Cummings Cabin be limited to activities appropriate for the cemetery and the historic nature and condition of the cabin and the cemetery. This is the original cabin occupied by the Reverend Charles Cummings dating back to circa 1774. The cabin premises have been used by the Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church for Easter morning services and for the annual Fourth of July programs by the Black's Fort Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The cabin could be used for school history classes and similar activities perhaps in cooperation with the Historical Society of Washington County, Incorporated.

VIII. Burial Information and Plats or Diagrams

The best source of information about burials in the cemetery is Catherine McConnell's book "High on a Windy Hill." The Historical Society has copies in its library. The committee has not been able to obtain a chart or diagram of the separate sections, squares or graves in the cemetery. There is no information that such a diagram exists for the Presbyterian Church section. There have been some comments that a diagram exists for the Scott-Campbell addition but the committee has not obtained a copy. There is no information about a diagram for the Penn addition. The Historical Society has a list and map prepared by a Boy Scout for a Eagle Scout project.

The Committee does not recommend that the Town undertake to sell burial sites but rather continue to maintain and protect the cemetery.

IX. Pertinent State Laws Among Others

- A. Sec. 57-27.3. Authorization for interment.
- B. Sec. 46-19. Trespassing upon, damaging property- Town property.
- C. Sec. 46-21. Damages to churches, church property, cemeteries, burial grounds.
- B. Sec. 46-22. Trespass-Upon cemetery.
- C. Sec. 46-23. Same-Upon church or school property.

XI. Future of the Cemetery

A. The Committee has observed that the cemetery is well maintained. The addition of the iron fence has contributed significantly to the appearance of the cemetery and improved the appearance of that section of the Town. The Committee compliments the Town personnel responsible for the maintenance and care of the cemetery. The care and maintenance of the cemetery speaks well for the Town of Abingdon.

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B. The Committee submits that the cemetery is historically significant and the expense required to maintain and operate the cemetery is justified. Present day residents of the Town and County have relatives or ancestors buried in the cemetery. The graves of citizens prominent in the history of our Town and County and Southwest Virginia can be found in the cemetery. Members of the Committee have observed frequent visitors to the cemetery. Tours of the cemetery have been conducted during the Virginia Highlands Festival for several years. Most recently Gene Matthis conducted tours during the 2006 Virginia Highlands Festival. Other tours were conducted for a Elder Hostel program and the College for Older Adults. These tours have been well attended.

C. The Committee recommends that the Town continue to maintain the cemetery in the manner in which it is being maintained at this time. Further research or work may need to be done to determine the role the Town will play in protecting the Scott-Campbell Addition and the Penn Addition.

D. The Committee has been informed that members of the Penn family and the Campbell family among others have plans to be buried in the cemetery in the future.

XII. Dissolution of Committee

This report completes the work of the interim committee.

Respectfully submitted:

Jack Frost

Kitty Henninger

Anne P. Hutton

Francine Ivery

Gene Matthis

Ed Morgan

Charles Seaver

Thomas C. Phillips, Jr., Chair

TOWN OF ABINGDON
SINKING SPRINGS CEMETERY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Meeting on Thursday, January 3, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.

Members Present

Ed Morgan
Charles Seaver
Francine Ivery
Gene Matthis
Kitty Henninger
Greg Kelly

Absent

Anne Hutton
Jack Frost

Mr. Morgan made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Mr. Seaver seconded the motion. The minutes from last meeting were approved.

Mr. Matthis presented the Cemetery Committee report and asked for any comments.

On motion of Mr. Morgan, seconded by Kitty Henninger, the committee agreed to modify the report to recommend that the Town seek legislative action from General Assembly to have ownership in Penn and Scott Addition that is presently owned by the Town.

Mr. Matthis commented that he would amend the annual report with the suggested changes and asked that each Committee member come by and sign the report before submittal to the Town Council.

The group agreed that the next meeting of the Cemetery Committee will be on Saturday, May 10, 2008 at 10:30 a.m. at the Cemetery.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



Gregory W. Kelly, Town Manager

November 14, 2007

To: Members of Sinking Spring Cemetery Committee

From: Gene Matthis

Subject: 2007 Annual Report to Town Council

As discussed at our November 10th meeting a draft of our required annual report to Town Council is enclosed. The approval of this report will be discussed at our January 3rd Committee Meeting at Town Hall at 7 P.M. It is hoped that any revisions or corrections that the committee desires can be made at that meeting, and that another meeting will not be required until November or December of 2008. This mandated report is due before the end of the First Quarter and it is hoped it will be ready for the first Council meeting of the New Year.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gene".

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2007 Annual Report of Abington Cemetery Committee

Pursuant to Town Ordinance Chapter 62-106 through 62-107 the Cemetery Committee met on November 10, 2007 on the Cemetery site and after an inspection of the Cemetery and the Cummings Cabin, moved into the Historical Society of Washington County Library due to the cold weather existing at the time. Those present at the meeting included the following persons:

Kitty Henninger
Anne P. Hutton, Esq.
Ms. Francine Ivery
Gene Matthis
Ed Morgan
Charles Seaver
Gregory W. Kelly

The Committee elected Gene Matthis to serve as Chairman and Charles Seaver as Vice Chairman. During a detailed inspection of the Cemetery the committee took note of the excellent condition of the Cemetery and commends those Town Employees responsible for the care and maintenance of the Cemetery for their obvious dedicated service. The committee particularly took note of the excellent service of the Town Arborist in removing dangerous trees and the planting of new trees of appropriate species and location. The addition to the very attractive fence surrounding the Cemetery has been completed and greatly compliment the excellent appearance of the Cemetery. The gates are locked from dark to dawn and along with visual observation by the Police Department provide adequate security to the Cemetery. The Committee noted that in some locations, otherwise healthy trees are overwhelming and detracting from some significant historical monuments. Of particular concern is the family square that contains the graves of former Virginia Governor John Buchanan Floyd and former Federal District Judge Robert W. Hughes. The committee recommends that a large holly tree be either removed or trimmed as the Town Arborist and Tree Commission deem appropriate. The Committee also recommends that two minor repairs to metal fencing at the family squares of former U.S. Congressman George W. Hopkins and to the very attractive family square of the Gibson Family. These repairs are simple in nature and could easily be accomplished by Town maintenance crews. It is apparent that the Cemetery is occupied by groundhogs at several locations and the Committee recommends that the Town have Animal Control Officers attend to this unsightly problem.

The Committee took note of the fact that pedestrian access to the African American section is difficult and this problem could be corrected by the construction of a side walk parallel to Russell Road on the North East side from Dale Street to the new Taylor Hill rehabilitation project. The Committee recommends that this be given consideration by Council. It was also noticed that the front porch flooring of the Cummings Cabin is in need of repairs which include the replacement of the floor joists and flooring. This porch is about 4' by 20'. The 1" chestnut flooring may be available at

no cost from Curtis Addison, but the joists should be replaced by new treated joist material.

The Committee was made aware of a piece of ground to the rear of the Cummings Cabin and adjoining the Penn Addition which is owned by the town and was never a part of Sinking Spring Cemetery or any addition thereto. This piece of ground is large enough to accommodate up to 35 graves and would in no way interfere with the operation or use of the Cummings Cabin. The Committee recommends that Council consider making these grave sites available for sale to the public. The Committee believes this would accomplish two worthwhile objectives; 1.) Provide significant cash for capital improvements and 2.) Tie the past to the present and future of the cemetery. The committee has noticed considerable interest by the public to grave sites in Sinking Spring Cemetery. The Committee recommends that the Council give consideration to other adjoining areas as grave plots and/or columbaries for the same purpose, as they become apparent, the thought being that Sinking Spring can be more than an historical museum.

The Committee also noted that six attractive bluebird houses have been attached to the new fence around the cemetery and several successful fledges of bluebirds have occurred. The Cemetery is excellent habitat for bluebirds and the addition of bluebirds to the Cemetery will add to the tranquility and beauty of the area.

It was also noted that three burials were made during the year as follows:

Scott Campbell Addition.

Mrs. Pauline Montgomery, Aug. 28, 2007

Penn Addition.

John Gilmore Penn Sr., Aug. 8, 2007

B. E. Hayter Jr., Oct. 29, 2007

It is believed that burials will continue to occur at the rate of three to six per year for an indefinite period of time until additional space becomes available. These burials were conducted without any problem or inconvenience to the families involved.

During the year six guided tours of the Cemetery were conducted by the College of Older Adults and/or The Highland Festival Committee and all were well attended by approximately 180 persons from all corners of the country and one from France. In addition, the Historical Society assisted numerous visitors in either finding graves of ancestors buried there or other information pertaining to them. Many visitors have been observed touring the Cemetery on their own, and to assist them in their efforts an ample supply of self-guided tour brochures that were printed by the town last year are provided in a dispenser mounted on the main entrance gate to the Cemetery. A video CD of a guided tour of the cemetery is currently under production by the Historical Society.

ANNE P. HUTTON
ATTORNEY AT LAW
101A EAST VALLEY STREET
ABINGDON, VIRGINIA 24210

AREA CODE 276
TELEPHONE 628-9342

January 4, 2007

Mr. Gene Matthis, Chairman
153 Stone Wall Heights
Abingdon, VA 24210

Greg Kelly, Esq.
Town Attorney
P.O. Box 789
Abingdon, VA 24212

Mrs. Kitty Henninger
159 Hill Drive
Abingdon, VA 24210

Mrs. Francine Ivery
335 Rose Street
Abingdon, VA 24210

Mr. Jack Frost
Frost Funeral Home
250 East Main Street
Abingdon, VA 24210

Mr. Charles Seaver
431 Montview Ave.
Abingdon, VA 24210

Mr. Ed Morgan
259 Bradley Street
Abingdon, VA 24210

Dear Mr. Matthis, Chairman, and all other members
of the Sinking Spring Cemetery Committee:

Regardless of whether the January 3 meeting was at 7:00 a.m. or 7:00 p.m., I was unable to attend because of a misbehaving furnace.

While I certainly think that use of the area back (south) of the Cummings Cabin for new grave sites should be recommended to the Town Council, I do believe that the Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church would have to grant permission for such use. This comment is based on the assumption that the area for the 35± grave sites would be within the 0.324 acre tract shown on the map attached to the deed of February 3, 2006 between the Trustees of Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church and the Town of Abingdon, Virginia. By that deed, the Church clearly reserved the use of the 0.324 acre. Of course, if the 35± grave sites are not in that 0.324 acre area, such permission from the Church would not be required. I made this comment at our November 10, 2007 meeting.

While I did not make this comment at our November 10, 2007 meeting, I have become concerned that encouraging blue birds or other birds in the cemetery would not be in the best interest of most, if not all, of the stones and monuments in the cemetery. Bird droppings are quite detrimental to marble and most other materials used for stones, markers and monuments. I, therefore, suggest that the committee do

Mr. Gene Matthis, Chairman, et al
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January 4, 2008

everything possible to discourage, rather than encourage, birds of any kind in the cemetery.

The very able draft of Mr. Matthis' report does not address an issue that Greg Kelly raised at the November meeting, which was a request to allow the installation of one or more fences around one or more squares. My thinking is that such fences should be encouraged as the fences would tend to protect the existing markers and monuments, many of which are in a very fragile state.

I respectfully request that my admittedly late comments be attached to the Report to Council.

With all good wishes, I am

Very truly yours,



Anne P. Hutton

APH/mr

TOWN OF ABINGDON
SINKING SPRINGS CEMETERY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Meeting on Saturday, November 10, 2007 at 10:00 a.m.

Members Present

Ed Morgan
Anne Hutton
Charles Seaver
Francine Ivery
Gene Matthis
Kitty Henninger
Greg Kelly

Absent

Jack Frost

The Committee initially met at 10:00 a.m. at the Sinking Spring Cemetery. Thereafter, Gene Matthis led the committee on a tour of the cemetery and Cummings Cabin. The Committee then adjourned to the Washington County Historical Society Building for the remainder of the meeting.

Mr. Morgan read various points of the instructions to the Committee that are provided for in the Town's ordinance.

Greg Kelly, Town Manager, thereafter temporarily chaired the meeting by taking roll and proceeding with election of a Chairman and a Vice Chairman.

On motion of Ed Morgan, seconded by Kitty Henninger, and by unanimous vote, Gene Matthis was elected Chairman and Charles Seaver was elected Vice Chairman for the Cemetery Committee.

Mr. Kelly then turned the meeting over to Chairman Matthis.

The Committee discussed the following items:

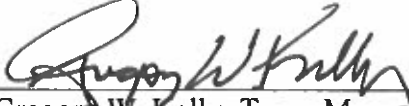
- A possible sidewalk in Taylor's Hill area of the cemetery
- Safety of Cummings Cabin and the need for repair to front porch
- Issue of church liability and the need for a copy of the insurance policy
- Need for an accounting of the number of burials in the cemetery
- Possible placement of bluebird houses in cemetery

- Determination of who owns the property immediately around the Cummings Cabin area and consideration of use of the same for future burial sites
- Consideration of a columbarium to be located on Town property acquired in the Taylor's Hill project that is adjacent to Cemetery
- Consideration of obtaining ownership in Penn and Scott Addition through an act of the Virginia General Assembly
- Cleaning up of fallen limbs in the Cemetery
- The need for an inventory of the types and number of trees planted in the Cemetery
- Need to fix the gates and maintain the fencing in the Cemetery
- Request the Town Arborist, Kevin Sigmon to look at pruning of trees in Cemetery

Chairman Matthis agreed to prepare a report to the Town Council for review at their regular January meeting which detailed the aforementioned discussion items and committee recommendations.

The group agreed that the next meeting of the Cemetery Committee will be on Thursday, January 3, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the Town Hall.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



Gregory W. Kelly, Town Manager

2007 Annual Report of Abingdon Cemetery Committee

January 3, 2008

Pursuant to Town Ordinance Chapter 62-106 through 62-107 the Cemetery Committee met on November 10, 2007 on the Cemetery site and after an inspection of the Cemetery and the Cummings Cabin, moved into the Historical Society of Washington County Library due to the cold weather existing at the time. Those present at the meeting included the following persons:

Kitty Henninger
Anne P. Hutton, Esq.
Ms. Francine Ivery
Gene Matthis
Ed Morgan
Charles Seaver
Gregory W. Kelly

The Committee elected Gene Matthis to serve as Chairman and Charles Seaver as Vice Chairman. During a detailed inspection of the Cemetery the committee took note of the excellent condition of the Cemetery and commends those Town Employees responsible for the care and maintenance of the Cemetery for their obvious dedicated service. The committee particularly took note of the excellent service of the Town Arborist in removing dangerous trees and the planting of new trees of appropriate species and location. The addition to the very attractive fence surrounding the Cemetery has been completed and greatly compliment the excellent appearance of the Cemetery. The gates are locked from dark to dawn and along with visual observation by the Police Department provide adequate security to the Cemetery. The Committee noted that in some locations, otherwise healthy trees are overwhelming and detracting from some significant historical monuments. Of particular concern is the family square that contains the graves of former Virginia Governor John Buchanan Floyd and former Federal District Judge Robert W. Hughes. The committee recommends that a large holly tree be either removed or trimmed as the Town Arborist and Tree Commission deem appropriate. The Committee also recommends that two minor repairs to metal fencing at the family squares of former U.S. Congressman George W. Hopkins and to the very attractive family square of the Gibson Family. These repairs are simple in nature and could easily be accomplished by Town maintenance crews. It is apparent that the Cemetery is occupied by groundhogs at several locations and the Committee recommends that the Town have Animal Control Officers attend to this unsightly problem.

In view of the fact that the Town of Abingdon does not have clear title to the Penn Addition or the Scott Campbell Addition to the Cemetery and the owners of these additions have effectively abandoned the properties and the town has maintained the properties for over 25 years, the Cemetery Committee recommends that the Town introduce legislation that would give a clear title to these properties to the Town. The

Committee also recommends that the town consider improving the roads within the cemetery by the adding of pea gravel or other suitable and attractive gravel.

The Committee took note of the fact that pedestrian access to the African American section is difficult and this problem could be corrected by the construction of a sidewalk parallel to Russell Road on the North East side from Dale Street to the new Taylor Hill rehabilitation project. The Committee recommends that this be given consideration by Council. It was also noticed that the front porch flooring of the Cummings Cabin is in need of repairs which include the replacement of the floor joists and flooring. This porch is about 4' by 20'. The 1" chestnut flooring may be available at no cost from Curtis Addison, but the joists should be replaced by new treated joist material.

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The Committee also noted that six attractive bluebird houses have been attached to the new fence around the cemetery and several successful fledges of bluebirds have occurred. The Cemetery is excellent habitat for bluebirds and the addition of bluebirds to the Cemetery will add to the tranquility and beauty of the area.

It was also noted that four burials were made during the year as follows:

Scott Campbell Addition.

Mrs. Pauline Montgomery, Aug. 28, 2007

Penn Addition.

John Gilmore Penn Sr., Aug. 8, 2007

B. E. Hayter Jr., Oct. 29, 2007

Original Sinking Spring Cemetery.

James C. Moore, Dec. 31, 2007 (Inurnment)


It is believed that burials will continue to occur at the rate of three to six per year for an indefinite period of time until addition space becomes available. These burials were conducted without any problem or inconvenience to the families involved.

During the year six guided tours of the Cemetery were conducted by the College of Older Adults and/or The Highland Festival Committee and all were well attended by approximately 180 persons from all corners of the country and one from France. In addition, the Historical Society assisted numerous visitors in either finding graves of ancestors buried there or other information pertaining to them. Many visitors have been observed touring the Cemetery on their own, and to assist them in their efforts an ample supply of self guided tour brochures that were printed by the town last year are provided in a dispenser mounted on the main entrance gate to the Cemetery. A video CD of a guided tour of the cemetery is currently under production by the Historical Society.

Respectfully submitted:


Gene Matthis, Chairman

Attest:


Gregory W. Kelly, Secretary

TOWN OF ABINGDON
SINKING SPRINGS CEMETERY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Meeting on Saturday, May 10, 2008 at 10:30 a.m.

Members Present

Ed Morgan
Charles Seaver
Anne Hutton
Francine Ivery
Gene Matthis
Kitty Henninger
Greg Kelly

Absent

Jack Frost

Mr. Morgan began the meeting with discussions about the bird houses in the cemetery and he recommended that they be observed for one year to see if they present a problem with droppings on the cemetery stones. Anne Hutton recommended removal of the bird houses if they present noticeable problems for the stones.

The group discussed the Scott and Penn additions to the cemetery and agreed that the Town should continue to acquire clearer title for those two additions.

Francine Ivery inquired if there were additional gravesites in the African American section of the cemetery and could they be sold. The group noted that the cemetery was being maintained very well by Town staff and was in excellent condition.

Mr. Morgan asked the group to consider the installation of a columbarium at the cemetery.

Anne Hutton recommended that the committee members encourage family square owners to fence the square for added protection to the square markers.


The group recommended the following items be discussed by the Tree Commission:

- Pruning of the holly tree at the Floyd plot
- Maple tree growing through yew
- African American section has overgrown trees and brush causing damage to the fence on the backside of the area.

The group toured and inspected all sections and additions to the cemetery.

The group agreed that the next meeting of the Cemetery Committee will be on Saturday, November 8, 2008 at 10:30 a.m. at the Cemetery.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



Gregory W. Kelly, Town Manager

TOWN OF ABINGDON
SINKING SPRING CEMETERY COMMITTEE MEETING
Saturday November 19, 2011
Town Hall, First Floor Conference Room

The semi-annual meeting of the Sinking Spring Cemetery Committee was held on Saturday 19, 2011 in the first floor conference room.

A. Welcome and Call to Order:

Mr. Seaver welcomed everyone to the meeting and called it to order.

B. Roll Call:

Members present:

- a. Charles Seaver
- b. Kitty Henninger
- c. Ed Morgan
- d. Greg Kelly
- e. Tom Phillips
- f. David Winship
- g. Carolyn Lee

Members absent:

Jack Frost

Visitors:

Deb Icenhour

C. Approval of Minutes:

Copies of the minutes of the previous meeting (2/19/2010) were distributed to the members present, after which David Winship brought to the attention of the group that the minutes failed to list him as having been in attendance at same. The secretary made the correction and the chair entertained a motion by Tom Phillips to accept the minutes as corrected. The motion was seconded by Ed Morgan, and the minutes were accepted accordingly by unanimous vote.

D. Old Business of the Committee:

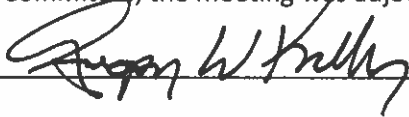
- a. Mr. Kelly reported that the Gene Mathis memorial bench was finished and that it would be placed inside the gate nearest the Cummings Cabin at the Cemetery by Town Parks & Rec. employees. The bench will have a brass plate attached to it which denotes Mr. Mathis' pertinent dates and information.

the columbarium that they would own to sell off niches at a price controlled and determined by the funeral homes.

- b. Mr. Winship made a motion, seconded by Kitty Henninger, which passed by unanimous vote that the Cemetery Committee hold a special meeting in the summer for a presentation of marketing from a columbarium consultant and the two local funeral homes (Frost Funeral Home and Farris Funeral Home).
- c. The committee recessed to the Sinking Spring Cemetery and proceeded with an inspection of the same. Members generally commented on how well kept it was and in particular, found it to be in good condition. The committee further viewed potential sites of the various phases of the future columbarium.

E. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned.



Gregory W. Kelly, Secretary

TOWN OF ABINGDON
SINKING SPRING CEMETERY COMMITTEE MEETING
SATURDAY, May 3, 2014-9:00 A.M.
MUNICIPAL BUILDING and SINKING SPRING CEMETERY

The fall semi-annual meeting of the Sinking Spring Cemetery Committee was held on May 3, 2014 at 9:00A.M. at the Abingdon Municipal Building, followed by a walking tour and inspection of Sinking Spring Cemetery.

A. Welcome and Introductions

David Winship, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

B. Roll Call

Members of Present:

- a. David Winship
- b. Wayne Miller
- c. Al Bradley
- d. Jim Hagy
- e. Ed Morgan
- f. Greg Kelly

Members Absent:

- a. Jack Frost
- b. Carolyn Lee

Guests:

- a. Kevin Worley, Director of Parks and Recreation, Town of Abingdon

C. Approval of Minutes

- a. Mr. Kelly provided copies of the minutes from the November 16, 2013 meeting after which, without objection, they were approved as submitted.

D. Business of the Committee

- a. Report on Recent Maintenance Issues to the Cemetery. Mr. Kelly reported to the committee that maintenance matters had taken place at the cemetery since the last meeting:
 - i. Painting of fencing
 - ii. Removal of invasive plants (e.g. Yucca Plants)
 - iii. Various tree trimming throughout the cemetery
 - iv. Resetting of several headstones that had fallen or sunk into the ground due to the wet weather
- b. Mapping of Cemetery. David Winship indicated a desire and the need to map the cemetery and that perhaps volunteers could be asked to help in that regard. Discussion was had about the use of GIS and GPS to assist in the mapping. Mr. Kelly advised that Town staff was looking into exactly

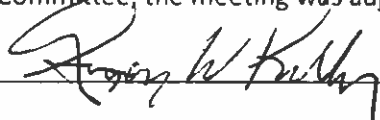
- how the Town's GIS system could be utilized to assist with this. He also mentioned that there would be a flyover photo out soon that could perhaps zoom in on the cemetery. Mr. Winship pointed out a preliminary map that had been started by the Boy Scouts that could perhaps be expanded upon. Mr. Morgan pointed out that there was mapping software available for cemeteries and he indicated he would forward the link on to Mr. Kelly for him to review and look into. Mr. Hagy noted that a book of all cemeteries in Washington County was being prepared by Charlie Barnett and Carol Hawthorn Taylor that would have photographs of all markers in the county.
- c. Columbarium Project. Mr. Kelly gave an update on the columbarium project and informed that the Town received no formal proposals from its previous request for proposals. Mr. Kelly advised that the funeral homes local to Abingdon had indicated that there was very minimal current demand for columbarium space. Mr. Morgan advised that he felt the more practical and affordable thing to do was a memorial wall that could perhaps be in a location where there could be the scattering of ashes and perhaps a limited columbarium incorporated into the wall. Also there was the discussion of planting memorial trees. Mr. Kelly agreed and indicated that it was his intent to get estimates on the construction of a memorial wall and schedule a special meeting with the committee in the next two months to discuss how to proceed in moving this matter forward in the future. In addition, Mr. Kelly agreed to provide the current committee with a copy of the concept for the columbarium and wall that landscape architect, Quinn Croqwell had completed last year.
 - d. Use of Cemetery. Mr. Winship reported that the cemetery was currently being used regularly for the following:
 - i. tourist/visitors
 - ii. Historical Society tours
 - iii. Recreational walking
 - iv. Cabin tours Cleaning of Tombstone Request by Tina Harris. Discussion was had on the topic of this request and it was left to the Town Manager to administratively approve this request. No objection was asserted by any member. Mr. Hagy suggested that we look into a company to perhaps assist in the cleaning of other tombstones throughout the cemetery. He indicated that he would try to have such a company come before the next committee meeting to give a presentation.
 - e. Upcoming Report to the Town Council. Mr. Winship, as the Chairman, indicated that he would provide a report on the condition of the cemetery and the committee's endeavors at the May 5, 2014 Council meeting.
 - f. Miscellaneous Discussion. Mr. Miller stated that perhaps as the weather dried out in the upcoming warmer months that some more of the stones that needed to be reset or stood up could be done so by the Town staff. Mr. Kelly indicated that Kevin Worley was going to meet the committee in the cemetery to view it with the committee and answer any maintenance issues that the committee had. Mr. Morgan and Mr. Bradley mentioned the

possibility of creating a club, similar to the Creeper Trail club that could assist in some of the maintenance of the cemetery.

- g. The committee recessed to the Sinking Spring Cemetery and proceeded with an inspection of the same. Members commented on how well kept it was and in particular, found it to be in remarkable condition with the repainting of the fence, the removal of invasive plants, resetting of various displaced stones, the recent mowing and the tree trimming. Kevin Worley discussed various issues concerning maintenance and described how he regularly inspects the cemetery before and after mowing to assess whether any damage has occurred by vandalism or from mowing.

E. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned.



Gregory W. Kelly, Secretary

Mr. Mayor, Members of Council, this report is from the Cemetery Committee
of which I serve as chair.
Report to Abingdon Town Council May 6, 2014

Sinking Springs ~~Presbyterian~~ Cemetery Committee

The committee met on Saturday, May 3.

The main matters which we discussed were:

The mapping of the cemetery – Efforts have been underway through The Historical Society of Washington Co., with an initial map as an Eagle Scout project and subsequent recent efforts of Martha Keys and Charles Seaver, to combine the scout efforts into a usable form. The difficulty is that the names are not alphabetically searchable and the location is not able to be located. Toward this end, entering the information into a spreadsheet database has begun and is partway completed. Completion with volunteer help is anticipated. With the location issue, efforts are underway to determine whether the Town GIS system can assist with an overlay of the Town flyover map over the existing map for individual grave identification. Mayor Morgan has suggested investigating already existing software to expedite the process. Finding the right software to address already existing cemetery layouts and antique cemeteries is the challenge.

As an update on the continued interment options, the committee suggests moving ahead with the concept of the "Memorial Wall," as a way for family to have recognition of those buried in the cemetery, for those whose location is not determined. We suggest also an incorporation of a memorial grove of trees for potential scattering of cremains, as well as incorporating into the design allowance for the possibility of a future columbarium. Mr. Kelly plans to get some cost estimates, that will be run by the Board of Architectural Review, along with the general location of the wall. The committee will be having a special meeting within the next two months to discuss the cost estimates, design and how to move forward. Though the construction of the full columbarium is not practical at this time, its future need is anticipated by the committee.

The cemetery is used by the community, beyond its intended use, for Historical Society tours (one is set for the Highlands Festival) and recreational/walking use of the circle trail, as well as visitors searching for their ancestors or simply viewing by those who enjoy cemeteries.

The committee suggests developing a "Friends of the Cemetery" group, for the purpose of assisting in some of the maintenance areas not undertaken by the Town, for assisting in the use of the cemetery, and perhaps for developing funding sources for the cemetery's enhancement. The Friends group might also be involved with the Historical Society in the mapping project.

After the inside meeting, the committee took its walk and review of the cemetery with Kevin Worley, who is now in charge of maintenance and overseeing the condition of the cemetery. The cemetery is looking very good. With the mowing operation, Kevin is doing an inspection before and after the mowing, and this is improving the look of the maintenance.

Kevin reported to the committee on The Day of Service effort which included painting of the fence. He described the effort and accomplishments and plans for completing the project. [The range of the fence fronting Russell Road, from the gate to the top of the hill, was completed. The complications from wind occurred. Plans are underway for the town crew to complete the fence.]

Among the efforts which have been accomplished are the removal of invasive plants, whose roots have upended some markers and eradicating some groundhogs, which have damaged graves. During the walk around, we identified additional groundhog holes which will need attention. There are numerous tombstones which are in need of repair and the best way to do that is not yet known. Previous efforts with commercial adhesive compounds have not been effective, though gravestone-specific materials may be available.

There exists a need for repair of walls of family plots. This has been requested by some family descendants, but is not necessarily the responsibility of the Town. However, there are some plots and walls that show serious damage and deterioration.

Thank you for your attention to the Sinking Springs ~~Presbyterian~~ Cemetery, both north and south of Russell Road, and the White Cemetery, and to allowing me to give you this report.