

SINKING SPRING CEMETERY COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, March 5, 2024 – 5:30 pm
Arthur Campbell Room, Town Hall
133 West Main Street
Abingdon, Virginia

AGENDA

- I. Call meeting to order – *Donnamarie Emmert, Chair*
- II. Approval of minutes –
 - December 7, 2023
- III. Presentation from Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson regarding the Cemetery Preservation Plan (*virtual*) - *Christine Leggio and Mary Alfson Tinsman, representatives*
- IV. Update on Adopt a Plot – *Mayana Rice, Asst. Town Manager and Director of Community Development*
- V. Old Business
- VII. Next scheduled meeting
- VIII. Adjourn



March 5, 2024



Sinking Springs Cemetery Preservation Plan

Presented to: The Town of Abingdon, Virginia



Our Agenda

- About JMT
 - Project Introduction
 - Project Purpose
 - Preservation Plan – Contents
 - Historical narrative
 - Cemetery Inventory
 - Preservation and Maintenance Plan
 - Funding and Revenue Plan
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About Us

Christine Leggio – Senior Architectural Historian

- MS/Historic Preservation: University of Pennsylvania
 - BFA/Fine Art: University of the Arts
 - Qualified under 36 CFR 61
 - 12 Years of Experience
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About Us

Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson, Inc. (JMT)

- JMT is a 100% employee-owned multi-disciplinary planning, design, engineering, and construction consulting firm established in 1971.
 - Cultural Resources group works on a combination of architectural history, historic preservation, archaeology, public history, and public participation.
 - Cultural Resources staff are qualified for positions they hold as outlined in the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards.
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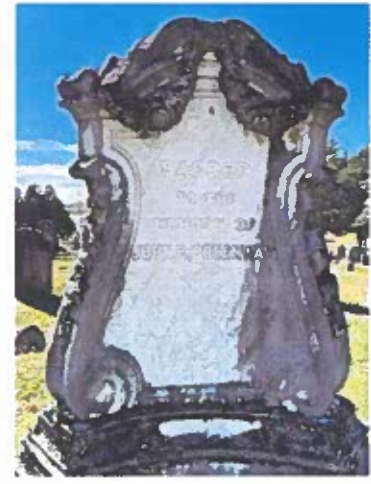
Sinking Spring Cemetery



Project Introduction

Sinking Spring Preservation Plan

JMT will develop a preservation plan for Sinking Spring Cemetery which will serve as a “living blueprint” to assist in the preservation and maintenance of Sinking Spring Cemetery’s history and cultural resources.



Project Purpose

- Survey and inventory all accessible grave markers
- Outline maintenance needs for grave markers
- Establish repair and cleaning procedures for common grave marker conditions (e.g. biological growth, soiling, cracking, etc.).
- Establish proper procedures for repair and maintenance of above-ground infrastructure including roads, pedestrian pathways, and structures (Cummings Cabin, headstones, markers, etc.).
- Address landscape management, rules and regulations for special events, and methods to address security and vandalism



Cemetery Preservation Plan

Contents

- Historical Narrative
- An inventory of grave markers
- Maintenance Plan
- Proposed edits to town ordinance
- Funding and revenue plan



Historical Narrative

- A written narrative of the history of Sinking Spring Cemetery.
- Deed research and records to clarify ownership
- Independent research done by JMT staff on the cemetery and church.
- Research will be conducted in person in conjunction with the site survey.
- Potential research sources include the records of the Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church, the
- Historical Society of Washington County, and the Washington County Recorder of Deeds.



Inventory of Grave Markers

Survey Method

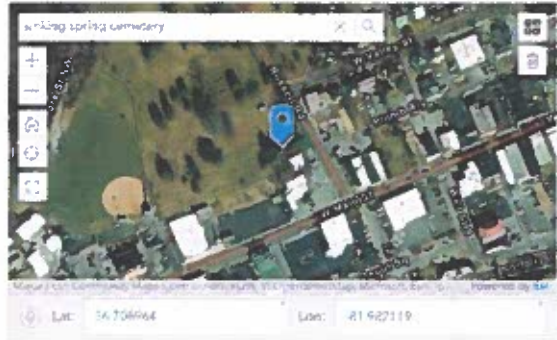
- JMT will use a custom map-based application to collect data for the survey.
- The application runs on tablets and can save data to the cloud in real time.

Data to be collected

- A GIS location point for each marker
- Photographs
- Marker type
- Marker material
- Name of deceased, birth/death dates, and inscriptions
- General conditions
- Site features (curbing, fencing, plaques, etc.).

Sinking Springs Collection Form

Resource Location



First Name

Middle Name

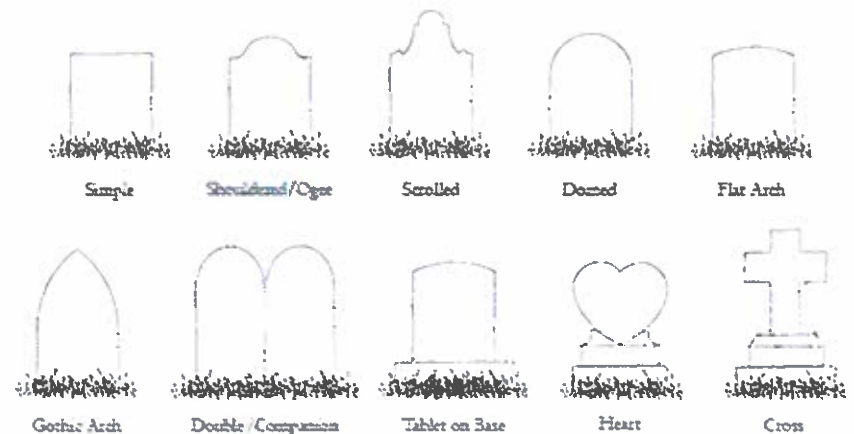
Last Name

Lat: 36.706664 Lon: -81.927119

Inventory of Grave Markers

On-Site Survey

- The survey will be conducted by a team of four cultural resource professionals.
- Each surveyor meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications as an architectural historian or archaeologist.
- Survey will begin on March 11th and continue through March 15th
- JMT cultural resource professionals will be on site from 9-5 PM March 12th through 14th



Inventory of Grave Markers

Resulting Inventory

- The Cemetery Inventory will catalog all visible grave markers located within the legal boundaries of the cemetery.
- The inventory will be produced using a GIS application specifically tailored to capture locational data, photographs, and narrative data about each grave marker.
- Photographs and collected data are tied to a locational datum point, resulting in a database that can be queried geographically.
- The information captured will include photographs of each side of each marker, the type of marker, the marker material, name of deceased, date of birth, date of death, inscriptions, associated plaques (where present), and the condition of each marker.
- The final cemetery inventory will be included in tabular form in the final Preservation and Maintenance Plan, as well as provided to the Town as a File Geodatabase to integrate with their respective GIS platforms.

The screenshot shows a web form with two main sections. The first section, titled 'Marker Type', contains a dropdown menu with the text 'Please select'. Below the dropdown, a list of marker types is displayed: 'Tablet - Simple', 'Tablet - Shouldered/Ogee', 'Tablet - Scrolled', and 'Tablet - Domed'. Below this list is a checkbox labeled 'Select all that apply'. The second section, titled 'Marker Material', contains a grid of checkboxes for different materials: 'Sandstone', 'Limestone', 'Slate', 'Marble', 'Granite', 'Bronze', 'Concrete', 'Wood', 'Cast Iron', 'Wrought Iron', and 'Other'. Below the grid is a label 'Marker Material - Other'.

Marker Type

Please select

Tablet - Simple

Tablet - Shouldered/Ogee

Tablet - Scrolled

Tablet - Domed

Select all that apply

☐ Sandstone

☐ Limestone

☐ Slate

☐ Marble

☐ Granite

☐ Bronze

☐ Concrete

☐ Wood

☐ Cast Iron

☐ Wrought Iron

☐ Other

Marker Material - Other

Preservation and Maintenance Plan


- Once fieldwork is complete, JMT will make recommendations regarding the preservation of the cemetery to include potential remedial treatments for a range of conditions noted over the course of the survey and for appropriate ongoing maintenance.
- The survey will be conducted in accordance with, and recommendations made based on the National Park Service's Historic Preservation Brief Number 48 *Preserving Grave Markers in Historic Cemeteries*
- While JMT's recommendations will address the treatment of specific conditions noted on site, JMT will not make recommendations specific to individual grave markers or burial sites.
- The Plan will address appropriate rules and regulations for special events, methods to address security and vandalism, and provide recommendations for capital improvements based on the survey and inventory.



Funding and Revenue Plan

- A funding and revenue plan for the continued preservation of the cemetery will be developed in consultation with the Town and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.
- The plan will include recommendations on potential avenues for grant funding, fundraising strategies, and parameters for historic heritage programming.





Contact us:

Mary Alfson Tinsman

Vice President

Philadelphia, PA 19103

Email: malfson@jmt.com

Christine Leggio

Senior Architectural Historian

Philadelphia, PA 19103

Email: cleggio@jmt.com





Questions

