

Cemetery Trustees
7 Sep 2023
Forestview Cemetery

Attendees: Marie Grella (Chair) Cynthia Dokmo, Lisa Eastland, Peter Lyon (BOS Rep), Perry Day (Sexton)

Professional Attendee: Ken Clinton, Meridian Land Services

Citizen Attendee: Kevin Grassett

Meeting called to order at 1008

Lisa summarized the purpose and intent of the meeting which is to determine what remaining portion of Forestview is usable for burials and what can be done with the rest, keeping in mind cemetery buildings such as a columbarium, memorial wall, work shed, etc. Cynthia also added a reflection area. The Cemetery Trustees are invested in using as much of the purchased property as possible, but also considering ways to be fiduciarily responsible to the Town for maintenance costs.

Ken Clinton had a copy of the Forestview map he used that showed the currently developed area to be around 5.2 acres. The next usable area for grave lots is about 6.1 acres. The remaining 35ish acres is currently not usable for burials. That space is on the flood plain and while it isn't marked that way on current FEMA maps, that FEMA study did not consider the massive amount of excavation done on that property over time.

The current Phase I should last the town of Amherst about 50-100 years. The proposed Phase II, which uses the above mentioned 6.1 acres, should last an equal or longer amount of time. At the longest glance, Forestview should last the town 200 years or more. Ken reminded us we currently have to allow consideration of Beaver Brook, conservation, and flood plain as we move forward.

Kevin Grassett: He reiterated the purpose of the land purchase was for cemetery only—not recreation or conservation. He also said Trombly Farm used to use rent that property for haying purposes and suggested the Cemetery Trustees look into that again. He said there is 12 inches of top soil at Forestview which makes it good for agricultural purposes. Kevin said he could reach out to various farmers around Amherst to see if they would be interested.

Kevin asked Ken Clinton if the flood plain could be lifted. His thought was to build a pond and using the fill to build up the flood area to a higher elevation to reduce flooding on the property. Additionally, that purpose would enable the town to dump their excavation materials to help. He stated that we need to be thinking 200-300 years ahead, not just 20-30.

Cynthia stated any other purposes of the property may have to be approved by the NH Attorney General, even if it is just used by a farmer for hay.

Lisa asked about offering up to the residents of Fairway Drive the option of purchasing a portion along their property lines to raise some money. Cynthia and Marie stated they would not support that if it came to a motion or vote.

The lowest impact on that property, and to families, is to investigate the agricultural route. The idea of selling to the town for playing fields may be allowable but may not be in the best interest of those burying loved ones. For instance, if a burial is happening and a lacrosse or baseball tournament is happening, how would we ensure the grieving family has the peace they want/need during a burial? We could ask the tournament to hold off, but we are not confident that will go over well with teams and visiting families.

Meeting was called to a close at 1028.

Next meeting is Thursday, September 20, 2023 at 1000 at the town DPW.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Eastland, Cemetery Trustee.