

TOWN OF PLAINFIELD
CEMETERY COMMISSION

The Cemetery Commission for the Town of Plainfield met remotely by "Zoom" on Tues, April 21, 2020 a 4:35PM on-line

The meeting started a bit late at approximately 4:35PM

Those attending remotely were commissioners Alice Dworkin, David Spense, Kenley Freeman, and Ed Hutchinson. I spoke with Rocky Edson after the meeting. He was planning to attend by telephone but had difficulty connecting.

No members of the public attended (except that Sasha Thayer was in earshot and assisted me with the vagaries of the Zoom meeting program).

The agenda was taken slightly out of the order published.

Those attending introduced themselves.

Ed Hutchinson was elected to serve as chairperson.

The meeting minutes of Feb 26, 2020 were approved by motion as published.

There were no members of the public attending so there was no need to retire to an executive session to discuss the mowing contract bids.

The proposals for the two year mowing contract were discussed and all commissioners spoke. Four bids had been received by the deadline of April 1, and one was accepted late because he had some difficulty, that was not the proposal we eventually accepted. Several of the bids contained references. It was an oversight not to require references when we published the request for bids. That should have been done because it left us without much information about several of the bidders.

The two highest bids were not in play. One had withdrawn his bid, and the other was about 50% higher than the next nearest bid.

By consensus we were leaning toward not accepting the lowest bid (that was considerably lower than we have been spending and lower than other bids we were considering). That issue was discussed. The lowest bid was questioned because our experience has not been successful at that level. If we had good references we might have had more confidence in the low bid. Ed read a brief history of the mowing contracts since 2013. Given the difficulty and the two failed contracts during that time it was decided that it is in the best interest of the Plainfield cemeteries to award the contract to Kirkyard Services (Joseph Mangan our current sexton). His bid was about 15% higher than the next lower bid but he has been doing a good job and we know what we can expect.

There were no members of the public attending for comments.

Other business

Alice has been researching the prospects for a natural burial site in one or more of our cemeteries. Several local cemeteries have natural or green burial options. Green Mountain Cemetery in Montpelier and cemeteries in Calais and Woodbury have followed. Alice mentioned Patrick Healy (A Marshfield resident and Sexton at Green Mountain). If he is willing he may be able to attend one of our meetings to walk us through the process used there. Joseph Mangan has been shepherding the Calais effort and they have had at least one burial. He may be able to help us with our effort. Alice has some documents on the subject (one from the Secretary of State's office, and I presume it will outline the legal parameters). She will send the documents she has collected to all of the commissioners and we will discuss the issue at our next meeting.

The damaged gate from PlainMont was discussed. Ed has removed the gate that remained attached to the stone wall all winter and both gates have been brought to the garage for storage. In consideration of the cost to repair them, the fact that the motorist was uninsured, that our insurance company refuses to cover any of the cost of repair, and the condition of our long term invested funds from the current recession, we decided to put the gate repairs aside until we might have more financial security.

Our next planned meeting will be Wednesday May 20 at 5:30PM. The details will be announced when we know if it will be in person or remote.

The meeting was adjourned by motion about 5:03 PM.

Minutes submitted by Ed Hutchinson