

Otisco Township Cemetery Meeting  
July 22, 2013

In attendance: Paul Reeves – Superintendent, Joan Reeves, Lynda Sower, Melissa Kline, Marianne Reeves, Laura Staats, David Hodges

The Otisco Township Cemetery committee hopes to improve the overall look of the two cemeteries in the Township; Smyrna Cemetery and Otisco Township Cemetery. The above group visited the Miriam Church Cemetery and the Easton Cemetery. The reason for visiting the cemeteries was to get ideas for maintenance and improvement of the Township Cemeteries. It was noted that at both of these cemeteries that water was accessible to the people tending their family's gravesites. It was also noted how trees and shrubs were trimmed to maintain a neat and orderly look.

The group then continued on to the Otisco Cemetery, a walking tour to view broken or toppled headstones was taken. It was noted that many of the older stones that had toppled as a result of not having a secure monument base. Some headstones may have been toppled by vandals as well. The Cemetery committee will consider options to find ways to reset the stones and keep them from further damage. In past years many of the broken stones have been repaired, most are still in good order.

Otisco Township Cemetery: specific items mentioned included weed killing, grass reseeding, Monument repair, gravesites not conforming to rules and regulations, continue trimming the trees and bushes, water accessibility to more parts of the Cemetery.

At the Smyrna Cemetery it was noted that there are a number of trees that need to be removed were trimmed, the group also visited the front rows which have been refurbished a number of years earlier. Headstones have been repaired, reset, and cleaned. It was noted here that a few of the older graves, before vaults were required, have sunk and need to be filled in reseeded.

Smyrna Cemetery: specific items mentioned included weed killing, removal of dead trees and bushes, water accessibility, adding topsoil added to some of the older grades that have sunk, removal of the large Mulberry tree near the exit, also removal of the pipe on the entry drive. Improvement to the drive itself was discussed, it currently is a two track drive with a grass center strip, Paul suggested the center be stripped out and crushed asphalt be applied to the drive. It was felt this was a good idea but not a top priority.

David Hodges recommended using a weed killer around the base of many of the headstones as it is difficult to mow closely, and the weeds grow back quickly in these areas. Also some headstones are so close together that it is nearly impossible to even weed whack between them. Areas where grass is thin would be re-seeded.

It was also noted that many of the families are ignoring rules and regulations for maintenance of the gravesites and placing objects, plants and fencing that is not allowed. It was discussed that the rules and regulations for the cemeteries be published in the township newsletter. Also a personal letter will be sent specifically to the families violating the regulations re-stating them and urging the families to make corrections to the gravesites by a given date, or the Cemetery committee will remove all items that do not conform.

Many of the urns used at gravesites were found to be tipping over, it was noted that at gravesites where a foundation had been placed under the urns that this was no longer a problem. It is being suggested that we add to the rules and regulations that all urns must have a foundation under them. Also that all urns must be in-line with the headstones and not set in front of them, so that lawn mowing will not be hindered. Baskets or other items hanging on crooks would need to be placed so that the basket or item falls in line with the headstones also to facilitate mowing.

In the past many of the gravestones have been washed, Joan wondered what solution had been used on them. Paul said the committee would have to contact Connie Doty as she was the person who had previously cleaned the headstones.

When asked how much money is available in the Cemetery fund Paul replied, that he did not know the specific amount but that it was not a lot. It was noted that some other communities hold fundraisers for the purpose of the maintaining the cemeteries, fundraisers such as a community picnic. Also some families might be interested in paying a fee to have family gravestones washed.

The date for the next Cemetery meeting has not been set; committee members will be called and notified of the date once it is determined.

Respectfully submitted,  
Laura J. Staats

## Otisco Township Cemetery Committee Meeting - June 16, 2014

Present: H. Paul Reeves supervisor, Maryann Reeves, Laura Staats, David Hodges, and Paul A. Reeves.

Smyrna Cemetery, the committee walked through the cemetery and made the following comments as to items that needed to be addressed.

- Locate North and South boundary lines for the Smyrna Cemetery.
- Rake areas around headstones where weeds were killed off and spread seed in these areas.
- New garbage cans are needed for the Smyrna Cemetery, suggest that they be plastic like the ones at Otisco Cemetery.
- A brief discussion was held regarding adding faucets for water, with one towards the front and one towards the back.
- Cut brush back along the entry south drive to the cemetery to allow for a second car passing by if need be.
- Cut and remove pipe located in driveway by Sexton's of shed.
- Consider painting Sexton's shed.
- Lop off lower branches of tree located near the Ring Memorial.
- Poison ivy along edges of Cemetery needs to be killed and then cleaned up.
- Spray the north border of the cemetery with weed killer and then clean out the brush.
- Adjust and level all crooked foundations on headstones.
- Get price quotes for repairing broken headstones and straightening headstones.
- Trim branches from Oak tree on south side of the cemetery by the flagpole.
- Remove the pipe being used as an urn near the front south end of cemetery.
- Remove broken urns from cemetery.
- Remove shrub by Leland Clark headstone.

Laura and Maryann discussed a Memorial Cremation Wall, Laura stated that Linda Sower said that she had been informed of a service for dumping ashes for those who have been cremated and do not want to purchase a burial plot. A decorative wall capable of accepting name plaques would be erected along one edge of the cemetery where there is a drop off behind that does not accommodate additional graves, the family, for a fee, would be able to place their loved one's name on the wall and deposit their ashes over the back.

The group then moved on to the Otisco Cemetery. All agreed both cemeteries are looking nicer than they have in the past, but the following items need to be considered for the Otisco Cemetery.

- The oak at the end of the north drive needs to have the lower limbs trimmed back.
- Grave for Alfie Brimmer (N93 1) needs to have military stone marker moved back in line with the headstones.
- All the small trees and brush need to be removed from the rear fence line where the additional drive will be.
- Rake areas around headstones where weeds were killed off and spread seed in these areas.
- Eddington (N28 5) grave needs to have tree moved to the side of the headstone or removed completely, white stones need to be removed from the grassy area in front of the headstone.
- Planters need to be in-line with headstones not located in front of or behind headstone.
- Flags for veterans need to be placed to the side, in line, with the headstone to facilitate mowing.
- Paul Reeves will look into the situation with the Demarest and Harrell plots, the official plat map for Otisco Cemetery shows that the two graves where the Caroline and Charles Demarest headstones rest was previously sold to Leland & Linda Harrell. (S386 Graves 3 & 4) Note that

the Demarest family resides in the next space west (S387 Graves 1-5). There are open Graves at the two following locations to accommodate the Demarest headstones S358 Graves 3&4, or plot S388 Graves 1 & 2.

- Cedar trees near the Demarest (S387 1) monument need to be removed or trimmed.
- Dead limbs located near the headstones of P& R Reeves (S388 3& 4) and Michalek (S390 3 & 4). Need to be removed or trimmed. Poison ivy located along the perimeter and climbing some of the trees in this same area needs to be killed and then removed.
- Remove lower branches located near the Kern (S374 3&4) and Reeves (S373 3&4) cemetery plots on the south side of the cemetery and South of the drive.
- At the two different Wierman (S368 & S372) cemetery plots the old urn rings need to be dug up and removed.
- Urns located near the Sower (S366 1-5) grave plot needs to be neatened up.
- It is recommended that all large Norway spruce trees need to be removed from the cemetery. A quote will be required for this work.
- Spicer family plot (S177 1 – 5) with cement curb could curb removed to facilitate mowing, or consider adding dirt to cover the curb and make for mowing easier.
- In the oldest part of the cemetery brush needs to be removed that is covering up the Franklin H and C Helen Mosher headstones (S 114 Graves 4&5).
- Trim lower branches near Amtz grave (S 381 1 & 2).
- Remove all shrubs that are hard to mow around, per supervisor Paul Reeves.

It is recommended that we put a Cemetery notice in the upcoming newsletter for Otisco Township. It should state the rules of the cemetery. A notation should be made saying that anything that is not in-line with the cemetery regulations should be removed by not later than, (insert date). We need to clarify that all headstones must be in-line and all items like plant crooks, crosses, planters and the like must be in-line with the headstones. Plant crooks with hanging planters must have the plantar overhanging the headstone and not hanging out over the grave. There should be no fences surrounding any portion of a grave site. A small discussion was held regarding graves that families have not placed markers on. Temporary markers placed by the funeral homes are often reclaimed leaving the graves unmarked. Laura suggested that the township consider looking into the cost of making a similar inexpensive marker available for a fee to families that cannot afford a granite marker.

Broken and cracked urns at both cemeteries should be removed, repaired or replaced by the families or the cemetery committee will request that they be removed.

It is recommended that we hire someone to clean and repair headstones at both cemeteries. A budget needs to be determined for the work that needs to be done regarding work on headstones, trimming and removing of larger trees. A multiyear plan needs to be discussed and items on the list need to be prioritized.

Laura would like to recommend that the entrance and exits for the Otisco Cemetery be reversed, for the following reason, that the sight line for exiting is blocked by the hill near the entrance. It would be safer to exit at the top of the hill and enter at the bottom.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura J. Staats