

## Otisco Township

### Cemetery Meeting

January 11, 2017

Cemetery Committee Members present: Maryann Reeves, Shane McDonald, Joe Daller, Laura Staats

Absent: Lynda Sower, David Hodges, Paul Reeves, Sextant Ralph Van Ocker

The Otisco Cemetery Committee welcomes Shane McDonald as a new committee member.

#### Old Business:

A copy of the recent survey was presented to each member present. Otisco Cemetery Committee funds covered the cost of \$1,100. The survey was completed and the boundaries that are currently marked did not change. With this completed the Cemetery Committee will continue with plans for extending the driveway within Otisco Cemetery. The property for the Otisco Cemetery is zoned R-2 – Residential. Laura will look through the Zoning Book to see if there is any setback references for the driveway. Joe will ask Marc Larabel if he knows of any specific ordinance that needed to be addressed regarding the driveway setback. It is the hope of the Committee that the new driveway extension can run along the back (west) property line.

The Hulliberger Monument was briefly discussed, it was reiterated that once the location of the drive has been determined that if it is necessary, a steel post will be installed near the marker to protect it from traffic. As it is, the marker has been upset from his foundation more than once by peoples driving all the way to the back of the cemetery, and has had to be moved back onto the foundation.

There was some discussion on what rights a person 'owned' when they purchased a space for burial. It was determined that they purchased "*the right to be buried*", they do not own any specific piece of the property in the cemetery, only the right to be buried in it. At the time of the sale for burial rights sale a plot will be selected, and only under specific or extreme circumstances would an interment location be changed from the one indicated at the time of purchase. If necessary, there should be no issue with relocating any plots/space within the cemetery if need arises. The MTA Cemetery Management book states that some documents for the sale of burial rights are recorded as 'deeds', it states that this is the right to burial and not the ownership of the piece of land. The Township, (or cemetery owner) owns the land in which the burial takes place.

Front hill at Smyrna Cemetery was discussed. Shane informed us that it was not likely that inmates from the Ionia Correctional Facility would be made available to assist with the planting of the front hill at the cemetery. However that perhaps inmates from the Ionia County Jail may be. Shane suggested that we check with Dion Sower about this. Some fees may apply to cover the cost of having a Deputy on site while the work is being done. Maryann feels that we would require the assistance of four individuals at the time of the hill planting.

The Ribbon foundations for markers has been implemented for both the Smyrna and Otisco Cemeteries. Future Ribbon foundations will cover the full width of any space/s sold and be flush with the ground to facilitate mowing. At the time the foundation is poured the Plot Space ID and Lot Space number are to be etched into the concrete. This

way even if a monument is never placed on the foundation the burial position can still be tracked.

#### **New Business:**

Copies of the MTA sample Cemetery Ordinance that Paul handed out in October for review were briefly discussed, and will be addressed again in March.

The question still stands, do the other cemeteries in Otisco Township need to supply the Township with copies of burial permits for the Township records? Laura is currently reading the MTA's book on Cemetery Management and may have an answer by the time of the March meeting. This question comes to light because in cleaning the vault we find we have records for the Rest Haven Cemetery burials. The other three cemeteries in Otisco Township are St. Mary's on Krupp Road, Rest Haven on Storey Road (M-91), and St. Joseph's on Zahm.

Cemetery Signage, Laura will look in the vault to see if there is an invoice from the current signage to see what the cost had been as well as who made them. There will be two new cemetery signs as well as two signs for the dumpsters. She will give any information she finds to Lynda so that the purchase of the signs can be made.

Funding for the future Columbaria was mentioned. Asking that when the Township Board works on the new budget that they please do not lower the annual \$10,000 budget, just because it was not all spent the previous year. It was noted that the Committee had planned on construction of a new drive in Otisco Cemetery in 2016, but with the property requiring a survey first, that construction did not take place. It was requested that any leftover funds be moved into saving in hopes that sometime in the not too distant future that a Columbaria may be placed in the Smyrna Cemetery, as more and more people are being cremated. The construction would also allow for a memorial wall for those wishing to scatter their ashes, either in the 'cemetery ash' garden or elsewhere, but to still leave a record of their life.

Lynda had previously contacted the Holland Supply Company requesting the rods that attach to the military flag markers. She was informed that they did not sell the rods individually. Laura stated that her husband can make rods for the military flag markers. An initial cost was given at \$4.50 per 18" rod. However they will look for a less expensive source of rod for this use, hopefully lowering the price. Joe stated that we should ask for a discount on the materials because they are for the Township. It was determined that when these rods are purchased, whether from Louis Staats or someone or someplace else that the monies come from the General Fund.

**Next Meeting: March 21, 2017 - Otisco Township Hall at 9:00 AM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura J. Staats

Proposed Agenda:

January 11, 2017