

Smyrna & Otisco Cemetery's Spring Review

April 27, 2022 10:00 am

Present: Desmond Pike, Maryann Reeves, Laura Staats, and Patrick of Belding Lawn Care.

Topics of discussion were divided into two main categories, those that will be covered by the funds from the Cemetery Committee which will come out of their \$5000 budget, and those that are considered maintenance that will come out of the groundskeeping funds for Otisco Township that would include the necessary tree removal, dumpsters emptied, etc.

At Smyrna Cemetery one of the first items to be addressed is the steps up from the parking lot to the cemetery, remove of the small amounts of moss and grass that cover the edges of the steps. Continuing into the cemetery we also looked at many gravestones whose foundations are tipped or markers that are now lying flat. Some markers are broken in two and will require repair. A bid will be put together concerning those as well as what it will cost to upright those and when necessary, include a foundation for their uprighting. The removal of bushes and brush as well as the removal of broken urns, or culverts that were used as urns that are now cracked and unusable. Dates on the old gravestones and lack of maintenance show that the families have not been around for many years to maintain these graves. The Cemetery Committee feels that it is their responsibility to make sure that the overall look is neat, clean, and respectful for all who enter. It was noted that several trees require trimming or removal. This includes the tree referred to as the five-finger tree, which is dead and is losing its bark. There are also trees along the north perimeter that are leaning into the cemetery that require trimming or removal. Several cedar trees have also been called into question for removal. It was also suggested that at least three and possibly four cedar trees at the east end of the entry drive be removed and that post and plastic chain similar to the one at Otisco Cemetery be put up to keep people from driving on the grass and graves at that end of the drive be installed.

Otherwise, for the most part, the Smyrna Cemetery looked very well.

Moving on to the Otisco Cemetery, it is in better condition than the Smyrna Cemetery which is much older than the Otisco Cemetery. Here again, in the oldest part of the cemetery, several headstones need to be uprighted. Some have no foundations installed under them. There are other headstones where there are a couple of trees that need to be removed because they are causing the markers to tilt. Bids will be needed before the work can be done. There is also some tree removal required in Otisco Cemetery as well as some stump grinding is required. Tree work will also have to be put out for bid.

A brief discussion was held regarding the purchase of land on the north side of the current cemetery for future expansion. As previously presented, it would be purchased with the intent to allow the farmer to continue using the land to grow crops on it until it is needed for burials. The planned driveway to connect the two areas is already in place.

In summation:

Patrick from Belding Lawn Care will submit a bid for some of the above-mentioned services that are over and above what is part of his mowing contract. One bid for the extra work at each cemetery.

Belding Lawn Care will spray the moss-covered headstones with the D2 spray supplied by the Township.

Desmond will ask Lynda to put a notice in the paper regarding bids for the tree work in each cemetery. The bids are to be two separate bids. One bid for the work in each cemetery.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura J Staats