

Cherokee County Cemetery Preservation Committee

Meeting Minutes

9 December 2014

Cherokee County Administration Building

Hickory Log Conference Room

Canton, Georgia

Members Present: Jean Vredenburgh and Loriann White

Members Not Present: John Cadle and Harold Silvey

Staff Present: Michael Chapman and Margaret Stallings

The Cemetery Preservation Committee meeting began at 9:10am. In place of Mr. Silvey, Ms. White served as the committee chairperson. Ms. Stallings informed the committee that Mr. Wilson recently submitted a letter of resignation to Board of Commissioners' chairman Buzz Ahrens. Mr. Wilson resigned from the committee to care for his ailing wife. Ms. White made a motion to approve the August committee meeting minutes (having no formal business to consider from September through November the committee did not meet). Ms. Vredenburgh seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously to approve the August committee meeting minutes.

The committee considered approval of an inclement weather procedures section of the committee bylaws. In July 2014, the committee planned to meet at Pine Knot Cemetery for an outdoor, onsite meeting but due to inclement weather the committee meeting was postponed. However, because the committee had no inclement weather procedures in place several committee members were not sure if the committee meeting would proceed as planned. Mr. Chapman drafted a section to be inserted into Article IV of the committee bylaws which lays out a set of procedures to be followed in the event of inclement weather. Ms. White suggested that the inclement weather section should include all forms of communication between and among members and staff, not just e-mail as written by Mr. Chapman. The committee approved the inclement weather procedures as amended.

Ms. Stallings reminded Ms. Vredenburgh that her term on the committee expires at the end of December. Ms. Vredenburgh was appointed by District 4 Commissioner Jason A. Nelms whose term expires at the end of December. The term of a committee member runs concurrently with the Board of Commissioners member who appoints them. Ms. Stallings suggested that Ms. Vredenburgh should contact Post 4 Commissioner-elect Scott Gordon if she would like to be reappointed to the Cemetery Preservation Committee.

Ms. Vredenburgh inquired about the status of the Cemetery Preservation Plan. Ms. Stallings said that she has not received feedback from the Cherokee County Manager. Ms. Stallings said she hopes to have the preservation plan put before the Board of Commissioners early in 2015. Ms. Stallings prepared an executive summary of the preservation plan which she will submit to the County Manager by the end of the month.

Ms. Vredenburgh brought a copy of Rome, Georgia's Myrtle Hill Cemetery Education Handbook. Ms. Vredenburgh feels that the handbook could be a helpful guide for this committee once the Cemetery Preservation Plan is adopted and the education component of the plan is

implemented. The Myrtle Hill Cemetery Education Handbook was prepared using a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior / National Park Service through the Georgia Historic Preservation Division.

Ms. White and Ms. Vredenburgh presented the results of their recent cemetery site visits. At a previous meeting committee members were asked to visit cemeteries which are believed to be incorrectly located on Cherokee County's official map. The Cherokee County GIS and Mapping Department maintains a database of all cemeteries in Cherokee County. Ensuring that Cherokee County has an accurate database of cemetery locations has been a longstanding goal of the committee. Ms. White and Ms. Vredenburgh reported those cemeteries which are correctly located on Cherokee County's maps and those which are not.

Ms. White shared an article from the Cherokee County Historical Society newsletter regarding the Sixes Community Cemetery located on Bells Ferry Road. The Historical Society recently hosted a cleanup project at the cemetery and is asking for more volunteers for future cleanup projects. Ms. White pointed out that the Strickland Family Cemetery would be an excellent candidate for a cleanup project because of its small size.

Ms. White noted that during her cemetery visits she found numerous cemeteries that were so old that grave markings were worn away and unreadable. Ms. White and Ms. Vredenburgh found many graves of soldiers from the War of 1812 and the American Civil War as well as prominent community members during their site visits. Ms. White noted that some churches claim not to own nearby cemeteries and, as a result, the cemeteries have fallen into disrepair.

Having no further business Ms. White made a motion to adjourn the Cemetery Preservation Committee meeting. Ms. Vredenburgh seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 10:45am.

The next Cherokee County Cemetery Preservation Committee meeting will be held at the Cherokee County Administration Building in Canton on a date to be determined.