

Cemetery Committee Meeting Proposed Agenda

April 20, 2023, @ 7:00 PM

Cemetery Committee Members in attendance: Dala Granzo, Laura Staats, Desmond Pike – Supervisor, Joe Borek – Trustee.

Our original agenda item was to identify the people buried in the newly GPR-marked graves – Ground Penetrating Radar, in Otisco Cemetery. We were unable to move forward with the agenda item of identifying the location of persons because Clerk, Lynda Sower had removed all of the cemetery burial maps from the Otisco Township building, this included not only the maps but also the burial permits from the premises.

The follow-up plan would then be to notify the families that are still living in the Belding, Lowell, or Greenville areas to see if they have an interest in placing a monument or marker on the grave of their deceased family member. A letter would be crafted to be sent individualized to each family identifying whom we believe to be buried at that location and in which cemetery, be it Otisco or Smyrna, and whom to contact regarding the placement of the said marker.

Excess ARPA funds can be used to help cover the costs of digitizing records and creating a geo-tag database for locating graves by someone who has the GEO-tag application on their phone or laptop. Laura Staats showed two examples, one of a geotag burial location and one of an onsite map currently in use at the Bostwick Lake Cemetery listing the names of everyone buried there as well as the location of the grave sites so, that visitors can easily locate family graves within the cemetery if they are not familiar with the layout.

The discussion turned to a way to mark all of the plots in both the Smyrna and Otisco Cemeteries with their lot numbers. Both Laura Staats and Dala Granzo had previously done online research regarding lot markers. It is now believed that we can find much better pricing locally and that these markers should be made out of 300 series 12-gauge stainless steel. Dala Granzo will look into getting some pricing locally as well. Laura will get pricing from some Grand Rapids-based companies. Also, for a good price comparison initially all online suggestions were for a round disk in a 3 ½ or 4 ½ inch circle. However, it has now been determined that if they are to be made locally that cutting a square reduces the amount of waste from a stainless-steel sheet and would be less expensive to manufacture. There are an estimated 2700 lots in the Otisco Cemetery and 850+ lots in the Smyrna Cemetery that will each require a numbered marker. This does not take into account the new southside cemetery located in Smyrna that has not yet been plotted and is behind the new Smyrna Cemetery parking lot. NOTE: Brass is a less expensive option, however, it does oxide and becomes harder to read over time. It is a long-lasting durable metal, lasting eons.

It was also determined that at some point in the future any graves that have been identified and that no family has come forward to place a marker on, the Township will place an inexpensive marker at a later time. No time frame has been set for this to be accomplished.

The Township hired an arborist to review the health of the trees in both cemeteries and determine which trees should be trimmed or removed. It was determined there are 12 trees in the Otisco Cemetery that need attention and there are 11 trees in the Smyrna Cemetery that require attention. Linda Sower will be asked to place an advertisement in the Daily News and Shoppers Guide regarding the tree service that is required for this cemetery work. Bids Packets are available for pickup at the Otisco Township Hall for those interested in bidding on the tree work. Bids will be accepted independently for each cemetery.

The next meeting is on June 15 at 7:00 pm, discussions will include: Cemetery gates, flowers, spring and fall clean-up, mowing contract job description clarification, and cemetery pump houses/sextant sheds maintenance. The meeting is to be held at the Otisco Township Hall.

Next Agenda: _____

Next Meeting: Thursday, August 17, 2023 @ 7:00 PM Otisco Township Hall