

CEMETERY COMMISSION

To the Citizens of the Town of Oak Bluffs:

The Cemetery Commission is charged with ensuring the proper maintenance of Oak Grove Cemetery and making improvements as needed.

After 43 years of service to the Town of Oak Bluffs at Oak Grove Cemetery, Gail Landers retired on July 1, 2011. Her vast knowledge of the Cemetery will be greatly missed, but her careful and detailed written records will allow us to begin working toward a comprehensive digital system of records management for our Cemetery. The Commissioners have begun work on this project. Ms. Lander's position was cut from the Highway Department budget in November.

At the April 2011 Annual Town Meeting, the Commissioners requested and the voters approved a transfer \$25,000 from the sale of cemetery lots in order to survey the cemetery and to restore a 19th century Cemetery Register found in storage in the Highway Department.

Beginning in 2002 the Commissioners expressed interest in a parcel (Map 12 Lot 139) abutting the Cemetery as a means of enlarging our holdings for future Cemetery expansion. In 2011 Alaric Swift of Swift Searches was hired to research the parcel. His work revealed that the over three-acre parcel was already designated as Cemetery property. Mr. Swift staked out the parcel and registered it with the Registry of Deeds. Planning and design for this parcel will be part of the survey described above. With the completion of a plan for the new parcel and a complete survey of the Oak Grove Cemetery we will finally be able to install the grave markers already purchased.

In 2011, twenty-seven quarter lots and two cremation lots were sold and there were two full casket burials and four cremation burials. The sales produced \$16,500 for the Cemetery fund. Statistics reveal that nationally cremation interments are up by about 30% and will soon surpass full body burials. In addition there is increased interest in green burials and cemeteries nationally and Island-wide. These issues may impact planning for the future of the Oak Grove Cemetery.

In December of 2011, a complete list of burials in Oak Grove Cemetery was placed on the website CemeteryFind.com. This will allow family members and researchers to independently find and confirm burials in the cemetery. Look for the link on the Town's website.

We were advised to leave the fallen 19th century headstones as they are rather than re-install them upright in their fragile and broken states. We will continue to monitor these historic headstones.

The Cemetery Commission would like to thank former Commissioner Ed Charter for his service to the Commission and welcome new Commissioner John Tiernan as a result of the April 2011 elections.

We also would like to thank the Highway Department personnel for their hard work in keeping Oak Grove Cemetery maintained after Ms Landers' retirement and Nicole Morey in particular for her assistance with and support of the work of the Commissioners. We hope that voters will support the Highway Department budget so the Cemetery maintenance position can be restored and filled in a timely manner.

Respectfully submitted,

JESSE B LAW III, Chairman
LINDA WILSON
JOHN TIERNAN