

The cemetery board would like to welcome Ms. Chris Gallagher to the board and Mr. Michael Sangiacomo as cemetery liaison.

Meetings are the second Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at the village town hall.

Agenda and previous month minutes will be e-mailed to members to be accepted and approved at the meeting. Any additions to the agenda should be announced before the meeting begins. I have taken over the duty of chairperson since the discharge of Mr. Johnson. Election of chairperson will be held at the Feb. meeting.

Cemetery background

Evergreen Cemetery: Evergreen cemetery is located on the south side of SR 113, one quarter mile west of South Amherst Road and is well behind the church. Evergreen Cemetery has been divided in sections from A to L. Poor record keeping during early years has always been an issue. The board is aware of the many errors of the past and continues to work to make adjustments that are acceptable to all parties involved.

Pioneer Cemetery is the oldest cemetery in the Village of South Amherst. The earliest burial known was in the 1830's. The land on which Pioneer Cemetery is located joins with Evergreen Cemetery to the west. Many, of whom have helped form this village are interned here.

The South Amherst Historical Society is in the process of restoration of this cemetery. Three/fourths of the gravestones have been repaired and reset. The society plans to finish the restoration this year. The north end of fencing will also be repaired and re-set this year. There were no records of this cemetery burials. Records for this cemetery are being developed through the historical society.

I would like to bring the new members up to speed on some of the items that are being discussed:

1. Baby Ritz: A mother of a stillborn child has been calling and asking for this baby's location to put a memorial on the grave. Evergreen only has records that the Baby is here in Babyland, with other infants, the amount they paid for the lot and the date they paid (records attached). Evergreen has no specific location other than "Babyland" in any of the antiquated handwritten records. Jean Stopford, the mother lives in Thomasville NC and is hiring lawyers that are telling her she has a case on the grounds of "neglect" she said. There are many babies in Babyland (more than 50) with no determination of location as you can fit more than one in a lot. Many cemeteries made use of a "Babyland" back in the day. Lots could be sold cheaper for the smaller graves rather than paying for a full family plot. Many of these children do not have names. We no longer make use of this section as babies are buried with families or with relatives. We had a cemetery board meeting and discussed this situation for her and sent her an email saying we did not know the baby's specific location and offered her the option of placing a memorial stone in Babyland anywhere she likes, this is what we have offered other parents in the past. She is wanting it specifically on her son's body. She has continued to threaten with a lawsuit. Information has been turned over to Village law director and she is to go through him with any further conversation.
2. Cemetery Sexton position: Coordinates and oversees the daily operation and maintenance of the village cemeteries. Administers day-to-day administrative, grounds maintenance, and burial-related activities; and performs other work as assigned. Responsible for working with cemetery clerk, excavator, vault company, funeral director, and cemetery board to ensure that all funerals at Evergreen Cemetery are managed as efficiently as possible. David Leshinski has been hired as the cemetery sexton. David is able to navigate the comings and goings of the cemetery and has made positive connections with families and contractors.
3. Drainage in section B and L.: The board has been working with the council and the county for the last several years to have these

flooding issues resolved. The village is waiting for the county to clear Ludwig ditch.

4. Roadway exit for Sec. L.: Plans were developed, and bids have been presented to council and denied.
5. Columbarium: Franklin Monument from Norwalk has offered to set up columbarium at no cost. Franklin would receive a percentage from each niche sold. This has been discussion for two years; a contract was drawn up. The proposal was presented to council, and they have requested more information. Plans are for Kevin Hipp owner of Franklin Monument to meet with council and answer questions.
6. Cemetery Clerk, Natilie lafolla has been with us for less than a year and we are happy to have her. Her gentleness and kindness are much appreciated by all. Let us offer her the help/support when needed as different issues arise.

Grief is delt with in a variety of ways....there is no wrong or right way. We need to be prepared to handle complicated grief. We are last in line to care for the loss of a loved one; death now becomes a reality.