



CITY OF CONCORD

REPORT TO MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: David Gill , Parks & Recreation Director
Jill McDaniel-Huckins, Cemetery Administrator

DATE: February 22, 2019

SUBJECT: Cemetery Operations

Background

The Department would like to highlight the work of the cemetery division last year.

Discussion

The Parks and Recreation Department maintains and operates approximately 140 acres that encompasses thirteen cemeteries in ten different locations.

The cemetery administration office and Perkins Chapel are located near the entrance to Blossom Hill Cemetery. The Chapel, of Gothic Revival design, was donated to the City by Miss Susan Perkins in 1904 and is listed, along with Blossom Hill and the Old North Cemetery, on the National Historic Register.

There are many prominent citizens and notable individuals interred in our cemeteries, from politicians (Franklin Pierce the 14th President of the United States), United States Senators, Congressman, Governors, Concord Mayors, to religious leaders, civic leaders, a Medal of Honor recipient and an Astronaut. There are also over 4,000 veterans interred in our cemeteries. A Concord Veterans group places an American flag on each grave prior to Memorial Day. Additional flags are kept in the cemetery office in the event a flag is lost, stolen or a veteran's grave was missed.

Several of our cemeteries are at capacity, no lots remain for sale (Horse Hill Cemetery, Stickney Hill Cemetery), others are near capacity (Concord Calvary, Millville Cemetery). The other cemeteries have enough capacity left, at the current purchase rate, to have available for another 30+ years.

The chart below illustrates the names of the cemeteries, where they are located (with some being internally separated), the year they were established, and the approximate size of the cemetery. The oldest being The Old North Cemetery which was established in 1730.

CONCORD CEMETERIES AND LOCATIONS

NAME	SIZE	LOCATION	ESTABLISHED	ESTIMATED INTERMENTS
Blossom Hill	67.0 acres	207 North State ST.	1859	21,760
Maple Grove	12.2 acres	Sewalls Falls Rd.	1824	1840
Woodlawn	14.0	Village St., Penacook	1816	4450
Pine Grove	9.8 acres	Cemetery St.	1825	1440
Old Fort	6.0 acres	Shawmut St.	1775	247
Soucook	2.0 acres	Josiah Bartlett Rd.	1848	400
Millville	1.9 acres	Pleasant St.	1798	640
Old North	5.4 acres	North State St.	1730	2840
Horse Hill	0.5 acres	Horse Hill Rd, Penacook	1811	220
Stickney Hill	0.1 acres	Stickney Hill Rd	1833	34
Concord Calvary (Part of Blossom Hill)	15.7 acres	North State St.	1859	6000
Penacook Calvary (Part of Woodlawn)	4.2 acres	Village St. Penacook	1816	1040
Beth Jacob (Part of Blossom Hill)	0.4 acres	North State St.	1859	200

TOTAL ESTIMATED INTERMENTS ON RECORD – 41,111

Administration and Staffing

The cemetery administrator is responsible for the day to day operations of all the cemeteries. There is eight permanent full time staff, two of which are “shared” employees. The shared employees work for the cemetery for approximately 32 weeks and then are “shared” with the General Services Department for 20 weeks during the winter months.

During the winter months, an average of 50 interments takes place in the cemeteries. Our staff will plow the roads, clean the grave site area of snow, jack hammer through frost and prepare the grave site. Since we inter year round, cemetery roads are maintained by the cemetery staff during the winter. Besides their regular duties during the winter months, the cemetery staff is responsible for helping plow the City streets. All full time cemetery staff work from 3pm-11pm with the General Service Department during snow storms, then return to their cemetery work at 7am. During the winter months cemetery staffs also assist will plowing and sanding of the parking lots at the new City Wide Community Center and the Beaver Meadow Golf Course.

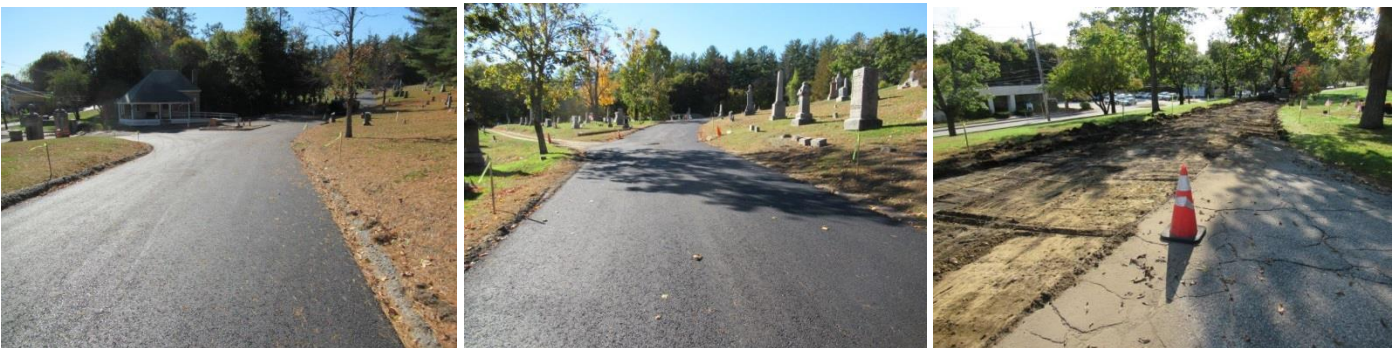
Preservation Team

In FY17 two additional 17 week temporary positions were funded for a dedicated staff to help preserve the monuments in the Old North Cemetery. The Old North is the oldest cemetery in the City, many of the monuments are over 200 years old. Cemetery employees, who are trained in monument preservation, trained the new temporary staff. To date they have preserved over 250 fallen or leaning slate monuments, broken or leaning marble monuments. We look forward to welcoming them back next year so they may continue this worthy endeavor as funded.



Blossom Hill Cemetery Road Paving Phase 1 and 2

The first phase of new roads in Blossom Hill Cemetery have been completed. The existing roads were ground, graded and then two inches of asphalt base was set. The finished coat was then applied on approximately 1,250 feet of selected roadway. Due to a rainy season GMI will return in the spring to shore up the sides of the road with a mixture of gravel and loam at which time the cemetery staff will hydro seed areas.



The Clara B. Perkins Chapel

This fiscal year several improvements have been made to the Perkins Chapel. New entrance walkway with lights and, inside the entire Chapel has been painted and several new “gas style” lights have been installed.

The Chapel dates back to 1904. Nine years after Blossom Hill Cemetery was established, the cemetery committee expressed the need for a chapel to hold burial services. The chapel was ultimately a generous gift from Concord philanthropist Miss Susan George Perkins, and named after her mother, Clara Bartlett Perkins. Susan and her mother are buried in Blossom Hill Cemetery.

The chapel is an example of late Gothic Revival architecture, based on English Parish design. Other features of the architecture & construction include:

- Stick style scissors truss made of heavy timber
- Granite walls & windows
- Roofs covered with Vermont slate
- Tall windows filled with stained glass



High Lift Sweepstar Sweeper

A new sweeper was purchased in September 2018. This sweeper takes the place of a sweeper that is over 15 years old. The new sweeper has worked out well this fall, the unit was able to pick up frozen leaves and dump directly into the truck bed. Previously we had to dump the leaves and place them in the bed of the truck by hand. This unit with an operator does the work of several staff members.



Partnerships

The cemetery utilizes partnerships with volunteers and civic groups to accomplish additional projects that would be out of our staffs reach without the additional assistance. The following is a list of our volunteer projects;

- Several volunteers assisted the cemetery administrator with research, and genealogy
- The Boutin-Rumford Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) has been preserving monuments in the Old Fort cemetery where Revolutionary War Soldiers are interred. They have held three work days so far this year preserving sixteen monuments so far.
- Concord Veterans Group – This group is responsible for placing American flags on veterans graves prior to Memorial Day.
- Franklin Pierce Brigade – This group holds an annual ceremony commemorating the birth of the President at his grave in the Old North Cemetery in November.
- General Services Tree crew – Working together to remove dangerous or damaged trees. GSD also offers a Tree Donation Program. We have had many trees donated through this donation program. The trees are placed near loved ones grave sites by family members with the type of tree and location being determined by Tree Crew.

Programs

The cemetery has a several ongoing programs that should be noted:

- Adopt A Grave – Initiated in October 2013. This program allows the public to donate funds for the purchase of a flat marker for those interred in the Common Ground area that was not able to afford a marker. To date all 211 Adult Graves have been adopted, and all but 267 Infants Graves have been adopted.
- Assisting the State of NH – For the past several months Jill McDaniel has been meeting with the State of NH to assist them in their efforts to modernize record keeping and operations at the State’s cemetery located on Clinton Street.
- Library – Annual Old North Cemetery Lecture and Tours.
- Heritage Heights – Several lectures on the interesting things that go on here at the Cemetery Division.
- Monument Cleaning Workshops – Several workshops were offered over the last few years to educate people on the proper way to safely clean headstones.
- St. Paul’s Students Work Day – The students work for 3 days planting Memorial Day Flowers, Raking Woodlawn Cemetery.
- Olli – Tour of Blossom Hill and visiting the graves prominent Concord residents.
- Rotary Club – Speak on what is happening in our Cemeteries.
- Wreaths Across America – Working with groups (DAR, Rotary, Civil Air Patrol, Pierce Brigade) to help set up promoting the program and wreath laying service.
- Jill McDaniel–Huckins was voted in as President of the New Hampshire Cemetery Association this year.