

Portage TWP - Cemetery Committee Minutes 03/18/2015

Where: Township Office – Green Acres Rd.

When: 10:30 A.M.

Who Present: Tony Sleeman, Bruce Petersen, Todd Van Vallenburg, Carolyn Petersen
Jay Green and Committee members John Ollila & Bill Bingham

Discussion Points:

- Discussed the inadequacy of the irrigation system at the cemetery and the fact that there are no known “as built” or drawings of any kind indicating where all the old galvanized piping is located. A proposal was put forth to put a new system in to the front half of the cemetery. PVC mainlines would be installed down the existing roadways with laterals running down the alleys. One riser for each 16 grave lot would be provided. Tony indicated that the oldest part of the cemetery along the northwestern line is largely tree covered and has very few ≤ 6 graves that are cared for by a commercial interest. So there would be very little advantage in putting an irrigation system in an area that is heavily treed with very little perennial care being done. The TWP could conceivably use the perpetual care fund that is generated through interest accrual to fund the new irrigation system. Everyone present – including the two committee representatives thought it was about time that we address the irrigation systems inadequacy. Will work out the final area and design and consult with UPEA about its’ feasibility.
- The inclusion of a “green cemetery” which would largely look like a wildflower meadow and there would be no vaults/coffins and no embalming fluid used. People would be buried in biodegradable coffins or shrouds only. There are six green cemeteries located in lower Michigan – the closest being in Traverse City. With a 48 hour State mandated time period from the time-of-death without the embalming to burial - this process would have to be run in an immediate sort of manner. The winter internment was also discussed and how that may be overcome. Forest Hills might only have seasonal green internments or the family may have to pay more to remove snow and to dig a grave during the winter months. Lot designation and ownership was discussed. The Committee needs to approach Lynn Madison at the UP Health Department again to see if she can offer any oversight/council and give us some final prerequisites that need to be met before we start accepting these kinds of burials.

>> Adjourned by Bill at 11:25 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted:

Bruce Petersen
Township Supervisor