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East Haven
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**EAST HAVEN OLD CEMETERY BOARD
HYBRID SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 31, 2023**

The East Haven Old Cemetery Board held a hybrid special meeting at 7:00 PM on Thursday, August 31, 2023 virtually and in person at the East Haven Senior Center, 91 Taylor Avenue, East Haven, CT 06512, and transacted the following:

Chairperson Robert Sand called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm.

Roll Call was taken and a quorum was present.

Present: Commissioners Arlene Hackbarth, Barbara Buonome, and Chairperson Robert Sand present in person. Vice-Chairperson Marcia Federico and Commissioners Judy Ruggiero, Melanie Johnson, James Longo present virtually.

Approval of Minutes:

Chairperson Sand asked if all in attendance had received and read the minutes from the July 27, 2023 regular meeting and all had. Chairperson Sand asked if there were any corrections, omissions or questions.

Commissioner Ruggiero stated she had a correction concerning the audit. The minutes state yearly when in fact the audit is performed bi-yearly.

Chairperson Sand asked if there were any other corrections.

Hearing none, Chairperson Sand asked for a motion to accept the July 27, 2023 regular meeting minutes with the one correction.

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to accept the July 27, 2023 regular meeting minutes with the one correction. Vice-Chairperson Federico seconded the motion to accept the July 27, 2023 regular meeting minutes with the one correction.

All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, motion carried. Minutes from July 27, 2023 regular meeting were accepted with the one correction.

Correspondence: None

Treasurer's Report:

Commissioner Ruggiero stated on August 30, 2023 she paid Jovani Precious Cuts \$1,080.00 for lawn care that occurred on July 26, 2023 and August 16, 2023 respectively. Commissioner Ruggiero received the Town Stipend of \$6,700.00 for fiscal year 2023-2024 and deposited it into account. Commissioner Ruggiero reimbursed herself the cost of \$74.45 for floral arrangement sent to Vice-Chairperson Federico. Balance in account as of August 31, 2023 was \$10,921.77.

Chairperson Sand asked if there were any questions, concerns, corrections with the treasurer's report as read.

Hearing none, Chairperson Sand asked for a motion to accept treasurer's report as read.

Commissioner Hackbarth made a motion to accept treasurer's report as read. Commissioner Buonome seconded the motion to accept treasurer's report as read.

All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, motion carried. Treasurer's Report accepted as read.

Ongoing Project Reports:

Landscaping:

Chairperson Sand stated grass was looking great, and he scheduled another grassing cutting for September 6, 2023, but the trees were not removed by public services as of yet.

Bamboo:

Chairperson Sand reported no shoots have appeared in the old cemetery.

Retention Wall:

No Report. Commissioner Johnson stated the Board needed to remind Mayor Carfora about Preservation Connecticut, an organization that provides grants for historical cemeteries.

Main Gate Entrance Pavers and Shrubbery Along Curbing:

No Report

Old Cemetery Flyer:

Chairperson Sand had two versions of the flyer made (see attached) and sent to each Commissioner for inspection. One flyer had larger font size than other, both on same style paper and coloration.

Chairperson Sand asked for input from the Commissioners. Commissioner Hackbarth stated the quote on top of first page should be centered better with Commissioner Johnson asking if the quote could be boxed in as well. Commissioner Buonome made notes for her daughter, Cheryl Panzo, who designed the flyer. Discussion concerning type of paper took place, with the consensus being the paper should be matte with a linen type texture. Chairperson Sand will pick up samples for paper for the Board's approval.

A discussion took place as to which version was more popular: Version 1 with the smaller font or Version 2 with the larger font. By a 4 to 3 margin, Version 1 was the most popular.

Further discussion will take place at next meeting.

Old Business:

Commissioner Ruggiero stated the Audit would begin with the date of October 17, 2021.

Chairperson Sand stated he would like Commissioner Ruggiero to contact Benny and ask Benny and his father Bedri to meet Chairperson Sand at the Old Cemetery to walk through and give an estimate of how many headstones need to be repaired and the cost. Chairperson Sand stated since the Old Cemetery is a Town owned piece of property, the Town should help with costs to maintain the headstones. Chairperson Sand would like to submit a Capital Improvement Project Report during the fiscal year 2024-2025 budget process seeking funds to repair all headstones.

New Business:

Commissioner Ruggiero stated her granddaughter would be in town from September 28, 2023 to October 2, 2023 and asked Commissioner Ruggiero to ask the Board for permission to perform a stone rubbing for her art class. Commissioner Ruggiero's granddaughter stated she would use charcoal or crayon and butcher paper, she would also take before and after pictures of the headstones to chronicle that the headstones were not damaged during the process.

None of the Commissioners had any issues, permission was granted.

Chairperson Sand asked if there was any other New Business.

Hearing none, Chairperson Sand asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Buonome made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Hackbarth seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

All in favor, none opposed, no abstentions, motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 7:46 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Stacy Gravino, Clerk

ABOUT US

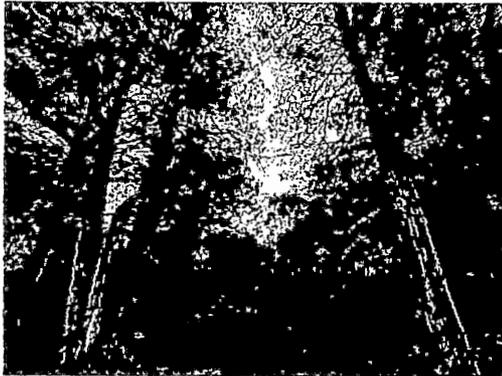
Prior to the arrival of European settlers in the 1630s East Haven was occupied by the Quinnipiac Indians. They grew crops and utilized the Farm River's resources of fish and oysters.

In what is today the OLD CEMETERY, there existed a natural amphitheater and spring used by the Indians. Remnants of this formation, commonly known as the "Indian Bowl" are visible to this day.

IN 1998 THE EAST HAVEN TOWN COUNCIL APPOINTED A BOARD TO OVERSEE THE CARE AND PRESERVATION OF THE GROUNDS AND GRAVESTONES OF THE OLD CEMETERY.

THIS COMMITTEE, KNOWN AS THE OLD CEMETERY BOARD, MEETS MONTHLY AND RAISES MONEY TO RESTORE GRAVESTONES. THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 200 GRAVESTONES IN THE OLD CEMETERY THAT REQUIRE RESTORATION.

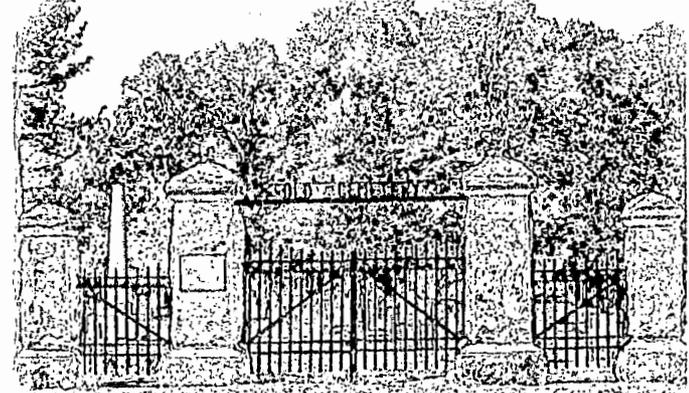
V.1
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The Old Cemetery Board graciously accepts donations of any size for continuing maintenance and repairs.

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The Quinnipiac Indians had a fort there to defend themselves from the combined attacks of the Mohawk and Mohegan tribes. This also accounts for the deep depression now existing on the east side of the ground. Naturally it was a pond, fed by a spring which no doubt was deepened and enlarged by the Indians for the two-fold purpose of supplying them with water; and earth for breastworks for their defence in time of siege.

Information is adapted from:
History of East Haven by Sara Hughes



Revised Edition 2023

THE OLD CEMETERY

RIVER STREET EAST HAVEN, CT

Registered as a National Historic Place in the Parks Department in Washington, DC

HISTORY

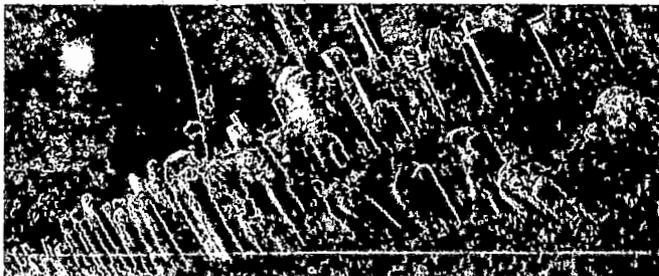
For several years after the settlement of East Haven, the inhabitants were compelled to carry their dead to New Haven and inter them in the ancient burying ground on what is now called the upper Green behind the Center Church. It was an arduous trip, especially during poor weather.

Therefore, on June 13, 1707, it was "agreed to sequester a piece of land for a burying place on the south side of the pond on the Forthill so called, as much as may be spared from highways and watering cattle." Thus began The Old Cemetery in East Haven, Connecticut, first called the "Burying Ground."

The oldest stone in the Burying Ground found bears 1712. It isn't likely that there are any earlier dates. Very little attention was given to the burying ground for many years until people began to let their cattle feed in it.

In 1777, a vote was taken that a committee of Jacob Bradley, Samuel Shepherd, and Joseph Hemingway take care of it and that no horses or cattle were to graze on the land. Only geese, sheep, and calves were allowed to feed there.

A hearse house on the northwest corner of the Burying Ground housed a hearse used for funerals. However, the undertaker for East Haven for several years was from North Haven, and he always came a few hours before the funeral to save travel with his hearse bearing the casket. This custom allowed the old town hearse to disappear and the hearse-house to fall to decay and be swept away with other refuse.



The Burying Ground was a free burial place, and after another fifty-two years, it was evident that "what was everybody's business was nobody's." It was deplorable, overrun with sumac and other bushes, briars, and rank weeds. The fences were old and broken, and there were none at all in places, and not infrequently, cattle were seen within its precincts. Everyone deplored the situation, but no one took the initiative to remedy the state of affairs.

In 1849, a society was formed by some young ladies, and it was decided that the Burying Ground was the most needy object in East Haven. Jeremiah B. Davidson handed out a new crisp five dollar bill to start them off. The membership fee was 25 cents; the fine for inexcusable absence from meetings was 10 cents. This society of young ladies successfully canvassed the town for money and hired Asahel Bradley to clean up the grounds and build fences. The following year Reverend D. W. Havens of the Congregational Church, not to be outdone by the women, organized the men to build a gateway to adorn the Burying Ground and complete the fence. Formally known as The Burying Ground, in 1868, the Burying Ground took on the name of "Old Cemetery." On October 5, 1868, it was voted that \$50 be appropriated from the town treasury to remove brush, etc.

In most cemeteries there are many quaint and striking epitaphs on stones. One which has attracted much attention, is that of Mr. Edmund Bradley with its seven outlined faces representing three pairs of twins and the eldest born:

"SEE DEATH REMOVES THE ELDEST SON JUST AS THE FAMILY'S BEGUN AND THREE PAIR OF TWINS IN A SHORT SPACE TO QUICKEN THEM IN THE CHRISTIAN RACE."

CHILDREN OF EDMUND AND LYDIA BRADLEY

STEP INTO A STORY WAS IT FACT OR FICTION?

The story as told by Bill Jackson, a former chairman and town historian.

He was at the cemetery one day and saw this woman in a long old-fashioned dress, wearing a bonnet, carrying a parasol walking down by the Indian Bowl.

He thought she was looking for someone buried there and maybe he could be of some help so he hurried in that direction. But by the time he got there, she had vanished! Did she slip and fall into the bowl? No, she was nowhere in sight and he knew she could not have left the cemetery without him seeing her.

He knew for sure he had seen a ghost!

TOMBSTONE SYMBOLS

AS YOU WALK THROUGH THE OLD CEMETERY, YOU MAY WONDER ABOUT THE SYMBOLS CARVED ON THE TOMBSTONES:

Anvil: Martyrdom

Angel's head: Soul's flight to heaven

Child, sleeping: Victorian death motif

Branch, severed: Mortality

Drapery over anything: Sorrow, mourning

Garlands: Victory in death

Handshakes: Farewell to earthly existence

Ship: The church

Skull, winged: Flight of the soul from mortal man

Cypress: Sorrow, death, eternal life, Roman symbol for mourning

Sheaves of wheat: Time, the divine harvest

Tree: Faith, life, the tree of life

Tree, felled: mortality

Tree trunk, broken:

Premature death

Urn, draped: Death, sorrow

Willow, weeping: Grief, death, earthly sorrow, the symbolic tree of human sadness

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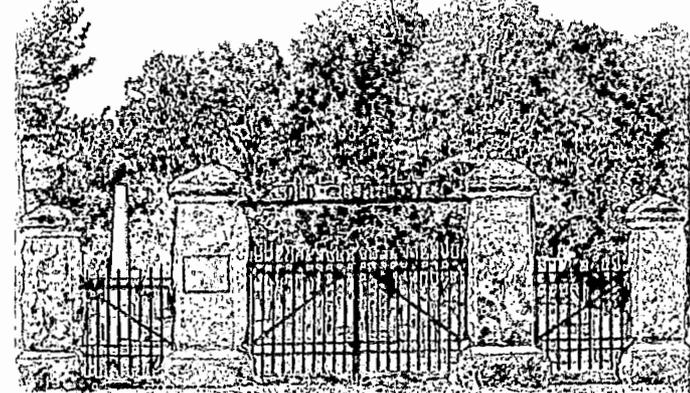
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