

RED CHURCH CEMETERY
Town of Red Hook
7340 South Broadway
Red Hook, NY 12571
845-758-4600 ~ Fax: 845-758-5313

Red Church Cemetery Committee Meeting
Wednesday, 9:00 a.m., 29 January 2020, Red Hook Town Hall

Red Church Cemetery Maintenance Report

Maintenance Staff Hours for 2020

BUDGET CODE: A0.08.8810.100

BUDGET LIMIT \$15,858=900 HOURS @ \$17.62

GROUNDKEEPERS: Joe Coon/Jeff Tremper

The maintenance staff hours are based on the experience of the past two years.

Fuel Consumption

The consumption of gasoline for the mowers and trimmers at the cemetery:

April 2019 = 29.90 gallons, May 2019 = 44.90 gallons, June 2019 = 30.00 gallons, July 2019 = 30.10 gallons, August 2019 = 47.50 gallons, September 2019 = 58.80 gallons, October 2019 = 29.40 gallons.

Total of gasoline used as of December 2019 = 270.6 gallons

The chain saw and the trimmers use a 30:1 gas and oil mixture. The oil is charged to the maintenance account along with the gasoline.

Diesel fuel used for the John Deere 4120 and John Deere 670 tractors are billed to the Recreation Park because the cemetery only has a gasoline account at the Highway Department. The cemetery has no diesel equipment.

Some budget overlaps with the Recreation Park are unavoidable. Both properties are in the A Fund.

Ferris IS Mower 600Z Commercial Mower

As noted in the last report, the John Deere F510 purchased for the Recreation Park in 1995 (24 years old) and used at the Red Church Cemetery for the past two years is now beyond reasonable repair.

Joe Coon researched a replacement and recommended purchasing a Ferris from Conway's Power Equipment through their Municipal Bid Assist Program.

This mower has a state-of-the-art suspension system that will make mowing at the cemetery somewhat less painful. A folding ROPS needed to mow under the trees, and a hand controlled mulch kit that prevents blowing grass on grave stones were purchased as special options. Four bids were received for this mower as required by the Town of Red Hook Purchasing Policy. Some bids were ruled non-compliant because they would not install the after-market hand-controlled mulch attachment. I purchased the mower from Conway's Lawn and Power, Inc. It is now stored in the maintenance building at the cemetery for use in the spring.

2020 Mowing and Trimming Schedule

In 2019 the mowing and trimming schedule did not significantly change as the summer turned into fall. The grass growth did not slow appreciably with warm fall temperatures and heavy dew every morning. One could not ask for more favorable conditions for growing grass. This may be a continuing trend with the effects of climate change ever more evident. The mowing schedule for 2020 reflects the experience of the past two years.

Aluminum Fence Repairs

Joe Coon and Jeff Tremper managed to acquire sections of aluminum fencing from Charlie O's in the village that can be used to make repairs to the fencing along Route 9G. As noted in past reports, deer crossing Route 9G panic and run straight through the aluminum fencing often leaving tufts of hair on the bent and broken pickets. The pickets can sometimes be straightened but more often have to be replaced. This requires drilling out the top and bottom rivets and installing the new pickets with self-tapping screws.

Bottles thrown from passing car windows also bend or break the pickets. Joe Coon has spent many hours repairing the aluminum fencing along Route 9G. He has also repaired and painted the remaining cast iron fencing south of the maintenance building. This is a maintenance task frequently overlooked when doing labor budgets.

Equipment Maintenance

Before the mowers, trimmers, chain saws, and blowers were stored for winter, they were serviced, i.e. oil and filters changed, hydraulic fluids checked and replaced as required, mower blades sharpened and balanced or replaced, and other equipment cleaning and repairs as required.

Joe Coon maintains thorough records of all maintenance requirements and when they were performed.

We did not purchase battery tenders for the equipment. The Tivoli Fire House fire was apparently caused by a battery tender, and I am nervous about using them.

In the future we may remove the batteries from all equipment for charging and storage at the Recreation Park Storage Barn.

Boyce Mausoleum

Joe Coon and Jeff Tremper reinstalled the stained glass window in the Boyce Mausoleum. The exterior of the window is now covered with a sheet of Lexan, the material used in helicopter windshields. They also replaced the metal grid protecting the window on the outside. While installing the window, they discovered that the west marble wall of the vault is in danger of the same collapse as occurred on the east wall. If this occurs there will be no way to enter the vault since the window cannot now be removed from the outside for security reasons. This stained glass window is unique and valuable and is now nearly impossible to remove. Bruce Troy gave me the lock for the door, and it is now reinstalled.

This ends the saga of the stained glass window. If the west wall of the of the mausoleum collapses, the door will be blocked forever!

Red Church Use for Events

There is only one entrance and exit to the Red Church. To have a viable venue would require a second handicapped access point somewhere at the back on the church. This is one more impediment in using the church for public events.

Red Church Electrical Service

I am developing a Scope of Work to put an electric service in the church. Once this is done, an RFP can be created and estimates solicited. This is the only way that we can determine what it would cost to have power in the church. This is taking longer than anticipated because various options are being considered.

Project Schedule

The project work schedule will depend upon the mowing demands. If the spring and summer are like last year, the projects will have to wait until fall simply because there will not be enough time to do them. Hopefully, mowing and trimming will be reasonable enough to allow for some of the needed projects to be completed.

Trimming with a gas-powered weed whacker is an arduous task that is quite physically demanding. Mowing over the rough terrain of the cemetery avoiding all

the monuments must be experienced to realize how difficult and time consuming job it is.

Tree Trimming and Removal

The three dead trees along the western border of the cemetery were dropped, cut up and removed in early November. No monuments were damaged. Joe Coon also used the fall to trim back shrubs. The Red Hook Tree Committee will assist the cemetery staff with trimming the crab apple trees along the 9G fence line and with some of the larger bushes within the cemetery this spring before the growing season begins.

I talked with Dr. George Michael about the overgrown section bordering and within the St. Sylvia's Section behind the Red Church. He recommends removal of all the lilac trees growing underneath the huge cedar tree. The dead limbs on the lower parts of the cedar tree must also be removed. There is a monument located underneath this tree, so trimming the tree and removing the lilacs will be a substantial improvement to the area.

Stone Entrance Pillars

As noted in the October report, when a vehicle struck the cast iron gates, the huge stacked stones were shifted out of alignment. I do not believe that they are in danger of falling at this time, but I believe that if they were struck again it could happen. The stones should be moved back into proper alignment once a viable method to do it is determined. This may not be something we are capable of doing ourselves. This is not a pressing issue. I will talk with the caretakers of the Montrepose Cemetery and/or Wiltwyke Cemetery for advice.

Horizontal Wall Mount Message Center

As noted in my last report, the damaged aluminum message board cannot be repaired. The remaining board is in direct sunlight most of the day which fades out anything placed inside. If we wish to replace the damaged one and eventually the second one, I would recommend going with 100% recycled plastic that is UV-resistant. A wall mounted unit costs \$676.85. These are durable locking units that should last for many years. Each unit has a small overhanging roof that prevents water damage getting in behind the board. Currently there is one message board. The holes from attaching the damaged message board were patched and with the recent painting of the maintenance building/vault, it is always an option simply to do nothing.

Topsoil for Sunken Graves

Mowing the cemetery is made much more difficult and dangerous by sunken graves. The mower drops down jarring the operator and then bounces up jarring the operator. There is 40,000+ cubic yards of topsoil sitting in the south parking lot of the Recreation Park. I would like to have the Highway Department load and deliver at least four truckloads of this topsoil to the cemetery to use for leveling the sunken graves. If we have a stockpile of good topsoil at the Red Church Cemetery, we can leave the John Deere 670 from the Rec Park on site to fill in the sunken graves as the mowing schedule permits. I would tarp the piles of topsoil to prevent vegetation from growing in the piles. This is a long-term and year-long project. Cemetery managers tell me that sunken graves are a constant problem for mowing that they address as time permits. I would like to have the topsoil delivered as soon as the Highway Department removes the sanders from their trucks.

Grave Decorations

All wreaths, plants, flowers, etc. will be removed in the spring by 15 March as stipulated in the Care of Plots (p. 4) Section of the Rules and Regulations.

2019 Total Paid Maintenance Hours/Joe Coon & Jeff Tremper

808.5 hours @ \$17.27 = \$13,962.80

Labor Records & Purchase Invoices

Complete records of all labor hours and maintenance purchases invoices are available for review in the Recreation Office. I will have the notebook at the meeting for all to examine.

Keys to the Red Church

Kingston Locksmiths have provided two keys that work. Jackie Szatko routinely inspects the church and puts out flowers and decorations appropriate for the various seasons. Joe Coon routinely checks the Red Church and needs a better working key. The solution may be to leave our best key hanging in the maintenance building for all to use.

Dumping at the Red Church Cemetery

I am pleased to report that there was no dumping of appliances, garbage, or other refuse at the cemetery in 2019. Joe Coon's constant presence at the cemetery may be one reason for this.

2020 Project List

Joe Coon has compiled a list of projects he would like to continue/complete in 2020.

1. Install a metal roof on the storage shed. If possible, install it over the existing asbestos shingles. Joe Coon and Jeff Tremper will research this possibility.
2. Paint the storage shed barn red.
3. Replace the corner boards and the two bottom boards on the storage shed.
4. Finish the trim around the new storage barn door.
5. Clean out the two outhouses and paint them white (with a paint sprayer?)
6. Repair/replace the outhouse doors & install proper hardware.
7. Sand and paint the plot railings within the cemetery.
8. Install two more LED lights in the maintenance building.
9. Roll the roughest cemetery sections with the water-filled roller from the Rec Park to make mowing less painful.
10. Remove the stumps from around headstones from long-removed bushes.
11. Continue the repair/resetting of fallen gravestones that require the use of the tripod and chain hoist.
12. Continue the long term process of filling in the hundreds of sunken graves.
13. Continued stone dust repairs to the roads within the cemetery to prevent puddles and washed out ruts.
14. Continue the tree work on the western border of the cemetery as time permits.

This is a list of work planned for the cemetery in 2020. Much depends upon the mowing schedule, but developing a solid plan for projects is essential for good cemetery management. We cannot forget that the Red Church Cemetery is an active cemetery that has many frequent visitors and regular burials.

Red Church Cemetery Committee Contact Information

Bill O'Neill, Chair: jeanandbill97@gmail.com

Harry Colgan: harrycolgan6@gmail.com

Jackie Szatko: 845-756-2608

John Kuhn: jkuhn@redhook.org - jdkuhn99@hotmail.com

Sue McCann: smccann@redhook.org

Claire Horst: chorst@redhook.org

Christine Chale, Town Attorney: cchale@rodenhausenchale.com

Ann Conway, Business Office aconway@redhook.org

Robert McKeon, Supervisor rmckeon@redhook.org

Joe Coon, Maintenance horsedancer777@yahoo.com