

Stonington Cemetery Commission Ordinance

WHEREAS, the Town of Stonington wishes to establish a procedure to oversee the protection, preservation and maintenance of cemeteries in the Town of Stonington; and

WHEREAS the Town of Stonington recognizes the need for a coordinated, collaborative approach to address the issue of maintaining Stonington's historic, public cemeteries; and

WHEREAS the Town of Stonington wishes to establish a Cemetery Commission to serve as an advisory body to the First Selectman, and as a center of communication, with the objective of ensuring Stonington cemeteries are respectfully cared for, maintained and documented; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Stonington desires to establish a Cemetery Commission that will be done in accordance with the Connecticut General Statutes, Chapter 368j, as well as collaborating in recording data for all cemeteries, excluding those owned by cemetery associations or Ecclesiastical Societies, in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 93, Sec. 7-71.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY ORDAINED BY THE LEGAL VOTERS OF THE TOWN OF STONINGTON IN LAWFUL TOWN MEETING DULY ASSEMBLED THAT:

Section 1. That the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Stonington be amended by adding a new ordinance to read as follows:

A. Establishment. The Town hereby establishes a Cemetery Commission.

B. Purpose. The Cemetery Commission will serve as an advisory body to the First Selectman, and as a center of communication, with the objective of ensuring Stonington cemeteries are respectfully cared for, maintained and documented.

C. Terms of Office. The Commission shall be composed of five (5) regular members and two (2) alternate members who will serve staggered three-year terms. Regular and alternate members shall be appointed by the Board of Selectman. The initial appointments by the Board of Selectmen shall be for one-, two- and three-year terms, and thereafter all terms shall be for three years.

D. Membership. All Commission members and alternate members shall be electors of the Town of Stonington. The Commission should have diverse representation. When possible, preference should be given to ensure membership includes: a historian, a Veteran or Veteran's representative, a member of the Conservation Commission or a landowner with a cemetery that lies within the landowner's boundaries. Seats should be given to those who will help ensure the balanced and diverse views needed to address cemetery needs within the Town of Stonington.

E. Powers and duties. The Commission shall, among other things:

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- I. Work in a collaborative manner to evaluate, define and monitor the needs of cemeteries within the Town of Stonington.
- II. Work with the Department of Public Works and the First Selectman to prepare a maintenance plan for all cemeteries owned by the Town of Stonington.
- III. Make recommendations for updating records as necessary.
- IV. Work with other town Departments and Commissions as appropriate on matters related to cemeteries, for example, working to ensure that the Town's approximate 120 acres of cemetery land is identified and catalogued.
- V. Monitor State of Connecticut legislation and regulations relevant to cemetery ownership, care and maintenance. When applicable, work with the Board of Selectmen on outreach and advocacy related to relevant public policy.
- VI. Monitor the availability of grants, programs, partnerships and other resources to support the perpetual care of the Town's cemeteries.
- VII. Working with Historic Stonington, develop and maintain a program of public engagement, communication and education on the topic of cemetery maintenance, including gravestone maintenance and care.
- VIII. Other responsibilities relevant to cemetery maintenance as determined by the Department of Public Works and First Selectman.

Section 2.

- A. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed.
- B. This ordinance shall become effective fifteen (15) days after the date of publication or notice of its passage, per Connecticut General Statute 7-157 (a).

Adopted: February 26, 2024
Effective: March 16, 2024