

**Town of Belgrade Tree Committee
July 17, 2007**

A meeting of the Belgrade Tree Committee was held on Tuesday, July 17, 2007, at the Pine Grove Cemetery in Belgrade.

Ex officio members present: tish carr, Belgrade Tree Warden
Carl Yeaton, Belgrade Cemetery Committee

Citizens attending: Nancy French
Dale Gilmour
Nancy Mairs

Committee members present:

Norma Blazer
Sylvia Coulombe
Loyce Hayslett
Doug Wood
Kristie Wood

Committee members absent:

John Blasenak
Sue Gawler
Phil Sprague

One seat on the committee is vacant.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of June 19, 2007, were approved as read.

Cemetery Plans and Article 56

This meeting was convened at 5:30 pm at the Pine Grove Cemetery in Belgrade. We stood about halfway up the gravel roadway that leads into the cemetery off Route 8. Carl Yeaton oriented us. Facing the long row of tall trees, the old section of the cemetery is behind us and the area designated for cemetery expansion is straight across from us—on the other side of the trees. In the right back corner lies other town-owned land that is not yet designated to a specific use. The trees and these three parcels of land are the subject of Article 56, Belgrade 2007 Town Meeting Warrant. In the Town Warrant, these parcels are referred to as Plan 4, Plan 5, and “approximately five acres of Town owned forested land.” Plan 4 is the old cemetery; Plan 5 is the area designated for cemetery expansion; and the five-acre parcel is located in the same area but is not yet designated to a specific use.

Carl explained the need for access to the expansion area and the need for more space at the ends of rows in the existing cemetery so that large vehicles can turn. The State has denied direct access to the expansion area from Route 8 for safety reasons. The trees impede free movement of trucks carrying burial vaults because they are close to the ends of rows in the old section. Furthermore, they stand between the old section and the new section, so passage between the two sections is not possible along most of that side. To complicate matters, there is no direct access—except through the cemetery—to the as-yet undesignated land from Route 8, Route 135, or Route 27, and the Town is anxious to ensure that any road accommodate that land as well.

The Tree Committee is sympathetic with the cemetery’s need for space at the ends of rows; it’s obvious that—as things are now—a large truck would have trouble turning there. One suggestion offered by Loyce Hayslett was to cut some of the trees located at the end of alternate cemetery rows (where trucks already drive) to make more turning room. Dale Gilmour referred to this practice as “scalloping” and said it is a typical accommodation. This would solve the immediate problem and was a popular idea with many, especially as an interim solution.

The Tree Committee recognizes the expansion area is already designated to the cemetery and recognizes that a method for access and room to maneuver vehicles will eventually be required in

the new section as well. An interim solution of cutting through the stand of trees at intervals was proffered.

There is a significant difference among various proposals for using the five-acre parcel of town-owned land. Proposals apparently include ideas all the way from constructing a new library and/or municipal building on the site to using it as a park or meditation garden, perhaps including a memorial area for cremains. In the one case, a public vehicle road through the cemetery to the five-acre plot would be necessary; and, in the other case, it's possible that *no* vehicular access would be necessary.

Although we respect the town's desire to preserve its options for the five-acre parcel, it seems to make sense, if possible, to decide now how the five-acre parcel will actually be used—before committing to a road plan (and the future cost of significant roadway) when there is still a good possibility that no high-use roadway will ever be required. At the very least, it makes sense to postpone cutting all the trees until such time as road building is imminent and to, instead, cut trees selectively to meet the immediate objectives for vehicle turning space and access between the two areas of the cemetery.

The Tree Committee's consensus is that these lands should be viewed as a whole and that, if possible, road building should be postponed until such time as there is a plan in place for all the land. An appropriate road should be part of the total plan. This planned approach, we believe, was anticipated by Article 56 in its call for coordination among the various committees. In the spirit of such cooperation, we thank the members of the Cemetery Committee who have discussed this with us already and the interested citizens who attended our meeting. Some of them have served on various town committees in the past and had knowledge about past discussions that were helpful. We will have a representative at the Long Range Planning Committee July 19. At that time, we will urge the committee to consider the as-yet undesignated five-acre parcel and its expected use, along with the type of road that will be required and explain its impact on the stand of trees that is the subject of Article 56.

Other Business

Norma circulated a proposed schedule for getting the Tree Ordinance approved by the Selectboard so that it can be voted on again in March of 2008. A copy of that schedule is attached to these minutes.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Belgrade Tree Committee will be held at the Belgrade Town Hall on Tuesday, August 21, 2007.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Norma Blazer, Recording Secretary

Article 56, passed in March, 2007: "To see if the Town will approve cutting the row of trees between Plan 4 and Plan 5 of Pine Grove Cemetery and apply proceeds from the sale toward creation of a 50' access road to approximately five acres of Town owned forested land that are now inaccessible. (This operation, if approved, will be coordinated with the Town Tree Warden and Long Range Planning Committee.)"