

Friends of the Bryson City Cemetery

Annual Meeting, 19 January 2017

Community Room, United Community Bank of Bryson City

The meeting was convened at 1:00 p.m.

In attendance were the following:

Bob Thomas, Ivan Gibby, Betty Sandlin, Jessie Greyer, Joyce Cooper, Don Casada, Christine Colcord, Janella Verner, Jean Douthit, Anne Marie Sossamon-Woofindin and husband Sam, Dee Decker, Toni Wright Davidson, Tony Monna, Rob Hawk, John Seay, Judy Revis, Gwen Breese, and Wendy Meyers.

Financials – a review of the 2016 finances was provided by Christine Colcord, Treasurer. Reference is made to the financial statement provided by Christine, and is not included in these minutes.

Incorporation

Don noted that documents of incorporation for the FBCC were approved on 17 June 2016. Approval of the FBCC as a 501(c)(3) organization was approved by the IRS on 23 September 2016.

Grounds Report – Don provided the following updates on work done on the grounds in 2016:

- 160 hours were logged between mowing, trimming, leaf handling, etc. Roughly twenty or 25 additional volunteer hours were logged.
- The JROTC group from the high school spent a morning in November helping in several capacities – leaf moving, planting bulbs, collecting limbs, and the like.
- Eight stones were put back in place (five were vandalized, and 2 had fallen naturally); 2 stones were broken and required gorilla glue repair.
- Four or 5 moderate size stones were straightened, and approximately 6 were ‘glued’ to their bases.
- Some ground leveling with fill dirt was done.
- The cemetery received a couple of loads of gravel, courtesy of Al Alemany & Hillside Baptist. As such, the driveway is presently in much better shape. Reverend Alemany and Hillside Baptist additionally provided the funds to have the grounds mown once this year.
- Connie DeHart Pertillo and her mother Barbara had the DeHart section of the cemetery (portion without any graves) cleaned and trees cut. They plan to do some more work and put lots up for sale this year. They also did some cleaning work around the far north end of the cemetery, including cleaning many of the Bryson family grave markers.

- Approximately 130 crocus, 36 grape hyacinth, 40 iris, and 50 daffodil bulbs were donated and have been planted. Monetary donations for bulbs and fertilizer have been made. Another donation of 75 triplet lilies will arrive sometime in late winter or early spring.
- One young, roughed-up dogwood has been transplanted from Don's home on Black Hill and more are desired; if anyone has seedlings (generally speaking, no more than two feet high), they are welcome. Other ornamental trees for consideration are Japanese maple, Bradford pear, etc.
- There is an intent to try to establish yellowbells (forsythia) along part of the bank facing the school; suggestions for other shrub types are welcome.
- Most of the leaves were mulched this year. There are several piles which need to be consolidated and will be used around the areas where bulbs are planted.
- Kudzu has been substantially controlled this year; it will be an ongoing but much more manageable problem. Poison ivy has largely been eliminated.
- Roundup[®] was used around the around gravestones and rock walls this past year. While it does involve both time and expense, in the net, it kept things looking neater and considerably reduced the time required for trimming.

JROTC Presentation

The Swain County High School JROTC instructor, Tony Monna, spoke regarding what the program does within the school and community. There are currently 59 students enrolled in the program. He has committed the JROTC to doing 2 community service events at the cemetery this year. Don Casada forwarded a motion that any JROTC student wishing to become a member of the FBCC be allowed to become a gratis member. The motion was approved by acclimation.

Media

Don provided the following updates on the FBCC's media efforts:

- 9 biographical sketches and 4 newsletters have been published, all of which are available on the website
- 995 grave markers have been photographed
- 469 death certificates and 342 obituaries have been posted to the website, with links to the appropriate individuals. Efforts continue to obtain additional obituaries by going through old episodes of the Smoky Mountain Times.
- Articles of incorporation, bylaws, and the IRS approval letter are available for inspection on the website.
- Maps for 3 of the 7 cemetery sections have been completed and posted to the website.
- A brief cemetery history and a small number of photographs of individuals have been uploaded to the website.
- A potluck supper presentation on the cemetery, with a focus on the Presbyterian connection, was given to the Presbyterian Church during the summer of 2016

Election of Officers

Ivan Gibby directed the election of officers for the 2017 year.

- **President** – as no other volunteers for the office of President came forward, Don Casada agreed to continue as President for 2017. Motion was forwarded by Bob Thomas, seconded by Judy Revis, and unanimously approved by acclimation.
- **Secretary** – Wendy Meyers volunteered for the office of secretary; there were no further volunteers. The motion to elect Wendy as Secretary was forwarded by Anne Marie Woffindin and approved by unanimous acclimation.
- **Treasurer** – Christine Colcord agreed to stay on as Treasurer; no vote was held.
- **Directors** – Anne-Marie and Toni Wright-Davidson will remain on the board for 2017, and Gwen Breese will rotate off. Bob Thomas volunteered to fill the third Director's position. Anne-Marie Woffindon forwarded the motion to approve Bob as a Director and the motion was approved by unanimous acclimation.

After the election of officers, further discussion was held around future possibilities for officers:

- Anne Marie Woffindon posited a question as to whether or not the office of the President should be held for two years. This was declined.
- Joyce Cooper posited the possibility of electing a Vice President in the future, who would transition into the President's role in the following year. Discussion around this will be held at a future Director's meeting

Plans for 2017

Grounds

- The grounds will continue to be maintained, and bulbs, trees, and shrubs will be planted for beautification.
- The northeast section of the cemetery has zoysia grass. Some plugs of this have been taken and moved to different locations to promote growth of the grass in those areas; this effort will continue.
- The JROTC will partner with the FBCC to obtain bronze plaques for veterans who are buried in the cemetery but do not currently have one.
- Granite markers will continue to be ordered for individuals known to have been buried in the cemetery.
- A lockable tool shed is highly desirable and the FBCC is asked to consider this for 2017.

- Wendy Meyers provided the suggestion that a sign be put up with the names of individuals who are known (via death certificate or obituary) to be buried in the cemetery and whose burial locations are unknown or unmarked.
- Plans continue for a sign to be placed at the entrance to the cemetery.
- A game camera donated by Janella Verner will be put up at the cemetery to deter vandalism and/or aid in the prosecution of vandals. Jim Casada has also volunteered to buy one.

Communications

Dee Decker and Rob Hawk from the NC State/Swain County Extension Office gave a presentation on the possibility of a history walk and 'living history' production for the cemetery that would promote the cemetery. Discussions have been had with the drama teacher at Swain County High School concerning this. This proposal was met with some concern from members of the FBCC as to the commercialization of the cemetery and the approval of the families whose members would be featured in such a production. Ivan stated that such a production is given in the Green Hills Cemetery in Waynesville, who do this annually and made the recommendation that the FBCC hold a discussion with them. At the conclusion of the discussion, Don recommended that the FBCC give Dee and Rob's proposal some thought; it will be discussed at a future meeting.

Meeting times and Content

- Don put forth a proposal for consideration that we consider changing meeting times to later in the day to accommodate younger people who are still working, or possibly alternate times. This will be discussed at the next meeting.
- Don asked that we consider having brief presentations at meetings.
- The next meeting date was set for 09 February 2017 at 4:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:30 p.m.