Nineteenth Century

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Editor Warren Ashworth

Consulting Editor William Ayres

Book Review Editor Kathleen Eagen Johnson

Managing Editor / Graphic Designer Wendy Midgett

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Committee on Publications Chair Warren Ashworth

Dennis Andersen William Ayres Anne-Taylor Cahill

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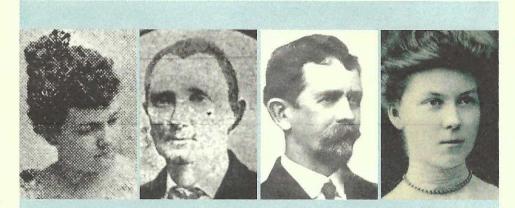
For information on The Victorian Society in America, contact the national office:

24 Wilkins Avenue Haddonfield, NJ 08033 (856) 216-8124 Fax (856) 216-8125 info@victoriansociety.org victoriansociety.org





Cover: Bluff grading in Kansas City, Missouri, 1886. Courtesy Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.



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THANK YOU TO OUR PEER REVIEWERS Nineteenth Century would like to acknowledge our peer reviewers. We at the editorial board are, as always, deeply grateful to this group of anonymous scholars who review all our author submissions for accuracy of content and application of up-to-date methods of research and scholarship.

Preservation Diary

The Restoration of the Belmont Chapel, Newport

Pamela Kelley

The Belmont Chapel is located in the middle of a cemetery in Newport, Rhode Island. The chapel, built in 1887 by August Belmont (1813-1890), a New York financier and his wife Caroline Slidell Belmont (1829-1892), commemorated their daughter Jane Pauline (1856-1875), who died at a young age. The Belmonts were early summer residents in Newport whose great wealth and high social standing helped shape Newport as a summer destination for their society friends. The Island Cemetery was laid out in 1848 as a private memorial garden cemetery, which were coming into vogue at that time, and plots were sold to the wealthy and influential people of Newport. After its completion in 1888, the Belmont Chapel was gifted to the Island Cemetery for use as a non-denominational funeral chapel, available for all.

Ivy and wisteria vines, planted around the building as a decorative element soon after it was built, became the building's downfall in later years, completely engulfing the chapel by the 1970's. Vandals used the building for target practice and animals found a home in the tower to further the destruction.

By 2014, the chapel roof was in imminent danger of collapsing. Harry Eudenbach, who had been keeping an eye on the chapel over the years, decided to uncover the building, restoration efforts.

The chapel was designed in the style of H.H. Richardson by George Champlin Mason & Son with heavy walls, rough-faced stone, rounded arches and a massive tower. The exterior is of a rich, warm, reddish-brown sandstone, rock faced and random squared with a slate roof. In constructing the chapel, no wood was used in any part of the building except for the doors, window frames and roof, which was of double-boarded yellow pine covered in slate, in a conscious effort to minimize maintenance issues.

The interior had been heavily damaged by water and most of the plaster had fallen down over the years. Vestiges of the original decorative painting that surrounded the windows were still visible but fast dissolving. Most of the information on the chapel's construction has been gleaned from contemporary newspaper articles but unfortunately no photographs could be found to help document the interior. The chapel consists of a nave, chancel and clergy robing room in the base of the tower and measures 48' x 112'. The centerpiece of the chancel is a white seven-foot-long altar of Caen stone and marble, designed by George Champlin Mason Jr. supported by life-size kneeling cherubs. There were 2 pews in the chancel and 8 in the nave also



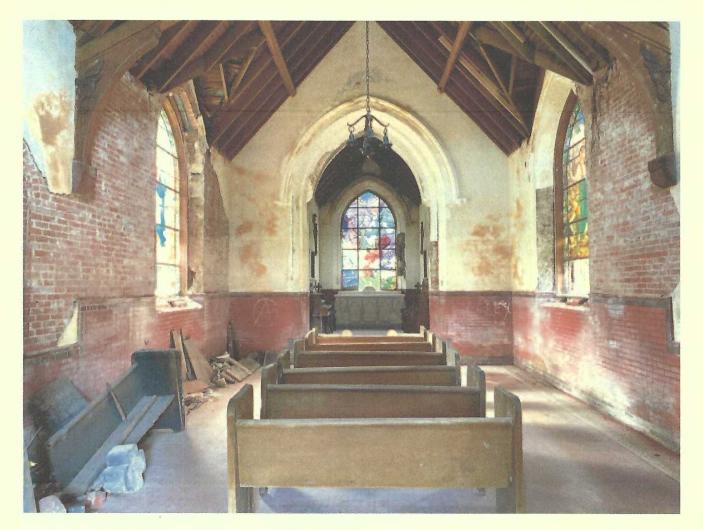
L to r: The Belmont Chapel, c. 1890; covered in ivy and wisteria, c. 1900; prior to removal of vines, 2014. Courtesy The Belmont Chapel Foundation.

patching the holes in the roof. Upon being hired to remove the ivy, landscapers informed him it was difficult to remove ivy from trees, whereupon Harry said, "That's not a tree, that's a building!" To assure himself that the building was stabilized, Harry also had an engineering report prepared to inform future designed by Mason, Jr. made of solid oak, each having its own bas-relief carving of oak leaves, climbing roses or ivy on the side panels. The floors throughout the building are tiled in a richly patterned and colored tile still in reasonable condition. The robing room walls are decorated in a checkerboard pattern of tan and gold Minton tiles. The nave is bordered in red tiles with a run of chocolate brown enameled tiles as a top border. In the nave and chancel, the plaster walls were painted a pale green by contemporary accounts and the windows and archway to the chancel embellished with decorative designs of trailing vines and florals. The paint colors and remaining designs have been painstaking analyzed to assist in recreating the interior as originally designed.

Of particular note are the 10 beautiful stained-glass windows that the Belmont family commissioned as memorials to family members. The four most important windows were designed by Luc-Olivier Merson of Paris and executed by the famous Parisian glass artist, Eugene Oudinot and his successor to the atelier, Felix Gaudin. Merson's artistic style of combining historic motifs with the spiritual was a new aesthetic reminiscent of Renaissance images. The window frames have been recreated of mahogany with iron frames seated in the brickwork. To safeguard the sadly it was either stolen or destroyed and no photos have been located to document it. To maintain the integrity of the restoration, the windows that have no documentation or insufficient stained-glass remaining are being replaced with diamond muntins and cathedral glass. This replicates the original treatment before the stained-glass windows were commissioned and installed and will also match the glass in the tower windows.

There were issues with the original building's design that became apparent fairly quickly and four years later Mrs. Belmont commissioned Richard Morris Hunt (1827-1895) to remedy defects in the construction. His improvements included excavating a cellar, adding a coal-fired heating system and building double interior walls as an air chamber to circulate heat and eliminate the damp, cold air.

In recent years, access to the cellar had been blocked and the entrance sealed. After uncovering the entrance, the chapel floor



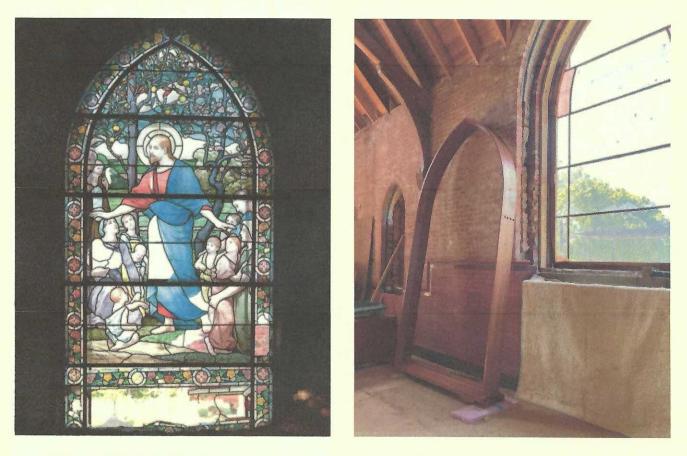
The interior of the Belmont Chapel, prior to restoration. Courtesy of The Belmont Chapel Foundation.

stained glass in the future, protective storm windows with lighting will be installed.

One of the windows, entitled *St. Elizabeth of Hungary* was designed and executed by Tiffany, a Belmont family relation, but

of concrete and Neuchatel Asphalt on vaulted bricks and iron Ibeams was able to be reinforced and the HVAC system installed, following the original pathways of Hunt's heating ducts.

The chapel occupies a prominent position in the center of the



L to r: Luc-Olivier Merson, Eugene Oudinot, *Christ Blessing Children*, as seen in the nave of the chapel. Mahogany window frames were installed during the interior restoration. Courtesy of The Belmont Chapel Foundation.

cemetery, but due to it's camouflage of ivy, few were even aware of its existence. This changed in 2018 when a local art group asked to use the chapel for an exhibition of Polish artist Piotr Uklanski's paintings that blended well with the haunted aesthetic of the derelict building. The exhibition brought people to the chapel and the cemetery for the first time and sparked interest in a restoration project of the chapel.

In 2019 the Executive Director and myself, President of Island Cemetery, decided to apply for some grants from local foundations to restore the chapel, beginning with the roof, as this was clearly the priority, and at \$600,000, a large expenditure. The Alletta Morris McBean Charitable Trust generously agreed to fund the project. In Newport we are fortunate to have excellent experienced workmen with the skills to do careful, historic restoration. We were fortunate, as well, to engage the services of an excellent general contractor, John Damon.

We attracted the interest of an individual who provided us with a large matching grant to help get a capital campaign underway. A fund-raising consultant helped us develop strategies needed to make the fund raising successful, creating a potential donor database and developing publicity materials. We formed a Capital Campaign Committee and a separate Building Committee, inviting several individuals with talent and influence to assist us.

Meanwhile, Harry worked with the general contractor to get tight, reliable quotes for the work needed and determined the overall budget for the capital campaign. The total needed to complete the project was \$2.5 million which includes \$500,000 to be used as an endowment fund to assure continuing care of the building. With a track record of keeping on budget and on schedule, we secured a grant of an additional \$600,000 the following year from another generous Newport family trust, the van Beuren Charitable Foundation, to complete much of the interior.

For the purposes of fundraising and managing the project, we divided the project into three phases:

Phase I included replacing the roof, repointing the exterior, excavating the cellar and installing electricity, all of which was completed in March 2022. The work of restoring the stainedglass windows was begun in parallel with Serpentino Stained and Lead Glass Restorers removing the panels to their studio in Massachusetts. The work on the windows is ongoing as the workmen are artists committed to this project and are doing a painstaking restoration.

Phase II includes restoring the interior, replastering the walls, additional repointing of bricks, framing the windows, obtaining an analysis of the paint and decorative details and restoration of the entrance doors and gate. This work is targeted to be completed by early 2023. To date, the walls have been replastered and repointed and the paint and décor analyzed.

Phase III will include applying the decorative painting, repairing the mosaic floor, installing lighting and audiovisual equipment and reinstalling the completed stained-glass windows and protective exterior glass, by Fall of 2023.



We have been fortunate to be able to open the chapel occasionally for open houses, to invite the community to see the progress as well as hold special events as work permits. Accordingly, we are hoping to close the Capital Campaign in the spring of 2023, having raised the full amount.

In spite of the building's condition, the Island Cemetery and the abutting Common Burying-Ground were jointly placed on the Historic Register of Historic Places in 1974, acknowledging:

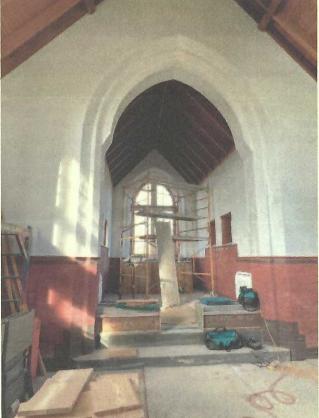
Newport's Common Burying-Ground and Island Cemetery present this nation's social and artistic development in microcosm. They contain not only the graves of our political, religious and commercial leaders but also, sailors, shopkeepers, farmers and the slaves. As a resting place for everyman and any man, the two cemeteries reflect Roger William's concept of brotherhood.

When completed, the chapel will again serve as a mortuary chapel for those to be interred or memorialized in the Island Cemetery as well as serve the general community for educational tours of the cemeteries that surround it and small gatherings for music and lectures. The chapel restoration has also renewed interest in the cemetery itself which has also been neglected over the years. We are now turning to the restoration of the cemetery grounds and the handsome cemetery administration building that was built in 1902. The Island Cemetery is open to the public during daylight hours.



Pamela Kelley lives in Newport, RI and is the President of the Island Cemetery where the Belmont Chapel is located. She was first introduced to restoration in 1980 when she and her husband moved and restored a 1780 home in Newport. Most recently, she has been focused on raising funding to restore the August Belmont Memorial Chapel.





Clockwise, from top: original floor tiles as seen during restoration; detail of decorative carving on the Chapel's benches, designed by George Champlin Mason, Jr.; the interior restoration in progress. Courtesy of The Belmont Chapel Foundation.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT Financials

Revenue from burials and lot sales decreased slightly from 2021 but continue to show an increase over prior years.

Burials	2020	2021	2022
Full	5	10	5
Cremains	4	13	14
Total	9	23	19
Lot sales	2020	2021	2022
Single		4	3
Double		2	5
4 graves	2	9	1
6 graves			1
8 graves			2
Cremation Way	1	3	2
Memorial Bench		1	
Total	3	19	14

As of 12/6/2021, the restricted fund (perpetual care) was \$411,235 and the unrestricted endowment that we draw on to help support the cemetery operations was \$1,414,584. The total of both funds, conservatively invested with Slocum and Gordon was \$1,825,819. As of June 28, 2022, the restricted fund is \$452,499 and the unrestricted fund is \$1,375,832. We are currently drawing \$10,000/month from the unrestricted fund to meet cash flow needs. We are adding 20% of sales from lots to the restricted (perpetual care) fund.

Grounds

• <u>Roads and parking areas – after careful consideration we began the much-needed</u> repaving with the parking areas behind the office building and in front of the Oliver Hazard Perry memorial. We also paved the Fern Ave extension that runs alongside the Griswold lot that was previously impassable due to potholes and ruts. The application of gravel on asphalt was chosen to blend with existing roadways. Half of the cost of 20,500 was paid for by donations to Friends of Island Cemetery, our 501(c)(3) established to support the cost of general cemetery maintenance through their donations.

 <u>Tree and shrub maintenance -</u> Following recommendations for hazardous tree removal from the Bartlett Tree Company, the two large Norwalk Maples to the west of the chapel were removed. A donor to the Belmont Chapel Restoration contributed funds to cover the cost of planting of 8 red Maples, 4 on each side of the entrance from Farewell Street. To keep new plantings healthy during the dry spring this year, we purchased a 60-gallon water tank with sprayer and trailer. We are also meeting and working with the Newport Tree Conservancy to complete our Arboretum status.

The overgrown arborvitae at the flagpole in the entrance from Warner Street was removed and replaced with a rose garden in a circular pattern around the flagpole.

- <u>Fence repair</u> 7 sections along Farewell Street that were bent and broken due to accidents over the years were restored and installed. We have selected another 4 sections that will be completed this year.
- <u>Gravestone Repair and Cleaning</u> in collaboration with Lew Keen of the Newport Restoration Commission, we are continuing the work of restoring gravestones of notable people such as Dudley Newton (architect of note) and George Champlin Mason (architect of Belmont Chapel). Lew also organized a volunteer effort to clean stones in the Friends Cemetery.
- <u>Volunteer Days</u> Rob Vitello and Frank Amaral gathered and directed volunteers during the months of October 2022 and May 2023 to weed, remove and prune overgrown shrubs and paint the railings surrounding the Belmont Circle.

Staff

Frank Amaral was hired in January as a part-time Grounds Manager. His experience and deep knowledge of landscaping has already resulted in greatly improved grounds. Frank also draws on the experience of his father who used to work at the cemetery. He works well with Lee who continues to cut the grass.

Belmont Chapel Update

We are nearing our Capital Campaign goal of \$2,500,000 with approximately \$2,325,000 raised as of this date from grants and donors.

Projects underway include:

- The interior decorative painting that has been documented and will be done by John Canning Studios, well respected preservation and restoration experts.
- The complete rebuild of the Farewell Street entrance that includes a gate and fence sections to replicate the 1935 entrance which had fallen into complete disrepair.

• And, in addition to the gate and fencing, the pillars, curbings, and cobblestones are being replaced as part of the Belmont Chapel Restoration project.

With both due to be completed by year-end, we hope to close out the Capital Campaign at that time.

We hosted the Belmont Stakes event for the 2nd year which brought people in to see the restoration progress in the chapel. The event was well received and we realized a net profit of approximately \$33,000 to be added to the Chapel's endowment.

We developed a brochure that lists naming rights for remaining opportunities for sponsorship and recognition with an identifying plaque. To date, all of the stained-glass windows, 4 wooden pews, the retiling of the mosaic entrance, and the maple trees along the allée have been spoken for.

The Victorian Society of NY published our article on the Belmont Chapel restoration in their '19th Century' periodical.

Legacy Lots: Inquiries were mailed out in late May to identified 63 descendants of 13 lots to cultivate donations to repair and maintain lots in need. No responses have been received to date.

Administration Building:

We have gotten a complete estimate from John Damon Company, the contractor who has managed the restoration of the Belmont Chapel for the repair of the office building of \$750,000 includes:

- slate roof replacement
- repointing buckling brickwork
- update plumbing and utilities
- repair and/or replace windows and storms
- installation of fire and intrusion alarms

We applied for grants to the van Beuren Charitable Foundation to replace roof and repair the slate roof and the exterior brickwork. We will meet with them in August to answer their questions about the project. Their committee will make a decision sometime in September.

Strategic Plan

A rough plan for the cemetery for the future still being reviewed by the Board. The goal is to identify opportunities and additional lots for development and assure the care of the cemetery is sustainable in the future.

Island Cemetery Statement of Activity January 1 - June 15, 2023

		Total
Revenue		
Interest Income		5.48
Other Types of Income		
4900 Endowment Distribution		60,000.00
4990 Admin contribution		18,955.00
1 Miscellaneous Revenue		6,890.38
Total Other Types of Income	\$	85,845.38
Sales of Product Revenue		
Burial Revenue		19,706.08
Cedar Way Cremation lots		3,000.00
Columbarium sales		2,943.92
Lot Sales		40.00
Total Sales of Product Revenue	\$	25,690.00
Total Revenue	\$ \$ \$	111,540.86
Gross Profit	\$	111,540.86
Expenditures		
Burial Expense		6,571.63
Facilities and Equipment		
Auto/Mechanical Maint		806.10
Building Maintenance		300.00
3 Cemetary Supplies		5,529.40
Maint Supplies		145.54
Repair & Maintenance		188.00
Stone Marker maintenance		9,400.00
Total Facilities and Equipment	\$	16,369.04
Grounds Maintenance		
Groundskeeper		31,304.40
Landscape Expense		3,022.23
Road maintenance		10,500.00
4 Tree care		8,830.00
Total Grounds Maintenance	\$	53,656.63

Expenditures cont.		Total
Insurance		
Property Insurance		2,774.25
Total Insurance	\$	2,774.25
Operations		
Advertising Expense		1,252.84
Business Fees		44.00
Dues		178.50
Office Expense		
Printing and Copying		264.85
Software		906.10
Supplies		681.49
Total Office Expense	\$	1,852.44
Property Tax		1,636.96
Telephone		604.11
Utilities		2,352.36
Total Operations	\$	7,921.21
Payroll Expenses		
Payroll		40,715.40
Payroll Processing Fees		511.06
Payroll Tax		4,874.98
Workers Comp		1,514.40
Total Payroll Expenses	\$	47,615.84
Total Expenditures	\$1	38,236.38
Net Operating Revenue		26,695.52
Net Revenue	-\$	26,695.52

1 BCF Contribution to allée trees

2 Golf cart repair

3 Equipment for grounds maintenance, trash barrels, etc.
4 removal of stumps and azalaes, planting of maples

Island Cemetery Statement of Activity January - December 2022

	Total	Expenditures cont.	Total
Revenue		Insurance	
Interest Income	16.44	D&O Insurance	832.00
Other Types of Income		Property Insurance	6,468.05
4900 Endowment Distribution	112,000.00	Total Insurance	\$ 7,300.05
Cedar Way Endowment Distribution	15,000.00	Operations	
Total 4900 Endowment Distribution	\$127,000.00	Advertising Expense	3,294.93
4990 Admin contribution	42,480.00	Bank Charges	35.00
Total Other Types of Income	\$169,480.00	Business Fees	32.95
Sales of Product Revenue		Dues	357.00
Burial Revenue	25,750.00	Office Expense	
Cedar Way Cremation lots	4,800.00	Postage, Mailing Service	337.44
Columbarium sales	5,000.00	Printing and Copying	310.17
Lot Sales	78,832.00	Software	7,571.79
Perpetual Care	20,728.00	Supplies	3,846.67
Perpetual Care-Transfers	-20,728.00	Total Office Expense	\$ 12,066.07
Total Sales of Product Revenue	\$114,382.00	Property Tax	3,395.03
Total Revenue	\$283,878.44	Telephone	1,526.88
Gross Profit	\$283,878.44	Utilities	2,810.32
Expenditures		Total Operations	\$ 23,518.18
Burial Expense	4,260.00	Payroll Expenses	
Facilities and Equipment		Payroll	66,460.67
Building Maintenance	1,961.00	Payroll Processing Fees	1,150.26
Cedar Way Expenses	40,336.39	Payroll Tax	7,810.26
Cemetary Supplies	4,911.73	Workers Comp	672.96
Total Facilities and Equipment	\$ 47,209.12	Total Payroll Expenses	\$ 76,094.15
Grounds Maintenance		Professional Fees	
Fence repairs	18,612.00	3 6130 Consultant	29,162.86
Groundskeeper	75,033.93	Accounting	1,500.00
Landscape Expense	2,480.00	Total Professional Fees	\$ 30,662.86
Snow removal	175.00	Total Expenditures	\$292,522.84
Tree care	7,000.00	Net Operating Revenue	-\$ 8,644.40
Total Grounds Maintenance	\$103,300.93	Net Revenue	-\$ 8,644.40

Completion of columbariaum and benches
 removal of Norwalk Maples and other tree limbs

3 Landscape architect - Cemetery Master Plan

ISLAND CEMETERY ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES JUNE 28, 2022

ATTENDEES:	Sharon Hussey, Island Cemetery Administrator Director Betsey Oestreich, Island Cemetery Admin Assistant	
Officers	Members of the Board	
Pam Kelley Walter Reed Kevin Kelley Frank Ray	Barbara Benson Harry Eudenbach George Herrick Lisa Lewis (Zoom) Robert Vitello (Zoom)	
Owners	Others	
Carolyn Case (Zoon William Case (Zoon Gus Cordeiro Michael Henlyshyn Abigail Campbell K Diana Pearson (Zoo Lewis & Trudy Keen Karen von Kunes Dan Titus	(Zoom) ng (Zoom) n)	

The meeting was called to order at the Newport Public Library with 19 lot owners present in person or on Zoom. The reading of the minutes from the last meeting was waived, and on motion, unanimously approved.

Financials. Sharon Hussey provided a Statement of Activity comparing calendar years 2020 and 2021, YTD 2022 & YTD 2021 and Statement of Cash Flows. Income from operations remained, although total revenue rose due to the sale of lots and burial revenue and an increase in endowment distribution. Payroll expenses did rise, modestly as part-time help was added to help with the increased lot sales. We ended 2020 with net revenue of \$42,607 vs \$18,191 in 2020 due the increase in lot and burial sales.

Kevin Kelley questioned "Net Other Revenue" of -\$38,555.89 which was a separate accounting of the draw used to develop Cedar Way.

Investment Report. Jeff Gordon delivered a report on the performance of the Island Cemetery's investment funds, a/o May 27, 2022.Two separate portfolios are maintained – a general funds and a perpetual care fund, as required by RI law. For purposes of our discussion the returns between the two funds were reported in aggregate. YTD returns were 2.0%. Because of world events, Covid 19, Ukrainian war, inflation, it has been a struggle for corporations to maintain profits. Island Cemetery's portfolio is wellpositioned for the downturn and our returns are still positive, compared to the market in general, although we will see an additional decline.

Trustee Appointment. Reelection of Board Members: Barbara Benson, Harry Eudenbach and Lisa Lewis were unanimously approved for a three-year term.

President's Report. Pam Kelley, President, reported on progress in the construction of the Cedar Way columbaria and cremation walkway. The construction phase is nearly complete and four of the inground cremation burials have already been sold. Response to the new sites has been brisk and positive. For planning purposes for the next five, ten and twenty years, we have commissioned the landscape architect Tanya Kelley to analyze and map the cemetery, identify areas for development and design for the different possibilities. Part of the cost of the plan was funded by a generous donor.

Outstanding projects in progress:

- 1. Roads We have contacted with A1 Paving to address the three areas in the cemetery that have been consistently rutted with standing water. Lisa Lewis questioned the if the repaving would be environmentally safe?
- 2. Headstones Beyond the Gravestone will return this summer to repair some of the fallen or leaning headstones. A question was asked about payment for repair on the legacy lots. It was suggested that establish a Legacy Lot fund to maintain monuments through Friends of IC.
- 3. Fences Begin to repair and restore the fencing along Farewell Street. Barbara Benson asked about the Farewell Gates repair. Abby Campbell-King is working on the design and is waiting for quotes for masonry, pavers and gate repair.
- 4. Office Building John Damon has been asked to provide quotes for the considerable upgrades required for the office building.

Also, Bartlett Tree is updating the tree map and evaluating the condition of our trees for immediate care or removal, with safety being the first priority.

The Belmont Chapel Restoration total of individual donations and foundation grants is approximately \$2M or 80% of the final goal of \$2.5M which includes \$500K for the Endowment Fund. The Damon Company has managed the work on the chapel very well and we are meeting our estimates of both costs and time. The Belmont Stakes event on June 11th, held in front of the chapel, cleared \$22K which will be deposited in the Endowment account at Rhode Island Foundation.

Dogs in the Cemetery. We are now enforcing the cemetery's policy that all dogs in the cemetery must be leashed. It was mentioned that another cemetery has a lottery for dog walkers which would raise funds.

Cemetery Sales. The activity around the chapel and the attendant publicity, along with the new columbarium has aroused significant interest from the community in the form of sales.

Karen von Kunes suggested that we consider events at Belmont Chapel or Island Cemetery to attract lot sales, such as walking tours.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Island Cemetery Newport Annual Meeting Agenda

June 21, 2023

Newport Public Library

Call to Order

Trustees Present or on Zoom Report on Proxies

Approval of 2022 Minutes

Treasurer's Report

Year End 2022 Year to Date 2023 Slocum & Gordon Investment Account. (Jeff Gordon)

President's Report

Trustee's Appointment/Reappointment to 3 year term

Pam Kelley Robert Vitello Kevin Kelley

Meeting Adjournment