

2021 NOV 29 P 6:35

Community Preservation Committee Town of Belmont

CPA Funding – Final Application

Ten copies of the completed Final Application must be submitted to the following address by no later than 7:00 pm on Monday, November 29, 2021:

Community Preservation Committee
Matthew Haskell, CPA Administrator
Office of the Select Board
Belmont Town Hall
455 Concord Avenue
Belmont, MA 02478

Unless an applicant can demonstrate that a significant opportunity would otherwise be lost, final applications will not be accepted after the submission deadline. In order for the CPC to consider a project proposal that cannot adhere to the deadlines as outlined in the Standard Application Process, the project must meet the additional selection criteria as outlined in the Special Application Process.

Project Title: Belmont Cemetery Preservation Master Plan with Treatment Recommendations

Project Location: Belmont Cemetery, 121 Grove Street, Belmont, MA 02478

Applicant/Contact Person: Jay Marcotte, DPW Director & Ellen Cushman, Chair of the Board of Cemetery Commissioners.

Organization: DPW & Board of Cemetery Commissioners.

Mailing Address: 19 Moore Street, Belmont MA 02478.

Telephone: 617-993-2685 **E-mail:** jmarcotte@belmont-ma.gov & ecushman@belmont-ma.gov

Signature  Date November 29, 2021

Signature  Date November 29, 2021

CPA Category (check only one, in consultation with the CPC):

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Housing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic Preservation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open Space | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation |

Amount Requested: \$60K

Total Project Cost: \$60K

The CPC will review the Final Applications. Applicants will be contacted if additional information or an interview is required. The CPC may also request to visit the site of the proposed project. Applicants will be notified by mid-January whether the CPC plans to recommend their project at the next Annual Town Meeting.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Attach answers to the following questions. Applications will be returned as incomplete if all requested information is not provided. Include supporting materials as necessary.

- **Goals:**

To hire a qualified consulting firm to research, prepare and present a comprehensive preservation and restoration master plan with treatment recommendations consisting of both narrative and graphic elements for Belmont Cemetery. This would include the hardscape items as well as the landscape elements. One of the expected deliverables of the plan would be to develop a list of projects and activities, with associated timing and funding estimates, descriptions that would be grouped into phases for the DPW and the Cemetery Commission to implement using a variety of funding resources. The Belmont Cemetery is a fully functioning cemetery, comprised of 17 acres of land, historic wrought iron gates and fencing, gravestones, landscape elements.

Community Need: The Belmont Cemetery is an important asset that has been a vital part of the Town since its incorporation in 1859. Town staff has managed and maintained the day-to-day operations of the cemetery to fulfill the Perpetual Care obligations but does not have the skillset, time or expertise to properly evaluate, preserve and restore items and landscape elements of historical significance.

- **Community Support:** This is a project that has support from DPW, Board of Cemetery Commissioners, Shade Tree Committee, Historical Society and fulfills one of the stated goals of Historic Preservation in the Comprehensive Plan, 2010, "Broaden preservation and protection of Belmont's historic buildings, sites and neighborhoods".

- **Project Documentation:** Pictures and map attached.

- **Timeline:** July/August 2022, a qualified consulting firm will be hired to research, prepare and present a comprehensive preservation and restoration master plan with treatment recommendations. It is anticipated that implementation phase recommendation(s) could qualify for CPA funding in FY24 and beyond.

- **Credentials:** As it relates to CPA projects, The Town of Belmont through its DPW, has managed the completion of Tennis Court projects at Pequossette (PQ) Park, Winn Brook Playground and Grove Street Playground, totaling approximately \$800K.

Also, working with a variety of "Friends of" groups, the current DPW staff has managed the completion of the PQ Park Renovation Project and Grove Street Park Intergenerational Walking Path Project, approximate total value \$1.3M and is currently working with the "Friends of" groups on the Town Field Playground Renovation Project and the Payson Park Playground Renovation Project with an anticipated value of \$2M.

- **Success Factors:** We are thrilled to have the support of Lauren Meier, former Chair of the Historic District Commission and landscape architect for the historic Olmsted papers. Lauren has committed to assist us in evaluating the credentials and applicable experience of consultants, review our materials and provide names of consultants who may be qualified to perform the work. Access and availability to historic resources for the Belmont Cemetery, dating back to 1859 through the Town Clerk's office consisting of Annual Reports, Town Meeting votes and discussion, that are readily available to the Town staff. In addition, the Historical Society and many long-time Town residents have direct recollections to support the research. Belmont is not the first cemetery to perform this work. We will be in contact with other public and private cemeteries for their advice, contacts and suggestions. In addition to historic landscape elements, consideration will be given to decisions that improve the efficiency of landscape maintenance operations to fulfill the perpetual care obligations and more importantly, are long-lasting preservation activities. The success of this project will be determined in phases, available funding and time.
- **Budget:** \$60K
- **Other Funding:** One of the expected deliverables of the Belmont Cemetery Preservation Master Plan with Treatment Recommendations is to identify available financial resources as well as grant and funding opportunities specific to the recommended treatments articulated in the Master Plan.

For public cemetery projects, there are wonderful, comprehensive State reference materials and guidelines that will inform the work, tailored for Massachusetts cemeteries.

An available Massachusetts public resource for context and preservation:
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/terra-firma-10-mourning-glory-preserving-historic-cemeteries/download> (16 pages)

An available Massachusetts public preservation resource for municipal cemeteries: <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/01/16/preservation-guidelines-cemeteries.pdf> (340 pages)

- **Town Properties:** Department of Public Works, Board of Cemetery Commissioners
- **Private Entity as a Private Project Sponsor:** N/A

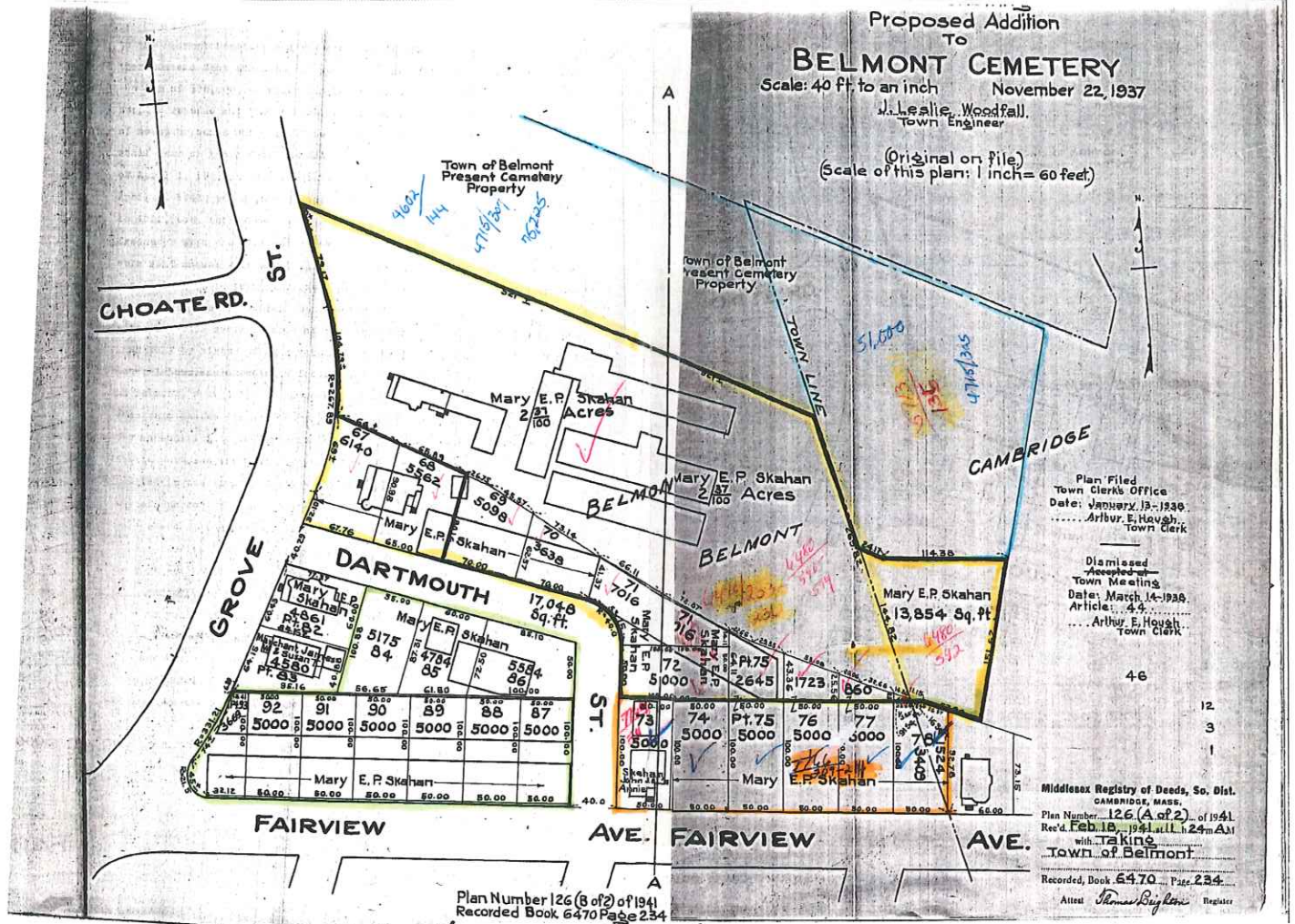
- **Maintenance:** The day-to-day maintenance and upkeep of the Belmont Cemetery is already being accomplished within the operating budget of DPW, Parks & Cemetery Division.
- **Impact on Town Budget:** The limited staff who perform the Perpetual Care landscape and grounds maintenance is the same staff that performs interment services at Belmont Cemetery and Highland Meadow Cemetery. Any efficiencies in operational management could result in a decrease to the budget for cost of day-to-day DPW cemetery operations by implementing efficiencies or one-time performing corrective repairs instead of ongoing/yearly expenses and effort to address them yearly.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Provide the following additional information, as applicable.

1. **Control of Site:** The Town owns and has exclusive control of the entire site for Cemetery purposes. A small portion, approximately 4 acres at the rear of Belmont Cemetery, is actually within the City of Cambridge city limits, though Belmont has exclusive control of the entire Belmont Cemetery site. Should any off-site issues arise, we would of course coordinate work with the City of Cambridge, as we do now. Entirety of Belmont Cemetery is comprised of many parcels of Registered land, all on file with the Town of Belmont Assessors' Office.
2. **Deed Restrictions:** None. Cemetery is current and continuing use.
3. **Acquisitions:** Not applicable
4. **Feasibility:** There are no barriers for moving forward with the project. Both the Board of Cemetery Commissioners and the DPW are sponsors, participating and will make themselves, staff and resources available to accomplish the goals.
5. **Hazardous Materials:** There are no known hazardous materials at this site at this time.
6. **Permitting:** No permits are required as this is an existing and functioning cemetery that is zoned for municipal use.
7. **Environmental Concerns:** There are no environmental concerns for this project at this time.
8. **Professional Standards:** The Preservation Master Plan will be conducted by a professional landscape architect that specializes cemeteries, specifically in historical research & writing, cultural landscape reports, landscape assessment & planning, landscape design, construction documentation & administration and grant & proposal writing.
9. **Fundraising:** N/A
10. **Further Attachments:** Assessor's map showing location of the project, attached.

Proposed Addition
To
BELMONT CEMETERY
Scale: 40 ft to an inch November 22, 1937
J. Leslie Woodfall,
Town Engineer

(Original on file)
(Scale of this plan: 1 inch = 60 feet)



Plan Filed
Town Clerks Office
Date: January 13, 1938
..... Arthur E. Hough,
Town Clerk

Dismissed
Accepted
Town Meeting
Date: March 14, 1938.
Article: 4.4
..... Arthur E. Hough,
Town Clerk

4-6

12
3
1

Middlesex Registry of Deeds, So. Dist.
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
Plan Number 126 (A of 2) of 1941
Rec'd Feb 18, 1941 at 11:24 a.m. A1
with Taking
Town of Belmont

Recorded, Book 6470, Page 234
Attest Thomas Brighton Register

Plan Number 126 (B of 2) of 1941
Recorded Book 6470 Page 234

To: the Belmont Community Preservation Act Committee

11/18/21

From: Lucia Gates, Chair of the Belmont Shade Tree Committee

Subject: CPA grant for the old Belmont Cemetery

To the CPA grant committee, I am writing on behalf of the Belmont Shade Tree Committee to support the CPA grant application for upgrading the old Belmont Cemetery. This is a project that our committee has been interested in for some time. In June 2021 we walked through the cemetery and noted the following concerns about the trees:

1. While we were impressed with the new tree plantings we saw in the cemetery, they were limited in number. Many of the trees in the existing canopy are mature and of a similar age. As they fail, there will be gaps in the canopy.
2. There is an existing tree allee in the cemetery which is quite lovely. But like the overall canopy, new trees need to be planted to eventually replace the aging trees.

While we understand that trees are only one part of the proposal, we also have concerns about the overall state of the cemetery. We particularly note the chain link fence across the front of the property. To motorists on Grove St. this is a grating view. We would also like to see the existing vegetation such as lilacs and flower beds pruned and refreshed.

Finally, we feel that the old cemetery is a vital part of the history of the Town of Belmont, and we support efforts to preserve it.

We urge you to approve this grant application.

Lucia Gates, on behalf of the Belmont Shade
Tree Committee



*Belmont
Historical Society*

NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

Richard B. Betts, Editor

VOLUME XI

SEPTEMBER 1976

NO. 1



BELMONT CEMETERY

"Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude Forefathers of the hamlet sleep. "

With these words from Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard" we bring to our readers this month a short history of Belmont's "Church Yard. "

The beautiful, serene and dignified Belmont Cemetery has quietly graced the local landscape for over a century since its establishment in 1859 by the Board of Selectmen.

Historically speaking, the first cemetery in this area, which is now Belmont, Watertown and Cambridge, was the ancient graveyard of Sir Richard Saltonstall's "Pequossettee Plantation." These burial grounds were located in 1634 at the corner of present day Arlington and Mount Auburn Streets in Watertown a small site which is still at that location. In this cemetery rest the forefathers of what in later years became known as Belmont.

One of the first orders of business after the incorporation of the town in 1859, was a site for a cemetery. A committee was formed and at a special town meeting in October of 1859 their recommendations for the purchase of six acres of land at the corner of Grove Street and Huron Avenue (then Cushing Street) from Leonard Stone at a cost of \$400 an acre was approved. The committee also recommended that about a half acre of this site be set aside for a school, and this also was approved.

The committee then reported that they had an agreement to purchase the "school house formerly located on the south side of Belmont Street and belonging to the Town of Watertown, but now the property of and standing upon the land of Deacon Thomas Livermore (on School Street between Belmont Street and Fairview Avenue) for \$600." The agreement also reserved the "privilege of removing the same through the lands of said Livermore."

In 1860, this old building was moved at a cost of \$140 by James Mellon across the Livermore farm to its new site at the corner of Grove Street and Huron Avenue and returned to its former use as a school house.

The Selectmen acting as Commissioners of the Public Burial Ground immediately began to build and lay out the town's first cemetery. Early maps show that it contained 265 eight grave lots, 24 tomb lots and 58 single grave lots.

The beauty spot of today evidently didn't come easy as the Selectmen reported in 1872 that "considerable has been done to improve the looks of the Cemetery, but the land being poor, it is very difficult to make anything grow or do well upon it, and we think a small appropriation this year, will suffice.

"We would suggest to the town, the feasibility of purchasing a more suitable lot for a Cemetery, procuring the necessary legislation, if needed to remove the bodies to the new Cemetery; using the present one for a gravel bank; which would supply the town with good gravel for several years. "

In 1880, when the "Strawberry Hill" section of Belmont was annexed by Cambridge, the new town line was drawn as a straight line from Belmont Street to Blanchard Road (then Washington Street) except where it crossed the cemetery where it was drawn around this site to avoid any taking. At this time, the Grove Street school house as it had been named was sold to Cambridge and they moved it to the corner of Holworthy Street and Park Avenue, and the land upon which it sat became part of the Belmont Cemetery. This was the first of many future enlargements.

The early settlers were given family burial plots free of charge with locations determined by the drawing of lots as authorized by the "Rules and Regulations of the Belmont Cemetery" adopted on November 6, 1860, as follows:

"Every inhabitant of the town, being a voter, and having a family consisting of two or more, shall be entitled to a lot; also, every female whose family shall consist of two or more, shall likewise be entitled to a lot. . .

"Each and every inhabitant of the town who shall be entitled to a lot . . . shall draw a number which shall be considered as his or her lot. . . The same method shall be adopted until all the lots shall be drawn from the box. "

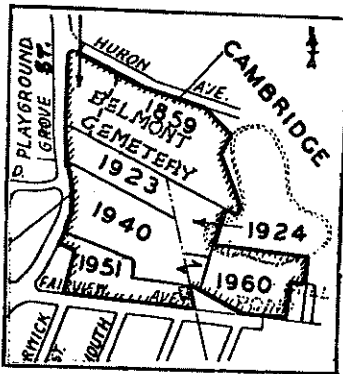
Evidently early records were a problem as the town report from 1877 to 1882 requested "Any person burying a body in the Belmont Cemetery will please notify the Town Clerk as soon as possible. "

Then in 1889, a new rule was adopted stating that no burial of a body shall be made except under the supervision of the Superintendent of the cemetery.

That same year (1899) the position of Commissioner of Public Burial Grounds became an elected office. From 1859 until 1884, the Selectmen assumed these duties. Beginning in 1885, the Selectmen appointed a Cemetery Committee who had control over the cemetery. This committee was appointed annually until March of 1899 when the commissioners were first elected.

The policy of free family burial lots continued until 1885, when the Town meeting, on advice of the new Cemetery Committee, voted that all future lots be sold for \$25 apiece. In 1900, the price of a lot went up to \$50 but single graves were only \$5. In 1913, it was voted to raise the price of full lots (8 graves) to \$200 of which \$100 was to be set aside for perpetual care. The present day price is \$150 per grave.

In 1871, Patrick Skahan purchased fifteen acres of land in Harvard Lawn including that adjacent to the cemetery and started a large market garden. Later his two sons John W. and Edward F. operated the farm with Edward's section being the property east of Grove Street. As the need for additional cemetery land arose, it was to this Skahan land that the town looked.



In 1923, the town purchased 1.73 acres of the Edward F. Skahan farm, adding 1.17 acres (actually in Cambridge) in 1924. In 1940, another 3.24 acre parcel plus 0.32 acres in Cambridge were added. Then in 1951, the balance of the Skahan farm on the east side of Grove Street being 1.93 acres on Fairview Avenue was purchased and added to the cemetery. At this time, the old Skahan house on Grove Street was moved to its present location at the corner of Dalton and Bacon Roads.

The final acquisition was in 1960, when the adjacent 2.85 acre former

Lever Brothers dump site in Cambridge was purchased bringing the total area of the cemetery to 17.03 acres of which 12.69 acres is in Belmont.

Of interest is that Edward F. Skahan whose land was purchased for the enlargement of the cemetery served as a Cemetery Commissioner from 1908 to 1915. He also was a Selectman from 1913 until his death in 1915.

The present attractive office building was erected in 1925, and the storage garage in 1954 to complete the buildings on the site. The iron fence was erected in 1937 enclosing all that was owned at that time thus explaining why it stops half way along Grove Street since it predates the 1940 purchase.

Responsible for the lovely appearance of the grounds is Francis J. Norton who recently observed his 38th anniversary as a Cemetery Department employee, thirty of which have been as Superintendent.

So this 117 year old site which in 1872 came close to becoming a gravel pit, remains today as the most serene and beautiful spot in all Belmont, a memorial to the farsightedness of the early citizens who urged its purchase.

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

TOWN HALL CANNONS

In June of this year, the Board of Selectmen received a request from the MDC asking for the two Civil War era cannon which are buried muzzle-up at the front entrance to the town hall.

The MDC is improving Fort Independence on Castle Island and Fort Warren on Georges Island in Boston Harbor and seek to equip these sites with cannon like the ones used in the forts during the 19th century.

The Selectmen unanimously voted to keep Belmont's cannon where they have been since 1897 after being buried muzzle-up following anti-war feeling which saw them removed from the town hall lawn.

BICENTENNIAL EVENTS



Have you noticed the plaques marking Belmont's Revolutionary period houses? The Belmont Women of Rotary as their gift to the Bicentennial recently had nine wooden signs made up and presented them to the owners of these houses. The houses so marked are: Ellis Barron House-1668, 51 Washington Street; Abraham Hill House-1683, 388 Pleasant Street; John Chenery House-1654, 52 Washington Street; Josiah Shattuck House-1744, 981 Concord Avenue; Captain Eaton House-1750, 154 Mill Street; Thomas Clark House-1760, 59 Common Street; Captain Stephen Frost House-1763, 467 Pleasant Street; Christopher Grant House-1760, 325 Common Street; and the Jonathan Stone House-1775, 160 Washington Street.

On October 16, 1976 the Bicentennial Committee is planning a gala parade. Starting in Cushing Square at 10:30 a. m. and made up of primarily local organizations and people, this parade will progress down Trapelo Road, Belmont Street, Grove Street, Bright Road and Concord Avenue to the high school. The giant Kiwanis Community Fair will begin immediately following the parade in the field house of the high school. Hang out your flags then come and watch the parade. Support your Bicentennial Committee.

LEXINGTON ELKS BICENTENNIAL COIN

A recent gift to the Historical Society was a sterling silver Bicentennial Commemorative coin made up by the Lexington Lodge "2204, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks."

Only 500 of these silver coins were struck and William J. Chemelli,

Exalted Ruler of the Lexington Lodge presented one of them to the Board of Selectmen of Belmont who in turn presented it to the Belmont Historical Society to be placed among the historical artifacts of the town.

Inscribed "Lexington, Mass - 1775 - Where it all began", one gold and two silver coins were also presented to the President of the United States this spring for the Bicentennial Museum.

FROM THE EDITOR

The State Library of Massachusetts has requested the back issues of the Newsletter and has asked to be placed on the mailing list for future copies. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin has also asked for the same privilege. I guess the Belmont Historical Society's fame is spreading!

Please send items of interest, bits of nostalgia, or ideas for future issues on the Newsletter to the Editor, Richard B. Betts, 20 Woods Road, Belmont, Mass. 02178.

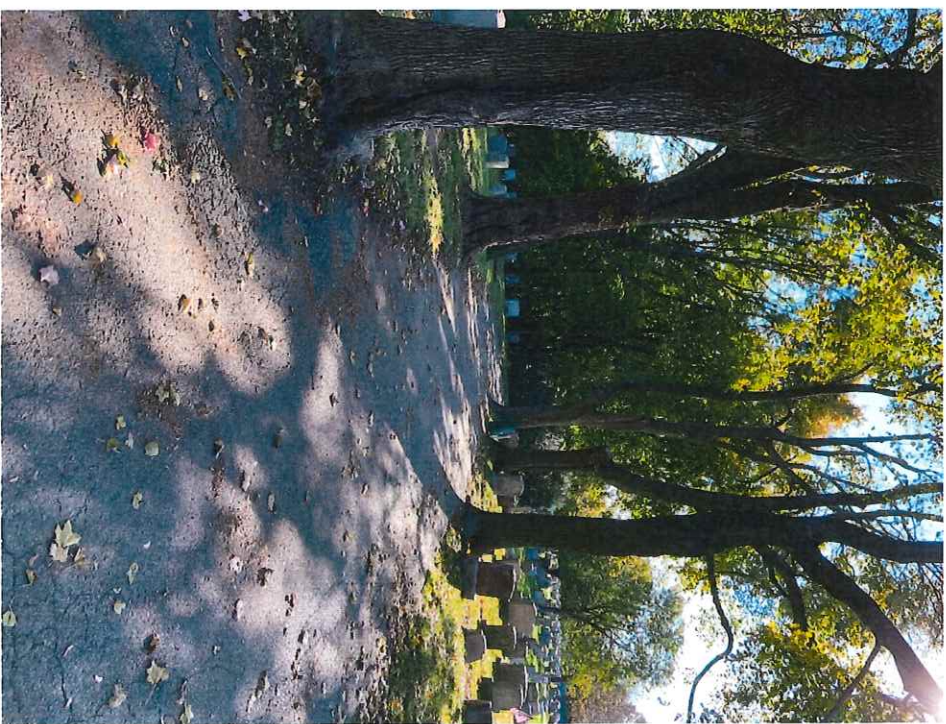
RECENT GIFTS

Irving F. Munroe, now of Orchard Park, New York, recently donated a complete bound volume of his "Winchie Walters' Notebooks" to the Historical Society. Covering the years 1934-1937, this popular high school bi-weekly paper was purchased and avidly read by students of the day to see if one had been "caught" and mentioned in the "At The Keyhole" column.

Another gift to the Historical Society for its ever growing collection, from James O. Jordan, III of Los Angeles, California, was a group of photographs of Pleasant Street and Trapelo Road taken the day after the 1938 hurricane.

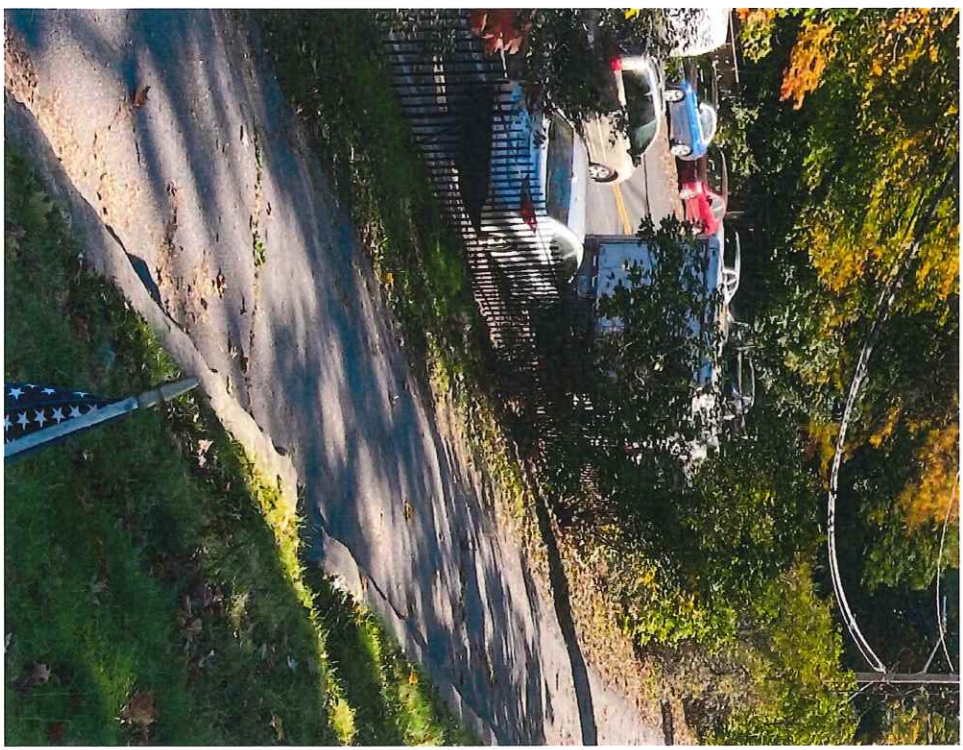
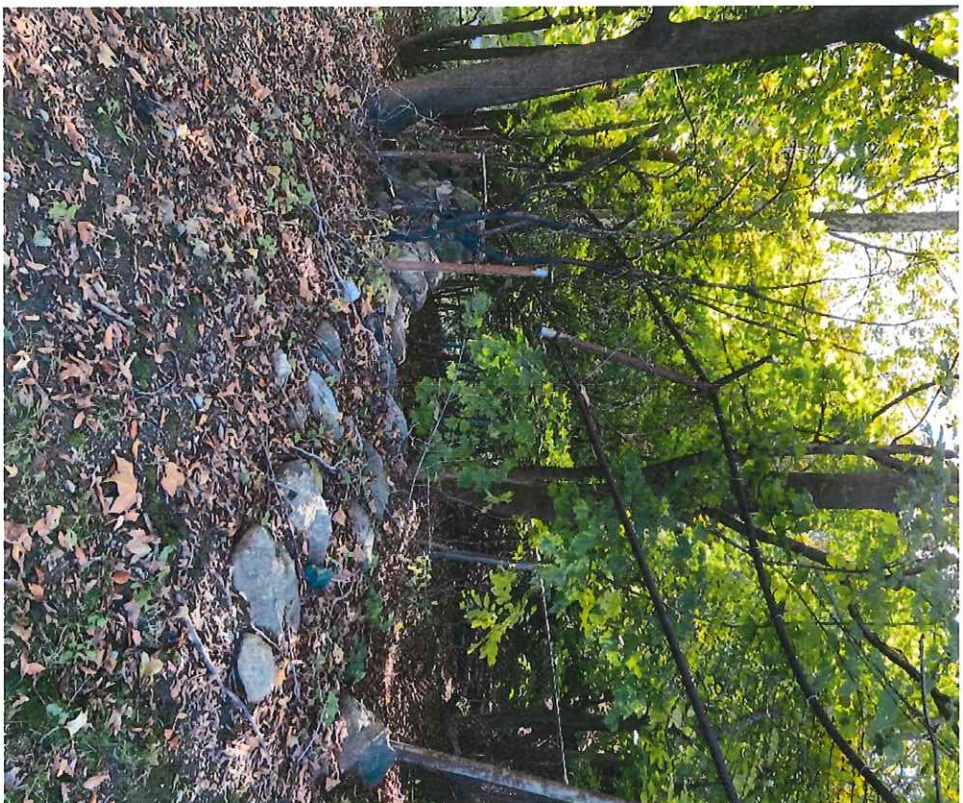
Belmont Cemetery – Preservation Master Plan

Older established trees pose higher risk of failure – poor road condition



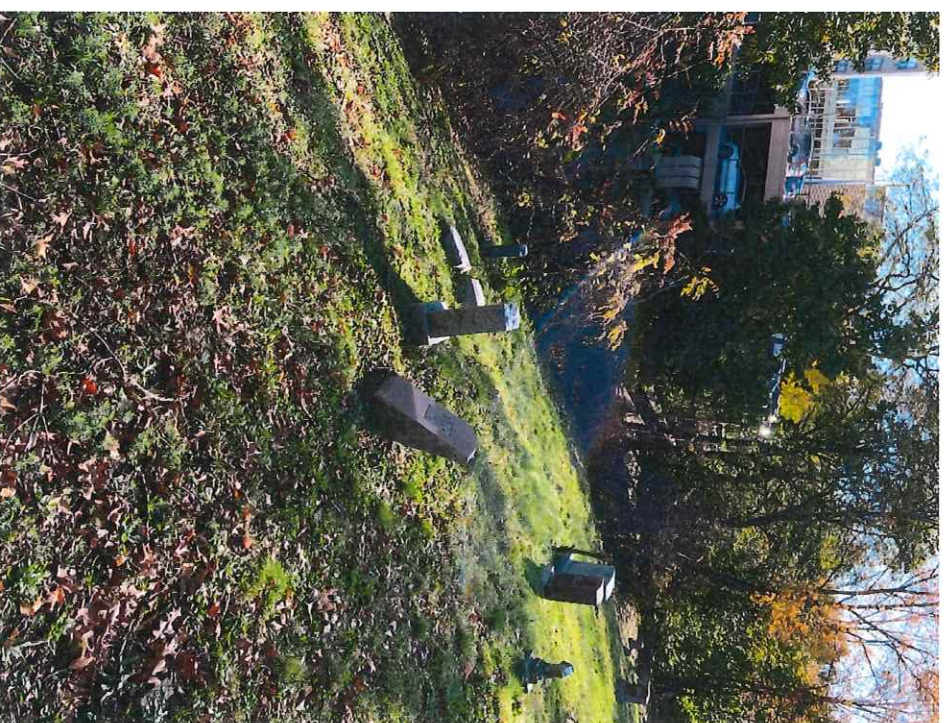
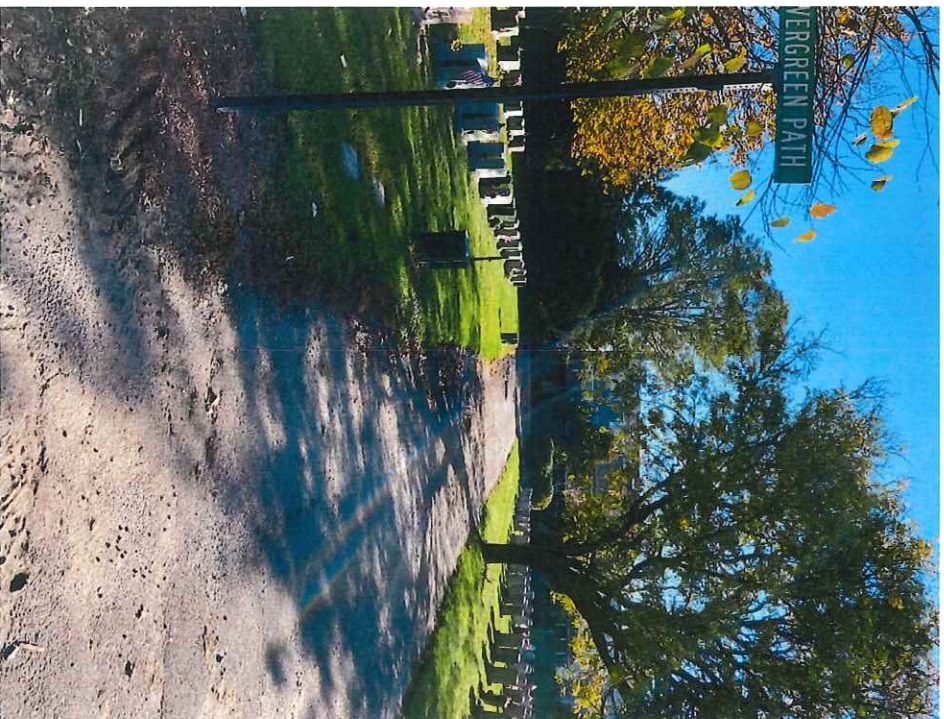
Belmont Cemetery – Preservation Master Plan

Damaged/broken fencing and wall – vegetative loss



Belmont Cemetery – Preservation Master Plan

Failing roads/poor drainage – challenging topography



Belmont Cemetery – Preservation Master Plan

Damaged and Broken historical headstones

