

BOARD OF CEMETERY COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Cemetery Commissioners herewith files our annual report of activities for the calendar year 2004, our 144th year of operation. We are a three member entirely volunteer board, consisting of Chairman Ellen O'Brien Cushman, Vice-Chairman Charles R. Johnson and Clerk Alexander E. Corbett, III.

Highland Meadow Cemetery Activities

This year has been another year of waiting and preparing. As we await the conveyance of the McLean land to the Town for use as our new Highland Meadow Cemetery, we completed our plans for its development. The master plan and design of the Highland Meadow Cemetery, prepared by our consultants, Halvorson Design Group, won a Merit Award for Planning given by the Boston Society of Landscape Architects for its innovative design and ecological planning.

Our activities also included working with the Town's Telecommunications Committee to relocate the public safety/commercial communications tower that is to be located in the active cemetery zone. Ongoing activities revolve around operations management, pricing and marketing. Lastly, our chairman has acted as our representative to the McLean Land Management Committee, which we believe has benefited both the cemetery and open space interests.

Belmont Cemetery Activities

Although new burial lots for traditional interments have not been available at Belmont Cemetery since 1988, 90 interments were made to existing plots in 2004 including 24 cremations. (This compares to 114 total in 2003 including 36 cremations). Of the 90 total, 45 (50%) of the interments were non-residents of the Town, to whom extra fees are assessed totaling \$13,500. Total fee receipts for the calendar year 2004 were \$90,075 down from \$107,681 in calendar 2003.

Staff and Organization

The staff at Belmont Cemetery is among the most dedicated employees in the Town. The pride they feel for a job "well done" is often remarked upon by visitors to the cemetery. The staff's helpful attitude and general kindness toward the grieving as well as the walker leaves a lastly positive impression. We thank Superintendent Robert P. Gardiner and our other full time employees John McDonough, Dan Tempesta and Jeff Currier as well as part time office worker Nancy Fay. They succeed in making Belmont Cemetery one of the most beautiful cemeteries in Greater Boston, public or private. It is a consoling place, treasured by our many families and we are deeply grateful for our talented staff.



Belmont Cemetery, Grove Street, in springtime

Progress against Goals

We are pleased to report the following progress against our stated goals for Fiscal Year 2005:

- **Acquire and develop land for a new cemetery.** Await the transfer of land.
- **Continue to promote and improve the Annual Planting Program for individual lots that was established in 1997.** Program continues to thrive and receive positive reviews from participants and enroll new participants. Continue to expand awareness.
- **Continue tree planting program originally established in 1996 and enhance landscape areas to beautify Belmont Cemetery.** Recently reinvigorated and changed program, securing several new enrollments. Exploring other cooperative funding opportunities with community organizations and community service hours for students.
- **Develop new ways to inspire and reward long-term employees and encourage newer employees to remain.** We are most pleased that we have had no staff turnover again this year. We continue to involve all our staff in design and operations planning efforts, solicit their ideas and rely upon their expertise. Dealing with the effects of the DPW consolidation on the employees of the cemetery division, to assure parity, equality and availability of opportunity.

- **Develop new revenue opportunities and identify cost-savings opportunities.** To date, we have not seen any cost savings attributable to the consolidation into a DPW. As we prepare to open a second location, we will be emphasizing efficiency of operations and employ strict cost controls on both labor and equipment.

Calendar Year 2004 Operational Statistics:

Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund	\$ 490,327
Interest Income from Perpetual Care Fund	\$ 20,276
Annual Planting Fund (includes H. Smith Fund)	\$ 67,395
Total Fee Receipts	\$ 90,075
Total Expense Budget Appropriation for FY2004	\$ 319,874
Actual Expended against FY2004 Appropriated Budget	\$ 307,255

Full Time Employees of Cemetery Division	4
Part Time Employees of Cemetery Division	1

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen O'Brien Cushman, Chairman