

Peabody Historic Commission Adopt -a - Cemetery Program

There are several cemeteries in Peabody in great need of attention that are up for adoption. If you're interested, contact the Peabody Historic Commission at (978) 538-5777 or by e-mail at lisa.greene@peabody-ma.gov and we will help you get started. It is important that you contact us prior to any work to make sure permissions are in place and to prevent any duplication of effort.

Three Steps to Adopting a Cemetery

- 1.) Contact the Commission to see what cemeteries are available and pick your site (a list of all cemeteries and a map of their locations is attached);
- 2.) Read the information sheet and sign and return the adoption agreement. The agreement will be for one year and may involve a Fall and a Spring cleaning. Additional visits for upkeep are optional, the main thing is to bring these sites back from years of neglect. Adoptees are welcome to continue with their chosen cemetery for multiple years if they wish, we just need you to check in each year to provide an updated signature to make sure the cemetery is covered each year.
- 3.) Assemble your crew and materials and start your clean up!

Procedures for Cleaning a Historic Cemetery

- 1.) You will be removing debris, pulling weeds and trimming grass. There is to be absolutely NO *subsurface* disturbance at any time within the established boundaries and buffers of the cemetery (no digging of any kind).
- 2.) There is to be absolutely NO disturbance of any stones, whether they are carved headstones, or fieldstone markers, footstones, or brick or stone borders, unless directed by and under the supervision of the Peabody Historic Commission.
- 3.) Gravestone rubbings are not allowed as it can damage stones. The Mass DCR recommends instead to shine a bright light on stones and to photograph them to record their markings.
- 4.) Methods for removing obnoxious weeds and shrubs should take into account the fragility of some of the stones and artifacts. For example, climbing vines and those with runners should be snipped into short sections and carefully pulled. They MUST NOT be yanked in long runners, as they can upset a fieldstone or rock/brick border.
- 4.) Please maintain an attitude of respect for those persons who are buried in these cemeteries.
- 5.) Do not lean on, sit on, or place any weight on any headstones, even if they seem sturdy. They are extremely fragile and will break easily.
- 6.) Please do not leave paper/food trash at the cemetery site.
- 7.) The following tools, supplies and equipment *WILL* be acceptable for use in the cleaning procedures:
 - a. Leaf blowers
 - b. Axes
 - c. Chain Saws
 - d. Leaf Rakes
 - e. Lopping Shears
 - f. Hand Trimmers (i.e., rose trimmers)
 - g. Paper yard waste bags (for leaf collection)
 - h. Lawnmowers and weed trimmers/edgers (However metal wires/blades on string trimmers may NOT be used around gravestones!). In all cases, mowers and edgers must be kept at least 10 inches away from all stones to prevent damage.
- 8.) The following tools and equipment *WILL NOT* be acceptable in any way for the cleaning procedures:
 - a. No Tractors or Heavy Equipment
 - b. No Rototillers
 - c. No Trowels
 - d. No Shovels or Digging Apparatus of any sort
 - e. No Steel Tooth Rakes
 - f. No Herbicides will be allowed to use on Cemetery grounds or around any Gravestones! (for example: Roundup)

Adopt-a-Cemetery Rules and Regulations

1. All adopting individuals or organizations must be approved through the Peabody Historic Commission and must sign an Adopt-A-Cemetery Program Agreement.
2. The Peabody Historic Commission will have final approval on all cemeteries adopted.
3. Participants in clean-ups must be at least 6 years of age and children under the age of sixteen (16), must be accompanied by a responsible adult while in the cemeteries. Neither the Peabody Historic Commission, nor the City of Peabody, will be held responsible for any injuries or incidents to anyone doing cleanup. Applicants will be responsible for any damages caused by children, including but not limited to damage to memorials, plants, flags, holders, new grass, and any other object within the cemetery boundaries. Cemetery grounds ARE NOT a place for children to play.
4. All domestic animals (i.e.: dogs, etc.) brought to any Cemeteries must be under the control of an owner or on a leash at all times. Neither the Peabody Historic Commission nor the City of Peabody will be held responsible for damage done by animals or persons visiting these hallowed grounds. Also, it is required that owners will pick up any waste that may be left behind by their animal.
5. State Law prohibits any person from writing upon, defacing, or injuring any monument, stone, marker or structure in, or belonging to the cemeteries.
6. All visitors to the cemeteries will adhere to the accepted rules of cemetery etiquette:
 - A. Take only photos, leave only footprints.
 - B. Do not touch memorials or artifacts.
 - C. Do not bring alcohol, illegal weapons, or entertainment items into cemeteries.
 - D. Show respect for the dead.
 - E. Supervise your children & teach them to respect the dead.
 - F. Keep pets under control & clean-up after them.
 - G. Do not litter, including cigarette butts.
 - H. Promptly report suspicious activities or vandalism to local authorities.
 - I. Gravestone Rubbings are Prohibited.
7. The Peabody Historic Commission will:
 - A. Provide Procedures for Cleaning Cemeteries
 - B. Coordinate with DPS on the removal of leaf bags and brush
 - C. Provide a sign crediting the adopter after the first clean-up

By signing below the Applicant hereby acknowledges that they have read and understand the above Procedures for Adopting a Cemetery and Adopt a Cemetery Rules and Regulations, agrees to abide by those rules, and agrees to hold harmless the City of Peabody and the Peabody Historic Commission for any injuries or accidents that may occur in the course of the cemetery cleaning project.

Signature

Date

PEABODY HISTORIC COMMISSION

Request to Adopt a Cemetery

I am interested in adopting the following Cemetery and would like more information on the

program. NAME _____ DATE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

PHONE _____

Organization (if Applicable) _____

Cemetery name/ or location _____

If you have no particular cemetery in mind, please identify the location in which you have an interest. _____

The Peabody Historic Commission will be looking for a one-year commitment to work on your chosen cemetery. The adoptee does not take ownership of the property but simply agrees to clean and preserve the area. No changes to the cemetery may be made without prior written agreement from the Peabody Historic Commission.

You will be contacted within 10 days of your submission and informed if the cemetery you are requesting is available!

Please enjoy these beautiful, special spaces and try to take time to read the inscriptions on the headstones (if there are any there), note the information from the stones and the style (square, rectangle, obelisk, etc.) and material they are constructed from (granite, marble, agate, cement, fieldstone, brick, wood, etc.). You might find it enjoyable to look up the names on the stones in the local history and genealogical books available at our local libraries and learn a little about these early residents of Peabody, and to read about the burial customs used during the time of their demise. Cemeteries are a non-renewable cultural resource, so let's take care of these unique pieces of history, and please take pride in yourself for having cared enough to help those who came before us.