

RED CHURCH CEMETERY
Town of Red Hook
7340 South Broadway
Red Hook, NY 12571
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Red Church Cemetery Year-End Report
7 December 2022

Red Church Cemetery Maintenance

Maintenance Staff Hours for 2022

BUDGET CODE: A0.08.8810.100

BUDGET LIMIT: 900 HOURS

GROUNDKEEPERS: Joe Coon/Jeff Tremper

The maintenance staff hours are based on the experience of past years.

Fuel Consumption

The cost of fuel increased significantly in 2022. Fuel consumption in 2022 was less than 2021, but the cost was greater. Fuel consumption for 2020 to 2022 are listed for comparison.

2022 Gallons of Gasoline

January	0
February	0
March	0
April	15.00
May	61.90
June	32.40
July	15.00
August	31.00
September	15.00
October	15.00
November	15.00
December	0

2022 Total – 200.30 Total Cost = \$ 712.12

2021 Gallons of Gasoline

January	0
February	0
March	0
April	15.00
May	32.50
June	64.40
July	32.90
August	32.50
September	40.60
October	32.60
November	0
December	0

2021 Total = 250 Gallons Total Cost = \$586.63

2020 Gallons of Gasoline

January	0
February	0
March	15.00
April	15.00
May	47.00
June	15.00
July	32.50
August	29.00
September	30.00
October	17.50
November	0
December	0

2020 Total = 201 Gallons Total Cost = \$ 280.73

The total area mowed at the cemetery has increased about half an acre along the north and west borders now that we cleared these areas of trees, brush, yard waste, and dumped appliances. The cost of fuel increased markedly in 2021 and now again in 2022.

The fuel cost increase has budget implications.

The Stihl Trimmers, Stihl Chain Saw, Stihl Blower all use gasoline. In the future I would like to transition to electric trimmers and blowers. Electric chain saws cut well but their battery life is dismal. Bard College is working on a grant to obtain electric trimmers and blowers. We may benefit from their efforts.

Diesel fuel used for the John Deere 4120 and John Deere 670 tractors are billed to the Recreation Park because the cemetery only has a gasoline account at the Highway Department. The cemetery has no diesel equipment.

Budget overlaps with the Recreation Park are unavoidable. Both properties are in the A Fund.

Monument Repair

15+ monuments were repaired and reset in 2022 using the tripod lift. At least two persons are required to do this work because it can be dangerous.

Included in 2022 was the resetting of the base and monument along the western roadway in the Catholic section of the cemetery. This massive stone has been down since the town took over the cemetery in 2018. Joe Coon and Jeff Tremper reset the stone so that it no longer hampers plowing.

John Deere 670 Tractor/Loader

The Recreation Park now has the John Deere 3039R to mow the fields at Rec Park West. As planned in 2021 this would free up the JD670 for use at the Red Church Cemetery to fill sunken graves, do roadway repairs and grading, as well as moving the dirt leftover from new graves.

The tractor cannot be driven to the cemetery. I am arranging for a trailer that I can pull with my truck. The tractor must be returned to the Rec Park for winter storage. Having this tractor at the cemetery during the summer will be a major maintenance help.

2022 Mowing and Trimming Schedule

The maintenance formula at the cemetery is one-third mowing and two-thirds trimming. This is a fact that is often overlooked in cemeteries. It is the trimming around monuments and stones that make the cemetery look groomed.

Aluminum Fence Repairs

Repairs to the aluminum fencing along Route 9G are constant. As noted in past reports, deer crossing Route 9G panic and run straight through the aluminum fencing often leaving tufts of hair on the bent and broken pickets. The pickets can sometimes be straightened but most often must be replaced. This requires drilling out the top and bottom rivets and installing the new pickets with self-tapping screws. Bottles thrown from passing car windows also bend or break the pickets. The speed limit past the cemetery is 55 mph; trucks “jake brake” to drop to the 45-mph limit. This noise terrifies the deer causing them to smash through the fence.

Equipment Maintenance

Before the mowers, trimmers, chain saws, and blowers were stored for winter, they were serviced, i.e., oil, air, and fuel filters changed, greased, hydraulic fluids checked and replaced as required, mower blades sharpened and balanced or replaced, and other equipment cleaning and repairs as required.

Joe Coon maintains thorough records of all maintenance requirements and when they were performed.

We did not purchase battery tenders for the equipment because of potential fires.

Red Church Electrical Service

The cost to put an electric service in the church is \$3,000+. An RFP would be required, and bids solicited. This is the only way that we can determine exactly what it would cost to have power in the church.

Electrical service would make connected smoke alarms possible.

Red Church Shutters

The Town of Red Hook is now responsible for church building. This past winter three of the huge and heavy shutters fell from windows. The hinges holding the shutters simply snapped. These shutters are dangerous if they were to hit someone, so they will be screwed permanently to the outside walls. Some are already fastened. Putting the shutters back in place requires at least two people and a large ladder.

North Side of the Red Church

The north side of the Red Church was in the poorest condition. The windows also required glazing and painting. Joe Coon with help from Jeff Tremper when needed prepped and painted the north side of the church including the shutters. The windows were painted in place instead of removing them for this work. This takes considerable time and effort but removing them would be more arduous.

Painting of the Red Church

In 2023 the painting of the west (back) of the Red Church will be done. If time permits the south side of the church will be done. Much depends upon the mowing and trimming demands of the year. If the grass grows as it did 2021, it is difficult to find the time to work on the church building.

At least 15 siding planks require replacement. They must be specially ordered in set of six and come only in 12' lengths. The cost of these boards was put in the 2023 budget.

Project Schedule

The project work schedule will depend upon the mowing demands. If the spring and summer are like last year, the projects will have to wait until fall simply because there will not be enough time to do them. Hopefully, mowing and trimming will be reasonable enough to allow for some of the needed projects to be completed.

Trimming with a gas-powered weed whacker is an arduous task that is quite physically demanding. Mowing over the rough terrain of the cemetery avoiding all the monuments must be experienced to realize how difficult and time-consuming job it is.

Tree and Shrub Trimming and Removal

Joe Coon continued the tree work on the north and west borders of the cemetery. The vines that have taken over most of the trees make tree trimming and removal complicated. A pole saw is needed to cut out the vines before the trees can be cut. The trimming of the many shrubs and bushes within the cemetery begun when the town took over the cemetery has now resulted in their being much more attractive and manageable.

The dead tree behind the maintenance building was removed. No replacement tree will be planted because this is an awkward space that is shadowed by the large tree to the east of the building.

Grave Decorations

All wreaths, plants, flowers, etc. were removed on 26 March because of cold and rainy. Decoration removal for 15 March is stipulated in the Care of Plots (p. 4) Section of the Rules and Regulations. Joe Coon likes to give extra time for people to remove the decorations to avoid complaints.

Labor Records & Purchase Invoices

Complete records of all labor hours and maintenance purchases invoices are available for review in the Recreation Office.

Dumping at the Red Church Cemetery

I am pleased to report that there was no dumping of appliances, garbage, or other refuse at the cemetery in 2022. In fact, there has been no dumping at the cemetery since 2019. Joe Coon's constant presence at the cemetery may be one reason for this. Also, the west border is cleared so there is no way to hide anything!

Sanding and Painting of Plot Railings

Joe Coon repaired, sanded, and painted all the plot railings within the cemetery. All were done in black enamel that should last for years.

Cast Iron Fence along Route 9G

Joe Coon repaired, prepped, and painted the cast iron fence south of the maintenance building.

Blue Bird Boxes

On Wednesday, 20 April, Susan and Gerry Gilnack, other volunteers, and I installed six blue bird boxes on 7' top rail posts saved from the middle field at the Rec Park. The boxes were constructed by Bard Students under the guidance of Paul Marienthal. We provided the poles and the PVC pipe shield needed to prevent predators from pillaging the nests. I am told that cemeteries are ideal locations for blue bird boxes.

The Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club, Inc. monitored the bluebird boxes and submitted a report to the Red Church Cemetery Committee on 23 September 2022.

The report reads as follows:

There were nine Bluebird eggs laid, all nine eggs hatched, and nine babies fledged. There were no white Bluebird eggs laid this season. There were four Tree Swallow eggs laid and for hatched and all four fledged. There were 14 House Wrens laid with 14 eggs. 12 babies were fledged.

The addition of the Bluebird boxes to the Red Church Cemetery has been well received by visitors. Susan Gilnack is the chair of the Bluebird Trail Committee.

Winter Snow Plowing

I called Dennis Loveland on 19 November, and he has agreed to plow the cemetery gain this winter.

Joe Coon has already installed the road markers to guide the plowing. There are certain spots in the cemetery where it is important not to push snow.

Three inches of snow must fall before plowing is done.

2023 Project List

Joe Coon has compiled a list of projects he would like to continue/complete in 2023.

1. Remove the stumps from around headstones from long-removed bushes.
2. Continue the repair/resetting of fallen gravestones that require the use of the tripod and chain hoist.
3. Continue the cleaning of headstones with D2 to make them readable.
4. Continue the long-term process of filling in the hundreds of sunken graves.
5. Continued stone dust repairs to the roads within the cemetery to prevent puddles and washed-out ruts.
6. Continue the tree work on the western border of the cemetery as time permits.
7. Prep and paint the west side of the Red Church.
8. Replace the damaged boards on the Red Church.
9. Prep and paint the south side of the church including the shutters if time permits.

This is a list of work planned for the cemetery in 2023. Much depends upon the mowing schedule but developing a solid plan for projects is essential for good cemetery management. We cannot forget that the Red Church Cemetery is an active cemetery that has frequent visitors and regular burials.

2023 Wish List

1. The installation of a 200-amp electrical service in the Red Church to allow for lights, outlets, and a fire alarm system.
2. Installation of a door and small ramp to the southwest corner of the church to permit handicapped access.

Electricity and handicapped access would permit possible use of the church for public events.

Red Church Cemetery Committee Contact Information

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