

The Cemetery Commission met in the Mount Vernon City Hall Conference Room on Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

Commissioners present: Mary Evans, Eric Siggins, Mike Woods, and Teresa Cox. Machele Pelkey's resignation was accepted with sadness.

Minutes of the September 9, 2025 meeting were approved.

The following topics were discussed:

Maintenance of cemetery records and documents – Joe Jennison completed the documents project and the City Staff are using the digitized inventory. This digitized inventory will be used to help build the WKHS GIS program. Updates on this program will hopefully be forthcoming.

Restoration and Preservation of cemetery monuments – On September 23 Robert B. Mitchell's and James Holman's 1812 gravestones were installed. The commission worked with Tony Townsend, member of the Sons of the American Revolution. The S.A.R. is replacing missing veteran markers all across the United States. Commission members and Tony researched military records, marriage licenses, and obituaries. Paperwork was submitted to Veteran Affairs for shipment of the 240-pound marble stones. Volunteers at the installation were: Commission members, Dustin Burnett, Jacob See, Tony & Deanna Townsend, and Dustin Peterson Director of Linn County Veteran Services. Rev. Dr. Catherine Quehl-Engel gave the blessing.

Mary Evans worked with Lawyer Douglas Herman of Lynch Dallas Legal, Cedar Rapids, to clarify the definition of "leveling" gravestones. The results was the public notice advising families that the following stones would be leveled/straightened/made plumb: Terrah Smith Brokaw, Charles Andrew & Oseanna Hawn, Mary Ayers Bauman, Cpt. John Safely, Horatio S. & Mary Hale, Donna & Emma McKay, and 2 unidentified graves in Blk 5 lot 34.

The Iowa Economic Development Authority accepted for CLG training requirements the July 14 workshop given by Gravestone Conservator John Heider. This is important to the Mount Vernon Historic Preservation Commission since three members attended the workshop.

Maintenance of cemetery grounds – A discussion is needed with Jordans Lawn Care to ensure that gravestones don't continue to be covered with grass clippings.

Eagle Scout Project organized by Cait O'Connor will begin at noon on Sunday, October 19. Casey & Cait O'Connor, Ted Seiter and commission members walked the cemetery

multiple times locating shrubs to be trimmed, bushes to be cut back, and sticks to be picked up getting the cemetery ready for winter.

Promoting and publicizing the cemetery – *Grave News* a Quarterly Newsletter of the State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries, Vol. 30, Issue 3, September 2025 published a two-page article titled "History of Mt. Vernon Cemetery".

The Sun published an article titled "Etched in Stone: 1812 Veterans Mitchell and Holman Honored".

The Sons of the American Revolution (S.A.R.) put a video of the installation of Mitchell's and Holman's gravestones on their YouTube channel. Jesse Thurn put the YouTube video on Mount Vernon's website.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,
Mary E. Evans