

Wilson Cemetery Columbarium Timeline

Time and circumstances and culture have made cremation a more viable option in bringing loved ones to their final rest. Our Barre Town cemetery sexton began to get questions about columbarium niches as an alternative storage method for cremation urns. As interest grew, the commission decided to research the relationship between cremation, burial, and overall trends in funerals.

During the cemetery year 2006, commission members began discussions on building a columbarium complex on the east side of the cemetery. Many cemeteries included such a facility, but no Vermont publicly owned cemetery had one. Discussions continued into 2007 and the commission, with guidance from the Town Manager, analyzed the financial and operational impacts of turning several grave lots into a single columbaria lot. They also collected information from other cemeteries, marketing sources, and local columbarium manufactures. After weighing the options, they selected an area on the east edge of the cemetery and close to Websterville Road.

Further research and input from the Rock of Ages Corporation finalized their choice to a 96 niche unit, each 12 inches by 12 inches, proposing two units to start the project. The commission chose Barre granite as the material to build the units. The year 2008 brought further planning to the project. Commission members worked with the town select board on funding issues, the health department on health issues, and the town attorney on legal issues. A budget request went into the cemetery operating budget to provide funds the initial start-up and plans and specifications put together. The documents went out as a request for proposal to local granite manufacturing concerns. G.I.V. (Granite Industries of Vermont) won the bid to build the first two units.

With funding and a contractor in place, the commission discussed the final site for the columbaria units and the layout for the park. They settled on a five – structure site to start the project, the layout could ultimately hold 13 of the structures. The initial construction would provide two completed units, the foundation for a third, a center pedestal, and benches. A granite paver walkway would be added with another bid. By the end of cemetery year 2008, the first two structures had been placed.

The final step in construction took place near the end of cemetery year 2009. While the town funded the costs for the granite pavers, commission members and the sexton placed them in the cemetery under the expert, and volunteer guidance, of the paver's manufacturer, G.I.V. With the work concluded and the structures marked for identification, the facility went on line.

In August of 2010, the new facility got a statewide introduction via Vermont's Channel 3 News. Niche reservations had been offered to the public and interest began to build. The project had been designed to be self – sustaining, funds from each reservation go into a special fund to defray the costs of future units. Once the initial units begin to fill and reservations hit a predetermined tipping point, planning for the next phase will begin using the funds previously set aside.

Barre Town Cemetery Commission:

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