

Pleasant Hill and Flanders-Hillside Cemeteries

Spring 2023 Newsletter

85 Pleasant Hill Road, PO Box 78, Chester, NJ 07930

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This newsletter is intended to keep you posted about our activities. Plot holder questions, comments, suggestions and kudos are always invited and should be addressed to the Superintendent at the above contacts.

SUPERINTENDENT

The first full-time Superintendent at Pleasant Hill/Flanders-Hillside Cemeteries, Earl G. Barnes III, was hired September 1, 2021 to replace William Wineburgh who has retired after serving 20 years as Superintendent.

Mr. Barnes grew up and resides in the area. He brings to the position his extensive background in Horticulture. He has a Landscape Design/Horticulture degree with 45 years of hands-on Horticulture experience, including owning his own business. In addition to this position, he serves on the Chester Fire Department.

We welcome Earl and look forward to him using his extensive background to beautify our cemeteries and we wish Bill a long and happy retirement.

TRUSTEES

At the November 9, 2022 Annual Plot Holders and Quarterly Trustees Meeting the following were elected for a three-year term:

Larry Ashley - 2026

Greg Bressler - 2026

David Conover – 2025

Other Trustees:

Kurt Alstede – 2025

Leslie Cooper – 2025

Edward Harrington – 2025

Karen Dilley - 2025

Holly Taquinto – 2024

Mike Wade – 2024

Paula Hays - 2024

All Plot Holders are encouraged to attend the yearly meeting – for 2023 it will be held on Wednesday, November 8 at 5:30 pm.

2022 CEMETERY STATISTICS

Last year saw 79 burials and 42 cremations for a total of 121. New plot sales totaled 123 with 54 deeds issued.

Plots are currently available in Area 15 for single graves and Area 4 for multiple graves.

SOCIAL MEDIA

We are continuously updating our website and hope that you can find answers to your questions there. Should you have any suggestions as to how we can make it even more user-friendly, please let us know.

We can also be found on Facebook at Pleasant Hill & Flanders-Hillside Cemeteries.

DATES TO REMEMBER

AUXILIARY MEETINGS – 1:00 P.M.

Saturday, June 10 - Wednesday, September 6 - Saturday, December 2

ANNUAL PLOT HOLDERS MEETING - 5:30 P.M.

Wednesday, November 8, 2023

All meetings will be held in the Smith Memorial Building

HISTORY OF PLEASANT HILL/FLANDERS HILLSIDE CEMETERY

Pleasant Hill Cemetery has a long and interesting history dating back to 1750 when William Larrison donated land for a Presbyterian Church and burying ground in an area known as Pleasant Hill. The church was, at that time, named the First Presbyterian Church of Roxbury but was referred to and called the Hill Church and Hill Graveyard in deeds and records; it was also called The Meeting House. A simple log church was the first building and was replaced in 1756 by a second structure that served the congregation until 1851. The church name changed in 1799 to the First Presbyterian Church of Chester. At this time the Township of Chester was also established.

The members of the church were from many of the early families who settled in the area as well as families from several surrounding areas. In 1850 the church membership changed drastically as 48 members from Mt Olive withdrew and built the Mt. Olive Presbyterian Church along with 26 members from Flanders who withdrew and built the Flanders Presbyterian Church. The remaining members (about 50 in number and all from Chester) decided to build on Main Street, in the village of Chester, a new church which was erected in 1851.

In 1856 the church family members and descendants of many original settlers of the area, about twenty men and women, are recorded as having come to take part in the proceedings to have the Old Hill Graveyard be incorporated as an association. On September 13, 1856, it became The Pleasant Hill Cemetery Association - 166 years ago (September 2022). There is no record of why they chose the name Pleasant Hill, however, that area was also named Pleasant Hill. The Association is governed by a Board of Trustees that serve without remuneration. The cemetery is maintained as non-denominational and non-sectarian and plot purchases include perpetual care.

Over the years additional land was purchased, paths and driveways were opened and trees were set out. The stone chapel was erected in 1903 at a cost of about \$1,200.

A Woman's Auxiliary was formed in October 1953, seventy years making Pleasant Hill Cemetery beautiful.

In 1964 the Biblical Seminary of New York allowed us to purchase 81/100th of an acre to adjust and straighten our boundary. In May, 1989, the Association purchased 80 adjoining acres from Mr. Kennedy, originally slated for a housing development. That purchase brought the cemetery to a total of almost 100 acres and assures our continued operation for many years to come. Development plans were created, and portions of the additional property have been cleared, laid out, and used for burials. Additional sections will be planned and created as needed.

In July of 1989, the Cemetery Association purchased the Flanders Methodist Church burying ground on Hillside Avenue in Succasunna. This cemetery has a history as old as Pleasant Hill in that it was originally created by Mr. Miller in 1850 to be an additional burying ground for the Flanders Methodist Church, as their churchyard had reached full capacity. The cemetery that has been serving the community for over 250 years is one of quiet and permanent beauty that will endure through the ages.

A new Administration Building was erected and dedicated in 1999. This building is the result of a gift from Bernice Smith, wife of Roswell Smith, who left money in trust to the cemetery, specifically for a building that would have inside toilets with running water. In 2005, the building on the south side of the cemetery that had long served as the administrative office and maintenance building was replaced by a larger and more modern pole barn with office space and toilet facilities for the Grounds Crew, and storage space for all the machines and tools required in the operation of the cemetery. The anticipated growth of the cemetery was a major factor in the decision to build this new building. The old building was razed, and the area was graded and seeded to provide a more tranquil setting on that side of the cemetery.

PLEASANT HILL CEMETERY
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INFORMATION UPDATES

It is important that we have a current contact name and address for all plots at Pleasant Hill. Please send any changes via email or snail mail to the Superintendent at Pleasant Hill.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Please visit the Pleasant Hill Cemetery website <http://pleasanthillcemetery.org> to review pertinent information regarding permitted decorations, vigil lights, floral tributes. Holiday wreaths and grave blankets may be placed after December 1 and will be removed by cemetery staff after February 1.