Edgewood Cemetery revisited

Last week, Pottstown attorney Andrew Monastra and his wife, Sue, made a presentation to Pottstown Council about his efforts to maintain the historic Edgewood Cemetery at High and Keim streets.

Monastra has big hopes for the cemetery, including more landscaping, a garden tour and perhaps even a farmer’s market.

Right now, however, Edgewood needs basic maintenance, like grass mowing. Monastra told Council he’s seeking $10,000 to $15,000 in donations just to get through this year.

The 12-acre cemetery, founded in 1851, is the final resting place of more than 2,800 Pottstonians, including Matthew Meigs, founder of The Hill School, and other Hill School headmasters and faculty. It sits at the eastern end of the Hill School campus.

For decades, a non-profit board managed the cemetery. But by 2014, the board had dissolved and the cemetery was essentially abandoned.

Meanwhile, the Hill School identified an area of about 600 residential parcels lining the perimeter of the campus, plus Edgewood Cemetery, that it aimed to revitalize.

The school said it would help beautify, secure, and improve the area, which it calls “Hobart’s Run.” It set a fundraising goal of $5 million for neighborhood improvements. As of last year, however, the school had raised just 16 percent of its goal, and there have been few tangible achievements.

One notable effort was the maintenance of Edgewood Cemetery. In 2015, Hill School Security Director Randal Doaty organized a committee that planned to incorporate and take possession of the cemetery. The grass was mowed. But this year, the cemetery has again been allowed to atrophy, leading to Monastra’s visit to Council.

Considering Edgewood Cemetery’s historic connection to the Hill School, its location near the school’s entrance, the school’s $162 million endowment, and its tax-exempt status, it shouldn’t be asking too much for the school to mow the lawn.

Commentary by Tom Hylton

EDGEOWOOD CEMETERY, founded in 1861, comprises 12 acres between High and Beech streets just east of The Hill School. More than 2,800 Pottstonians are buried there, including three Hill School headmasters.

Hobart’s Run area consists of about 600 mostly residential parcels, plus Edgewood Cemetery, located around the perimeter of The Hill School campus. The Hill School purchased 701-703 High St, left, in December 2016 to serve as an office for Hobart’s Run.