

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Feasibility Study
Maine Veterans Cemetery Annex
Aroostook County Maine

Prepared By The
Aroostook County Veterans Cemetery Committee

In July 1998, the legislature directed the Department of Defense , Veterans and Emergency Management to convene a group of people to study the feasibility of locating a Veterans' Cemetery in Aroostook County.

The group selected for the study must present a cross section of Veterans' organizations and Veterans at Large, and one member of the Veterans and Emergency Management.

The study directed by legislative action was to include a review of potential, in kind donation, of land and resources and volunteers for the purpose of establishing the Veterans Cemetery.

On September 2, 1998 a committee consisting of the following: Representing the Veterans of Foreign Wars; James Day Jr., Peter F. Miseburger, Zane Grant and Wilfred Deane. Representing the American Legion; Fred Ormezzani, Walter Corey, Richard Edgecomb and Camile Lausier. Representing the Veterans at large; Jack Myers and Don Collins. Representing the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management; Maurice Lizotte.

PHASE I

Plan

The first phase was to integrate the Veterans organization in Aroostook County into our plan to ensure the relevance and support of the Veteran community. A survey of Veterans and Veterans organization revealed that Aroostook County has a Veteran population of approximately 8,961. All major Veteran groups surveyed indicated a desire to support this endeavor. The need to establish a Veterans Cemetery in Aroostook County was occasioned by: 1.) The distance and costs associated with transporting the deceased to Augusta for internment, 2.) The distance and the cost associated with bereavement and commemoration of the deceased. A survey conducted by this committee found that transportation cost associated with a Maine Veterans Cemetery internment averaged two to three dollars per round trip mile . This is a significant cost when viewed from the perspective of people residing in Aroostook County.

On November 17, 1998 the committee met with the Superintendent of the Maine Veterans Cemetery in Augusta. This meeting with Mr. Nota highlighted our need to: 1.) Establish the Aroostook Veterans Cemetery as a annex to the Veterans Cemetery in Augusta. This decision is predicated upon the need to capitalize upon the expertise of Mr. Nota and his staff . 2.) Facilitate the acquisition of much needed federal money and equipment necessary to the operation of a cemetery. 3.) Minimize the cost to the State of Maine for employee and capitol-related expenditures. 4.) Develop cemetery; utilizing the plan and engineering specifications developed for the new Augusta-based Veterans Cemetery.

PHASE II

Land

In November, 1998 the committee was approached by a John and Joyce Noble of Caribou, Maine regarding the donation of 57 acres of land. Attached as Exhibit 1 is a copy of Mr. Noble's letter. The property is located at 317 Washburn Road Caribou, Maine Map 7 Lot 40. Attached as Exhibit 2 is an aerial map of the site. Contact with the land use Regulatory Commission/Department of Environmental Protection and the Code Enforcement Officer of the City of Caribou, Maine confirmed that the land meets both federal and state criteria for a Veterans Cemetery. Attached as Exhibit 3 is the Code Enforcement Officer's letter. The parcel of land offered to the Veterans Cemetery Association consist of gentle rolling, fields cleared of brush and trees that has been diligently maintained by Mr. Noble. The land has an appraised value of \$28,000.

PHASE III

Personnel

The operation and maintenance will be coordinated by utilizing the Administrative Staff of the Augusta-based Maine Veterans Cemetery and the contracting out of essential services such as grounds maintenance, internments, etc. The committee does not foresee a need for the State of Maine to create or hire Civil Services positions at this ime. The overall operation of the cemetery will be under the direction of the Superintendent of the Maine Veterans Cemetery in Augusta.

PHASE IV

Capitol

The committee has been informed that the City of Caribou and the Loring Development Committee have offered to donate two, two car garages. These buildings are located on the former Loring Air Force Base in Limestone, Maine. These buildings would provide the cemetery with equipment storage capabilities and with minor renovation a chapel should the need arise for such facilities.

The committee anticipates that volunteer efforts and the Maine Army National Guard will play a critical role in engineering, landscaping and the consolidating of resources such as relocating and the set up of building described heretofore.

PHASE V

All Other

It is the express intent of this committee that the Aroostook Veterans Cemetery be an annex to the Veterans Cemetery in Augusta. The specific reasons for this association are covered in Phase I of our plan and need not be repeated herein; it is very important to emphasize that the rationale in becoming an annex allows us to capitalize upon the existing resources of the Maine Veterans Cemetery. As with any endeavor, there is a cost in operating this business. The committee has conducted a survey of local cemetery officials and contractors to ascertain our per interment cost. We anticipate that this cost will be approximately \$175 per interment. Grounds maintenance will be minimal during the first several years of operation. Costs for these services will change yearly depending upon the number of interments.