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[Weedy Pittston cemetery stirs concerns](#)

The city plans a meeting on a program in which groups will care for parks and properties.

BILL O ' BOYLE boboyle@timesleader.com

The weeds at the Pittston City Cemetery are so high they cover headstones and the American flags placed on veterans' graves are difficult to see.



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Grave sites are surrounded by high grass and weeds in many sections of the Pittston Cemetery.

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City officials are aware of the situation and have vowed to get the cemetery cleaned up with the aid of local high school students and community groups.

"It's a mess; no question about it," said Pittston City Clerk Ron Mortimer. "We need to get it cleaned up."

The cemetery is located at Swallow and Vine streets and sits across from the American Legion Post 477. The members of the post are interested in getting the cemetery cleaned up as soon as possible.

Mortimer said an association cares for the cemetery, but the city owns it and is taking responsibility for cleaning it up.

“We had a meeting not that long ago and we came up with a plan to get the community involved in the project,” Mortimer said. “We will have students from Pittston Area and the Boy Scouts will help out.”

Mortimer said the city is asking local businesses to donate to the cause. He said the caretaker at the cemetery has done a good job, but the site – some 42 acres – is just too much for one person to handle.

Mortimer said he and other city officials took a ride through the cemetery and came away dismayed at the condition. He said the older section of the cemetery is especially bad.

“We looked at some of the monuments and they go way back,” Mortimer said. “One Spanish American War veteran is buried there. It’s a shame how it looks right now.”

Mortimer said the city is facing a financial crunch and manpower is low. He said he hopes to get the cemetery in better shape before the end of the year, but with the onset of cold weather, he said a spring cleanup is more likely.

“We will do what we can,” he said. “We understand that Veterans Day is Wednesday. It would be nice to have it in top shape by then, but I doubt we have enough time.”

Mortimer said he hopes the general public will get involved along with the city’s business community.

“It’s a worthwhile project,” Mortimer said. “We need people to come to our rescue.”

Joe Savokinas is the chaplain at the Legion Post.

“We go up there every Memorial Day and place flags,” Savokinas said. “We used to go up on Veterans Day too, but now we just do it once a year. The flags stay there for the whole year.”

Savokinas sympathized with the cemetery association and the city.

“The community needs to help out,” he said. “We need volunteers.”

Mortimer said maintenance of the cemetery falls under the city’s “Adopt-a-Park” program. He said part of the program is to beautify and maintain the physical structure and environment of city parks and properties like the cemetery.

He said the city will hold a meeting on Dec. 2, at 6 p.m. at city hall to discuss the program and the city’s needs. All interested business leaders, civic groups, youth groups, scout groups, church groups and individuals are invited.

Bill O’Boyle, a Times Leader staff writer, may be reached at 829-7218.