

From: Michael Weishan <mweishan@southboroughma.com>

Subject: Inappropriate Flags in the Old Burial Ground

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To: bos@southboroughma.com

Cc: Mark Purple <mpurple@southboroughma.com>

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we have already alerted you, the Historical Commission has received complaints about the choice of flags flying the Old Burial Ground. Particularly egregious to many are the two variants of the Gadsden flag, which was designed by a slave owning South Carolinian and [has become linked to white supremacist groups](#) including the Ku Klux Klan. These associations are not new; many date back to the 1960s. You may also wish to read this recent article in the Miami Herald by Harvard Professor Noah Feldman noting that the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has called for "[a careful investigation to see whether recent uses of the flag have been sufficiently "racially tinged" that it could count as harassment.](#)"

Read more here: <https://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/op-ed/article94090357.html#storylink=cpy>

Last night, the SHC voted 6-0 to urge the BOS to undertake an immediate review of these flags, with an aim to:

- 1) moving the current semi-circle of flags out of the actual burial area to preserve the integrity of those buried beneath the poles. The current poles are actually piercing the unmarked graves below.
- 2) removing flags of the South Carolina and Virginia regiments that carry such negative associations to people of color, and replacing them with flags that actually represent the veterans buried there.

The Historical Commission has done considerable research as to which flags would be appropriate for the period and to the individual buried veterans involved, and would be happy to share that guidance with you if requested.

Cordially,

Michael Weishan, Chair
Southborough Historical Commission
508.624.7640
mweishan@southboroughma.com