

A 2012 NH state law clarified the status of these graveyards (as opposed to large public cemeteries) which every town has.

1. the abutters do not own the graveyard and it is a felony to disturb it; so, they are, in a sense, sacred land and entrusted to the care of the public.
2. any descendant of people buried in the graveyard has right of first refusal to be the designated caretaker (adopt the graveyard)
3. if no descendant comes forward, RHC publicizes the need for abutters or anyone else in town to adopt the graveyard
4. The Select Board in each town is responsible for delegating what part of government is the overseer of the graveyards and the Rye select board delegated that responsibility to RHC after the law was passed in 2012
5. abutters need to be informed, I believe by RHC, when there is an official adopter.
6. if there are any graveyards not on a roadside location, caregivers or visitors must seek permission of landowner to cross their property to reach the graveyard.