

Request for Decision

Cemetery Services

Presented To: Community Services
Committee

Presented: Monday, May 05, 2014

Report Date Wednesday, Apr 23,
2014

Type: Managers' Reports

Recommendation

WHEREAS at the December 2, 2013 meeting, the Community Services Committee requested additional information and options related to the feasibility of a municipally operated pet cemetery, green burial spaces and exterior niche walls in cemeteries that are full;

AND WHEREAS pet cemeteries are not financially feasible;

AND WHEREAS there is growing demand for green burial spaces;

AND WHEREAS exterior niche walls have been purchased for cemeteries where cost/benefit warrants;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Greater Sudbury undertake a pilot initiative at the Civic Memorial Cemetery providing a dedicated space for green burial spaces;

AND THAT the impact of this pilot be brought back to the Community Services Committee for consideration.

Signed By

Report Prepared By

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Manager of Cemetery Services
Digitally Signed Apr 23, 14

Division Review

Ron Henderson
Director of Citizen Services
Digitally Signed Apr 23, 14

Recommended by the Department

Catherine Matheson
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Recommended by the C.A.O.

Doug Nadorozny
Chief Administrative Officer
Digitally Signed Apr 25, 14

Background

At the December 2, 2013 Community Services Committee meeting, staff were asked to report back on the viability of operating a pet cemetery, opening "green burial spaces" and examining exterior niche wall options.

Pet Cemeteries

The concept of opening a pet cemetery was researched by examining the operation of other pet cemeteries in Ontario. The main thrust of the research was to determine if pet cemeteries are financially viable. Research determined the following facts:

- According to the Ministry of Consumer Services, there is only one municipally operated pet cemetery in Ontario (Brockville). That cemetery is not financially viable.
- Pet cemeteries are generally operated by Non Profit groups or the Private Sector

- Land for a pet cemetery must be severed from a human cemetery
- Pet cemeteries are not a core municipal service
- Potential revenue from a pet cemetery will not offset future maintenance costs (i.e. grounds maintenance)

The City of Greater Sudbury faces challenges generating a surplus from human cemeteries with only 1 (Civic Memorial) out of 25 being financially sustainable without tax levy support.

Green Burial Spaces

Currently the demand for "green burial spaces" is not high, however, given the demographics in Greater Sudbury, it is anticipated that requests for this type of enhanced service will increase in the future.

It is proposed that the City of Greater Sudbury undertake a pilot initiative to designate a small section at Civic Memorial Cemetery to provide "green burial spaces" to essentially test the demand for this service and the needs of families going forward.

As part of the pilot, some of the standards for "green burial spaces" that will be adopted are as follows:

- All interment materials must be completely biodegradable and eco friendly
- Must be eco friendly products used in the disposition of remains
- Only natural wood caskets or biodegradable shrouds may be used as containers
- Grave markers must be of natural stone

Exterior Niche Walls

The committee inquired about options related to exterior niche walls within the City's 25 cemeteries. An exterior niche wall is a granite structure which may contain up to eighty compartments (niches) for the placement of cremations. The cost of approximately \$50,000 to construct exterior niche walls has resulted in these structures being provided in cemeteries where the demand warrants the cost. As such, exterior niche walls have been erected in the larger cemeteries; Lasalle, Civic Memorial, Valley East, Chelmsford, Garson, Lively and Capreol. Inquiries for niches in the City's 18 smaller cemeteries are infrequent and therefore, based on cost/benefit, have not been provided.