



STAFF REPORT
Public Hearing 10-15-19

AGENDA ITEM #: 19-116
COUNCIL MTG OF: October 1, 2019
FROM: D. Caron, Town Administrator
OFFERED BY: M. Fowler, Public Works Director
PREPARED BY: M. Fowler, Public Works Director
SUBJECT: Cemetery Trustees – Modify Policies and Procedures of the Forest Hill Cemetery

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to modify the Policies and Procedures of the Forest Hill Cemetery. There are two proposed revisions.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR COMMENTS:

The Council is encouraged to adopt the revisions as proposed after the October 15 public hearing.

BACKGROUND

On occasion, the Town of Derry receives a request from a non-resident to purchase a lot/lots at the Forest Hill Cemetery. Presently, the Policies and Procedures document, as adopted by Town Council states, "Burial lots shall be sold exclusively to current residents of the Town of Derry; however, exceptions may be granted and/or reviewed by the Cemetery Trustees." The proposed revision would allow for exceptions to be granted by the Town Administrator eliminating the need for the Town Council to address these requests. The Town Administrator would factor in prior long-term residency as a consideration for granting the exception to a non-resident seeking to purchase a burial plot.

The second revision would be to increase the number of cremation urns allowed to be buried on a single plot. The current policy reads, "Cremation remains without a concrete container or metal vault are allowed (Wood and Cardboard are not allowed), but not to exceed four burials to a grave lot." The proposed revision would allow for up to eight urns per full grave lot.

DISCUSSION

The general rationale behind restricting lot sales to residents stems from a period prior to 2007 when the cemetery was running out of available plots. At one point, there were under 100 plots available for sale. A major expansion in 2007/2008 added capacity for approximately 1500 additional burial plots. This provision has remained in effect without any change to the policy. Requests for non-resident plot purchases are very infrequent. Allowing the Town Administrator to authorize these sales would streamline the process allowing the lots to be purchased in a timely manner. Sometimes, time is of the essence in acquiring a lot. It would also not take up the time of the Town Council to address this need.

The second revision to the policy, would permit eight cremains on a single lot instead of four. This change would allow for greater use by the individual lot owner. As the trend continues to shift towards more cremations as opposed to full burials, this could prolong the need to expand the capacity of the cemetery in the future by promoting more extensive use of existing burial plots.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no measurable fiscal impact from these revisions to the Policies and Procedures.

RECOMMENDED ACTION BY COUNCIL

Staff recommends that the Town Council (acting as Cemetery Trustees) approve the proposed revisions to the Policies and Procedures of the Forest Hill Cemetery.

RECOMMENDED MOTIONS

See Attached Ordinance #2019-012