

DISCUSSION PAPER # 5

CEMETERY VISITOR ACTIVITIES and SERVICES

Friends Poulsbo Cemetery (FPC), Revised March 29, 2018

DISCUSSION GOAL - Draft for the Poulsbo Municipal Cemetery Master Plan and representatives of North Kitsap Cemeteries guidelines on organizing and implementing cemetery visitor activities and events.

Should the cemetery be used in ways that don't fit traditional concepts?

The project committee considered ideas that would include non-traditional uses for the cemetery, including designation as a historical landmark and heritage park, or allowing city residents to include their dogs in their walks along the cemetery lanes or opening the cemetery up to more recreational uses. Here are related questions and thoughts:

Should the historical aspect of the cemetery be highlighted?

The cemetery holds relics of the city's past. Tombstones and monuments provide a history of our community, where citizens and students can identify individuals who played important roles in the founding and development of Poulsbo, as well as links to U.S. and world history. In other communities of Washington, cemeteries attract people interested in past events and the lives of those who lived our history. Guides and maps for a history walk through those cemeteries were created and are used by visitors and local residents to connect to the lives of citizens who played important roles in the history of our state. One option is to document, record and create guides to the Poulsbo Cemetery, adding a new function where it serves as a historical landmark or heritage park.

Can recreational activities take place at the cemetery?

The cemetery resembles a park-like open space. There are lanes to walk or jog upon, benches to sit and read, water and trash cans, trees with shade, and almost no vehicle traffic. Should it be more like a park, with a recreational aspect to it? It appears that some informal recreation takes place there already.

If the cemetery is to be used for more recreational purposes, should the Parks Department and Parks Commission administer it instead of Public Works Department?

There are adjacent properties to the cemetery that could be purchased and converted into a park. By siting a park alongside the cemetery, open public space would be multiplied. The use of the adjacent property as a scatter park (for cremains) would intertwine the cemetery and recreational aspects (Note however, that the Cemetery Ordinance [PMC Chapter 2.76.130] currently prohibits expansion of any cemeteries within the City of Poulsbo).

Poulsbo Municipal Cemetery - Helpful Amenities for Visitors

- Install map display on site (covered?) with other navigation assistance
- Install historical markers/notes
- Construct covered structure on lower cemetery area for funeral service
- Continue with improvements to the cemetery entrance area. The cemetery entrance and area nearest Caldart Avenue should be inviting and a pleasant scene, to encourage city residents to venture into the cemetery, to add it to the mental geography of their own community, to become attached to the place so that they care about it. There are several projects already completed but others remain on the list to be done.

- Schedule an annual event at the cemetery, where the general public is invited. The exact nature of the event can be determined later, but a heritage or historical tour might fit the bill. The main point is to provide a reason for scout troops, youth groups, community organizations, families, and all other residents to walk the grounds of the cemetery and feel that they are not intruding, that the place is a welcoming park-like area where they can feel comfortable and appreciate the community's heritage.
- Schedule an annual cemetery clean-up day, perhaps the day before the annual event. In addition to periodic city maintenance, and ongoing volunteer clean-ups, this annual clean-up would be an open invitation to the entire community to join in with rakes, brooms, trash bags, and other tools. It will make the cemetery sparkle and provides city residents a chance to feel responsible for the cemetery's appearance.
- Continue with notices about the opportunity to sponsor a bench in the cemetery. By donating the cost of a bench and affixing a plaque to it, families and other citizens will feel more personally connected to the cemetery.
- Once the benches are all paid off, brick pilasters used on a proposed iron-work boundary fence in the front of the cemetery could also serve as places to affix sponsorship or memorial plaques.
- Rely on a stand-alone, non-profit organization to coordinate volunteer work, conduct fundraising, and assist the city with planning and public affairs outreach on cemetery-related happenings.
- Encourage heritage trail use. The memorials and markers constitute an informal open-air historical museum, commemorating the lives of pioneers and other important community members, as well as people less well-known that built and maintained our community. In other Washington cemeteries, local historical societies have cooperated with the cemetery administrators to create maps and brochures that highlight the heritage of former citizens interred in there. We can do the same.
- Include the cemetery in information for area visitors, along with other museums and historical structures in Poulsbo. Perhaps work to create an annual event where people visit all of Poulsbo's museums and historical structures, including the cemetery. A bicycle tour that hits all those sites might be an event that attracts visitors. In his way, the cemetery can play a minor but useful role in economic development and tourism.
- Be careful with recreational activities. Some might be appropriate, others would raise objection. To some people, cemeteries are hallowed ground, spiritual places where worship and prayer take place. Intrusive recreational activities may violate the sacredness the cemetery has in some people's lives.
- Allowing access to the cemetery for dogs and other pets would require a change to the ordinance and may raise objections.

Email thoughts and suggestions on this discussion paper to:

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Friends Poulsbo Cemetery is a discussion group. Papers on a Poulsbo Cemetery Master Plan and issues and needs of North Kitsap cemeteries are circulated via email and FPC website for comment and suggestions.