

CHAPTER VI. RULES, REGULATIONS and ADMINISTRATION

The City Ordinance establishing rules and regulations governing the Poulsbo Municipal Cemetery is contained in Appendix B. Portions of this ordinance should be amended to reflect changing conditions as well as the new vision for the Cemetery called for in this Master Plan.

As noted earlier in this Plan, the lower flat tier of the Cemetery should have features and standards that differ from the hillside tiers. Such distinctions should be addressed in the revised Cemetery Ordinance. The Friends of the Poulsbo Cemetery Committee considered two types of standards for the lower tier. One approach is to strive for uniformity and simplicity of maintenance. This could be accomplished by requiring grave markers to be placed in uniform rows with no above ground structures. Mowing and other maintenance activities could occur unimpeded. Alternatively, a different type of "maintenance friendly" approach would allow plot owners to erect whatever memorial they wish within the grave site, provided a concrete (or equivalent) border at least 6 inches in width is installed at ground level around the entire perimeter of the plot. This would facilitate mowing between plots while at the same time permitting individuality for each grave site.

Discussions over the past two years have reached consensus that the lower tier should be administered to different standards than the hillside tiers, and that the lower tier should be designed for ease of maintenance. But there was not consensus regarding the importance of uniformity versus individuality of grave sites on the lower tier.

Another issue needing attention is long-term contact with owners of Cemetery plots. People who purchase plots do not necessarily notify family members of such ownership and associated responsibilities. Sometimes descendants move away from the area and fail to provide updated contact information for the City's records. In some cases, there are no living descendants. This not only adds to problems with maintenance of grave sites, but some plots have been purchased with no subsequent interment. A better mechanism needs to be developed for retrieving and re-selling abandoned plots.

This Master Plan recommends:

- * Conducting research to obtain accurate contact information for each plot that has been sold.
- * Revising the application form to assure accurate contact information is provided for plot owners, descendants, and subsequent owners of the plot so that this information can be included in the City's database. Specific suggestions for revisions to the application form are contained in Appendix C.
- * Creating a process by which plot ownership is officially transferred from the initial purchaser to descendants, with updated contact information provided to City Staff.
- * Establishing legal guidelines regarding the Cemetery deed holder of record when the initial purchaser fails to designate a successor owner.

* Pursuing appropriate legal steps to identify and regain abandoned plots where ownership cannot be traced. These plots should revert to City ownership and become part of the inventory of plots available for purchase.

* Providing plot owners and dependents with information regarding their rights and responsibilities.

While it is the responsibility of the deed holder to care for each plot, grave sites sometimes become neglected. With proper deference to the interred and their descendants, the Cemetery Ordinance should contain provision for remedying tilted monuments, cracked plot borders, overgrown vegetation, or other problems at grave-sites where the deceased's family members cannot be contacted.

Currently, interments at the Cemetery are restricted to casket or cremains burials of human remains. The Cemetery Ordinance should be revised to allow for natural burials with an inverted liner. Similarly, provision should be made for placement of cremains in an ashes garden as proposed in Chapter IV of this Plan.

People have expressed interest in permitting burial of pets in the Cemetery. There should be further discussion of this possibility, and if consensus is reached the Cemetery Ordinance should be amended accordingly.

In addition, the following specific amendments to the Cemetery Ordinance are recommended:

* Section 2.76.010 Policy The policy should reflect the new vision that this Cemetery is not only a permanent burial ground, but also an open air historical space celebrating Poulsbo heritage. * Section 2.76.090 Rules of Conduct Paragraph F should allow the walking of dogs within the Cemetery in compliance with leash laws and other City regulatory guidelines.

* Section 2.76.160 Interments Paragraph A should allow a regular grave site to have one casket plus two cremated remains, OR four cremated remains if there is no casket. Note: Because of this increase in occupancy per plot, there should be a corresponding increase in the fee for future plot purchases. Plots already purchased should be allowed the additional cremains burials at no additional charge.