

## **CHAPTER VIII. OVERSIGHT and IMPLEMENTATION**

Thanks to the combined efforts of the Mayor, City Council, City staff and volunteers from the community, a "burst of progress" has occurred these past two years regarding Cemetery improvements and maintenance. Several organizational approaches have been considered to keep this momentum going and to implement the recommendations of this Master Plan. The following approaches are not mutually exclusive. Any/all of these steps can be taken as circumstances, resources, and enthusiasm dictates.

### **\* City Control**

The City of Poulsbo has policy, fiscal, regulatory, and management responsibility for its Municipal Cemetery in accordance with the Cemetery Ordinance. A Reserve Fund has been established and is dedicated to support cemetery improvements. Proceeds from the sale of plots are placed into this fund. As noted in Chapter VII, revenue from other sources such as fund raising, donations, bequests and (potentially) lease income may also be placed into the Reserve Fund. In addition, a modest amount of general fund revenue is authorized annually by the City Council to support the basic level of Cemetery maintenance conducted by the City. It is recommended that the City conduct a biennial review of this Master Plan and make adjustments deemed appropriate.

### **\* Deed Holders**

When a person purchases a plot in the Poulsbo Municipal Cemetery, that person obtains a deed to the property and technically owns the small parcel of land. As with other property ownership, it is the deed holder's responsibility to care for the property. For several reasons this has become a problem at the Cemetery. There is currently no formalized mechanism to update the City's records with contact information once the original purchaser is deceased or has moved with no forwarding address. Family members may be unaware of plot ownership and associated responsibilities for upkeep. Descendants may live far away and/or have little interest in maintaining plot(s) at the Cemetery. Descendants may no longer be physically able to maintain their ancestors' grave sites. While efforts should continue to be made to generate active involvement of plot owners and their descendants, excessive reliance on this approach is unlikely to accomplish the goals of this Master Plan.

### **\* 501(c) 3 Organization**

The creation of a non-profit organization with responsibilities for implementing portions of this Master Plan continues under discussion. Such an approach requires the preparation of articles of incorporation, adoption of bylaws, election of officers, proper record keeping, and annual reporting. The benefit of this approach would be a more sustainable level of effort and commitment compared to current reliance on individual volunteers. It also affords an opportunity to generate another source of funds to supplement financial support provided by the City. It remains to be seen, however, if the community has sufficient interest and followthrough to create and sustain a 501(c) 3 organization.

### **\* Internships**

Many organizations offer students or employees internships to provide training and work experience by conducting specific, time-limited tasks or projects. Several of the implementation items listed in Appendix D lend themselves to such internships. Examples include: creating a Cemetery Heritage Trail and corresponding brochure; creating a GPS cell phone application

accessible to visitors of the Cemetery; helping the City with research to improve the database for grave site ownership/descendants/contact information; installation of landscaping or artwork; creating a photographic archive of grave sites; repair of neglected grave sites; updating/enhancing the Cemetery website; conducting historical or genealogical research; etc. Potential sponsors for internships include the high schools, colleges and graduate schools in the Puget Sound region, and the Leadership Kitsap organization. Local service clubs as well as the City of Poulsbo itself may on occasion choose to sponsor such internships.

\* City Board or Commission

To secure more sustainable attention and involvement by citizens, the City could establish an advisory Board or Commission for the Municipal Cemetery. This could be analogous to current City Boards/Commissions. In fact, if an appropriate existing Board or Commission were interested in doing so, it could (with City Council authorization) enlarge its current scope of responsibility to include the Municipal Cemetery and this Master Plan.

\* Special District

Rather than house the Municipal Cemetery within the City government, a Special District could be created with responsibility for the Cemetery. Analogous governmental structures exist for Utility Districts, Parks/Recreation Districts, and other specifically defined functions. The creation of such a District could focus exclusively on the current Poulsbo Cemetery site. Or it could have a broader scope to include other cemeteries in North Kitsap. The responsibility of such a Special District could be defined even more broadly to include historical sites, open space, trails, or other associated functions. Creation of a Special District would require establishment of District boundaries which may be (but needn't be) contiguous with Poulsbo city limits. A Special District would also have a governing body of elected officials, which would not necessarily be the same as the people serving on the Poulsbo City Council. A Special District would also have its own source of funds to be used exclusively for the purpose(s) for which the District is created.

Note: This would be a complex approach and would require broad-based community support. It is mentioned here because it could conceivably provide the most sustainable way to fully implement this Master Plan.

\* Lease

The City could lease all or a portion of the Cemetery site to a private funeral home. The details of such an arrangement are quite variable, but could include maintenance responsibilities. As a matter of policy it would be important to assure plots remain affordable for current and former Poulsbo residents. While it seems impractical to include the hillside tiers in such a lease agreement, the flat lower tier may lend itself to leasing. Revenue to the City generated by such an agreement could be used for an enhanced level of City maintenance and/or could be placed in the City's Cemetery Reserve Fund to support future capital improvements.

Note: The challenge here is to find a public/private partnership that would continue affordable fees for plot ownership. Perhaps the purchase price per plot could be uniform throughout the Cemetery, but the funeral home could provide services akin to perpetual care (for an additional fee) to owners of plots on the lower tier.

\* Sale of the Cemetery

If there were a way to assure the permanent use of the site as a burial ground with appropriate maintenance, the City if it chose to do so could sell the property and thereby divest itself from the responsibilities of Cemetery ownership and care.

Rather than depend on any one of the above institutional approaches to achieve the desired future for the Poulsbo Municipal Cemetery, this Master Plan is intentionally structured to include steps that can be taken by essentially any organization or individual wishing to do so. The goal is to have all such efforts reinforce and not contradict the vision promoted in this document. Appendix D summarizes all the Master Plan recommendations and suggested implementation steps.