

April 18, 2024

Re: Item for Discussion – Request for Provincial Support for Cemetery Operations

At its meeting of April 10, 2024, the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Bracebridge ratified motion #24-GC-066, regarding Request for Provincial Support for Cemetery Operations, as follows:

“WHEREAS under the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, 2002, when a cemetery is declared abandoned by a judge of the Superior Court Justice, the local municipality within whose geographic boundaries the land of the cemetery is located, becomes the owner of the cemetery with all the rights and obligations in respect of the cemetery and the assets, trust funds and trust accounts related to it that the previous owner or operator possessed;

AND WHEREAS over the last decade, there has been an increase in the number of churches and local cemetery boards initiating processes to transfer ownership or abandon their owned and operated cemeteries to the local municipality due to such issues as high maintenance costs, inaccuracy of records, lack of financial and human resources to effectively operate and maintain the cemetery, increased regulatory processes regarding training, selling of interment rights, financial operation of the care and maintenance fund, etc.;

AND WHEREAS municipalities experience the same issues and pressures that churches and local boards experience with the operation and maintenance of cemeteries within its jurisdiction, and additional transfers of cemetery lands only compound the burden on municipal taxpayers;

AND WHEREAS cemeteries are important infrastructure where the reasonable costs for interment rights, burials, monument foundations, corner stones and administration charges do not sufficiently support the general operation of cemeteries;

AND WHEREAS the interest earned from the care and maintenance fund(s) of a cemetery do not provide adequate funding to maintain the cemetery with the rising costs of lawn and turf maintenance contracts and monument restoration;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of The Corporation of the Town of Bracebridge requests that the Province through the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery and the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO) consider the following to assist municipalities in this growing concern of cemetery operations:

1. That the Province of Ontario provide annual funding (equitably allocated based on the operating costs of cemeteries) to municipalities to assist with the maintenance of inactive and active cemeteries;

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2. Provide free training opportunities and resources for municipalities regarding cemetery administration; and,
3. Investigate and support the design of universal cemetery software for use by municipal cemetery operators that can be offered at an affordable cost.

AND THAT this resolution be circulated to the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery, the Bereavement Authority of Ontario CEO/Registrar, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Minister of Finance; the Local Member of Provincial Parliament; the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO); and all Ontario Municipalities.”

In accordance with Council's direction, I am forwarding you a copy of the resolution for your reference.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional clarification in this regard.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lori McDonald', written in a cursive style.

Lori McDonald
Director of Corporate Services/Clerk