



COUNCIL REPORT

To: Paul Gipps, CAO

Date: October 13, 2020

From: Stacey Harding, Parks and Fleet Operations
Manager

File No: Bylaw No. 0166.04

Subject: **Cemetery Bylaw Revision 0166.04**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council consider and resolve to give first, second, and third reading to Westbank Cemetery Amendment Bylaw No. 0166.04, 2020.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

- **Invest in Infrastructure** – to invest in building, improving and maintaining quality infrastructure to meet the needs of, and to provide a high quality of life for, current and future generations;
- **Strengthen Our Community** – to provide opportunities for the residents of West Kelowna to build connections, celebrate successes, embrace the community's strengths and diversity, address shared needs, and contribute to shaping the community's future.

BACKGROUND

The Westbank Cemetery has undergone tremendous improvements since the City incorporated thanks to Councils continued support for our heritage site. Sales and services have increased to a point that operational costs are now recovered annually. Staff have kept current on burial trends and added services creating revenue opportunities. Both from an Operational and Administrative perspective our service levels are highly regarded and we are reminded of this both from the public and the funeral homes whom we work closely with.

We operate under an annual license issued by Consumer Protection BC. We have been audited in the past successfully and operate under the assumption an unannounced audit could happen at any time, therefore we continually monitor locally offered interment and service fees to ensure our rates are within industry average. We aim to strike a balance between the financial viability of the operation and fair costs of plot sales and burial services for our residents.

In June of 2019 Council approved a fee schedule that included a one-time 35% increase to keep our services in line with industry averages in the Okanagan valley.

In 2020 despite the complexities of managing this essential service under a pandemic we have completed a fee schedule and operational analysis for 2020.

From this, Staff make the following recommendations.

- Adding an administration fee to recover staff cost when refunding plot fees.
- Adding some descriptive language to address frequent questions regarding our fee schedule and interment procedures.
- Adding an artificial turf plot cover option.

DISCUSSION

Internal questions included,

- **Why are you offering an artificial turf cover option?** Answer; it comes at a lower price point option and is an added service for our residents. We want to provide the product so it's of a consistent quality and visual appeal.
- **What's this new administration fee for?** Answer; the Bylaw speaks to an administration fee charged when processing refunds. A fee was previously never defined to recover clerical and finance department costs to complete the process.
- **Why are we removing the mausoleum open/close fee?** Answer; the opening and closing fee is included in the original purchase price.
- **Have the impacts of Covid -19 been felt in our interment quantities?** Answer; No, we remain busy but no more so than other busy years.
- **How long will our existing Cemetery be able to accept clients?** Answer; Our projections conveyed to Council in 2019 remain accurate today. It will be 20+ years before we consider planning for additional property or develop the existing site to the north.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Modest income increase as a result of the added artificial turf option.

COUNCIL REPORT / RESOLUTION HISTORY

Date	Report Topic / Resolution	Resolution No.
May 28, 2019	THAT Council approve a Fee Schedule based on 2019 Okanagan Valley Industry averages plus a one-time increase of 35%.	C215/19

June 11, 2019	THAT Council give first, second and third readings to Westbank Cemetery Amendment Bylaw No. 0166.03, 2019	C234/19
June 25, 2019	THAT Council adopt the Westbank Cemetery Amendment Bylaw No. 0166.03, 2019	C261/19

CONCLUSION

Staff feel the current and future viability of the services remains in good shape. However looking for improvements will be ongoing. Small changes in the cemetery Bylaw if necessary and providing a high level of service will continue to be our focus.

Alternate Motion:

THAT Council postpone first, second and third reading of Westbank Cemetery Amendment Bylaw No. 0166.04, 2020.

Alternate direction for staff to pursue would be requested.

REVIEWED BY

Allen Fillion, Director of Engineering, Parks and Public Works

Lisa Siavashi, Finance Manager

APPROVED FOR THE AGENDA BY

Paul Gipps, CAO

Powerpoint: Yes ☒ No ☐

Attachments:

- 1) Plot and Service Fees comparison 2020
- 2) Westbank Cemetery Amendment Bylaw No. 0166.04