

 <p style="text-align: center;">Council Communication Office of the City Manager</p>	Date:	December 9, 2013
	Agenda Item No.	32
	Roll Call No.	<u>13-1904</u>
	Communication No.	<u>13-587</u>
	Submitted by:	Benjamin R. Page, Park and Recreation Director

AGENDA HEADING:

Approval of amendment of the Schedule of Cemetery Fees.

SYNOPSIS:

Approve adoption of proposed revisions to the Schedule of Cemetery Fees, as is required by Municipal Code Sec. 34-69.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Amount: These are introductory fees associated with either a new, premium product option or location in newly opening areas of cemeteries; every space sold in a new area will have a higher fee than its counterpart in another area of that cemetery and will therefore result in additional revenue, but it is not possible to accurately predict the overall increase.

Funding Source: Additional revenue will be deposited into FY 2014 Operating Budget, Cemetery, GE001 PKS010400, page 163.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

On April 8, 2013, by Roll Call No. 13-0614, City Council approved revisions to the Schedule of Cemetery Fees, as is required by Municipal Code Sec. 34-69. The fee changes updated existing pricing to bring it in line with the competition and demand in the marketplace and also established pricing for new cemetery areas, products, and services. Columbarium cremain niches that had been built and additional land areas that had been platted were set to open at Glendale and Elm Grove Cemeteries as soon as the pricing was approved; these were the first new options of this nature to be made available since 2004 in these cemeteries. The new columbarium structures and land areas have been contributing factors to the overall 23% increase in the municipal cemeteries' space sales between January 1, 2012 and June 30, 2013 as compared to the previous 18 months.

Since that time, staff has continued to assess various additional methods of increasing space sales revenue by further expanding product options to address consumer preferences and the ever-increasing demand for single-lot and cremain spaces. New fees are necessary for diversified product offerings in newly opening Block N, which overlooks the Glendale Cemetery pond, and to introduce differential location pricing for newly platted areas at Elm Grove Cemetery. Because these are introductory fees associated with either a new, premium product option or location in newly opening areas of cemeteries, it is anticipated that they will enhance sales and revenue levels, but it is not known to what

extent. A sale may be displacing one in another lower priced area of a cemetery or it could be to a customer who has been drawn to a Des Moines municipal cemetery by the new option. New products/prices include the following:

- Block N single spaces, \$1950 - Customer-selected locations offering the upright monument option, with planting allowed. This compares to single spaces with like options in other Glendale locations with a fee range of \$1600-1800;
- Block N double spaces, \$3825 - Pricing is being established at this time at the same level as the adjoining Block M double spaces which have the same options and likewise overlook Glendale's pond; however, it is not intended that double space sales in N will open until sometime in the future, when space availability in Block M becomes limited;
- Block N single in-ground cremation spaces (5feet by 5 ½ feet), \$750 with upright monument and both perennials and annuals planting allowed, \$650 with flush marker and annuals only allowed - A combination of customer selected locations, upright monuments, planting, and the pond view location is a new option for single, in-ground cremation spaces in the municipal cemeteries (Glendale Block H-C and Laurel Hill Block N single, customer selected, in-ground cremation, flush marker spaces with no planting are priced at \$550); and
- Elm Grove, \$835-\$1350 - All spaces in this cemetery are single spaces for which the customer is able to select the location; upright monuments and planting are allowed. Pricing is currently \$835 for all spaces in the cemetery; however, platting of a meadow area as well as renovation and platting of another newly opening area have provided serene, countryside settings for which there is a high demand. These new areas will be priced from \$1000 to \$1350; therefore, a new range must be established in the Municipal Code to include both existing pricing and the new levels.

Prices for these products are recommended based on existing prices in other areas of the cemeteries, location, desired views, and gravesite features such as: allowances for above-ground monuments as compared to flush ones, amenities such as roadways and trees/gardens, allowance of the planting of perennials and annuals, proximity to various features such as Glendale's lake and entrances, ability of the customer to make a choice of location as compared to not being able to make that choice, newly opened blocks within cemeteries, etc.

At its September 4, 2013 meeting, the Citizen Cemetery Advisory Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Park and Recreation Board forward these prices to the City Council with a recommendation for adoption. At its November 26, 2013 meeting, the Park and Recreation Board unanimously approved a recommendation that City Council amend the Schedule of Fees to reflect these new fees.

Cemetery management is continuing to evaluate the City's municipal cemetery product offerings and services and will be establishing or changing existing fees and establishing new pricing categories on an ongoing basis to stay in alignment with demand and the marketplace and address ever-changing cultural changes that affect this industry.

Staff recommends these fees to be implemented effective the date following City Council approval.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S):

Date: April 8, 2013

Roll Call Number: [13-0614](#)

Action: [Amended](#) Schedule of Fees for Cemeteries. ([Council Communication No. 13-160](#)) Moved by Hensley to adopt. Motion Carried 7-0.

Date: June 9, 2008

Roll Call Number: [08-1017](#)

Action: [Amendment](#) to Schedule of Fees for Chapter 34 of the Municipal Code regarding cemetery fees. Moved by Hensley to receive, file and approve banner design. Motion Carried 7-0.

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S):

Board: Park and Recreation Board

Date: November 26, 2013

Resolution Number: N/A

Action: Recommend City Council approval of amendment of the Schedule of Cemetery Fees for Municipal Code Chapter 34 Cemeteries.

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE

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