

Cemetery Task Force Warrant Article

Summary

What is the article about?

The “Cemetery Improvements” line item is a request to transfer historical Green Cemetery records from old log books and paper files to a cemetery management system to ensure their preservation and those going forward, and to capture anomalies and confusing references which have been passed down from one Cemetery Supervisor to another. Due to the personal knowledge of each Supervisor compounded over time, the information would very likely be lost to the next successor without a digital road map. The software would save time and money through more timely burial processes and ready financial records.

The article also requests a subsurface scan of the cemetery with ground penetrating radar (GPR) to evaluate currently available burial land, which is known to have substantial rock ledge. The software will utilize the enhanced mapping (combining GIS, drone, and paper) with the GPR data to provide precise location data to the cemetery crew, accurate interface for office entry, and feed an enhanced phone app to cemetery patrons and ground crews to locate graves and reference biographies, notations, and photos.

What does a “Yes” vote mean?

A “Yes” vote on this article will fund the purchase of cemetery management software to

- Safeguard the preservation of records, both historical and new, for the future
- Provide digitization and capture clear interpretation of arcane written ledgers so future supervisors can understand confusing diagrams and notes
- Provide accurate available burial data and capacity status
- Allow augmentation of records with historical articles, documents, pictures, and remembrances
- Provide precise locations and full biographical data to cemetery visitors and grounds crew

And provide

- Ground penetrating radar to reveals obstacles, like boulders, and prior burial artifacts, so cemetery planning can be more precise, and the cemetery crew can be surer of grave locations and availability

Pros and Cons

Pro:

1. Adoption of cemetery software and ground penetrating radar (GPR) would ensure Green Cemetery's historical, personal, and civic roles are maintained and carried forward, with records intact through the inevitable succession of Cemetery Supervisors. Specifically:

- a) Updating Green Cemetery's historical record-keeping for accuracy, robustness, and succession planning
- b) Integrating the arcane hand-written records which otherwise would not be able to be passed down to the next cemetery supervisor
- c) Providing available burial space and capacity data
- d) Employing Ground Penetrating Radar to identify geologic features which inhibit or obstruct grave excavations, assessing the contents and positioning of vaults and other contents of graves, including historical items
- e) Enhancing burial records to include supplemental data on occupants, including historical and ceremonial documents, photographs, and other miscellany
- f) Standardize workflow, making activities replicable to any employee
- g) Provide a public-facing, interactive view of the burial records on a phone app, allowing anyone to retrieve the directions and location of a grave, as well as file records (which can be masked) to enrich the experience.

2. Digitizing the cemetery records and setting up the cemetery management system ensures a succession plan is in place when the Cemetery Supervisor role turns over to a new candidate. This is vital to ensuring Green Cemetery operations continue accurately and uninterrupted.

Con:

1. There is a one-time cost of \$40,000 to set up the system, load data, perform mapping, etc., and an annual fee of \$2,100.

2. This covers Green Cemetery, only. Some of the benefits and learnings may accrue to the Central Burial Ground at some point but not immediately.