



ELWOOD TOWN CEMETERY POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the rules and regulations governing the cemetery is to provide for an orderly, well groomed, quiet sanctuary. To achieve and maintain that status requires a joint effort between the cemetery staff and cemetery patrons. Those persons owning rights to burial and those having deceased loved ones interred within the cemetery need to be informed of the policies that regulate activities so that no misunderstandings or problems occur.

Any questions regarding these policies or requests not covered by policy can be discussed in person with the cemetery commissioners.

HISTORY

The beginning of the Elwood Cemetery started with the burial of Anna Altida Christensen which occurred on March 5, 1904, although the actual Elwood Cemetery Maintenance District was not created until 1967. Owen Rasmussen, Earl Petersen and E.M. Erickson were appointed as the Commissioners to begin the district.

A \$200.00 assessment was levied to start the cemetery. The cemetery ground was leveled and water lines were placed for sprinkling system and grass was then planted. A 2 mill levy was assessed to the land owners in the district.

In 1972 arrangements were made to have the town water piped to the cemetery. At that time the sprinkler system and the lawn was completed. A flag pole was constructed and installed by Carl Roberts.

POLICY AND REGULATIONS

DECORATIONS

FLOWERS ON NEW GRAVES - Decorations or flowers on new graves will be removed by the cemetery maintenance personnel after seven (7) days. Special flower mementos should be removed at the conclusion of services by those interested. After the grave is closed the casket spray is placed at the center of the grave, other flower containers and wreaths are laid down in an orderly fashion around the spray with the containers extending outward. Only the last row of containers is visible, the others being covered by each succeeding row of flowers. Flowers are laid down to prevent them from being blown around the cemetery.

FLOWER POLICY – Flowers properly displayed add to the beauty and character of the cemetery. Flowers are allowed throughout the year. The Elwood Cemetery Maintenance District will not be responsible for flowers or other personal property left in the cemetery. Be aware that on occasion uncaring individuals have removed expensive flower arrangements without patron or staff consent.

FLOWER REGULATIONS – All flowers, real or artificial, must be placed in a container or attached to the monument. Flowers in movable containers must be placed on the headstone or base to insure easy access for grass cutting. No glass containers are permitted. Any object or decoration not in compliance will be removed immediately upon discovery. Flowers on monuments between designated rows are NOT permitted except on Memorial Day.

MEMORIAL DAY – Cemetery crews begin preparation for Memorial Day the Monday prior to the holiday. Preparations including mowing, trimming and weeding take the whole week to accomplish. The sprinkling of the grass is stopped on Friday afternoon through the end of Memorial Day to allow for the placement of decorations. Flower regulations as listed above will be strictly enforced. The clean-up of the cemetery will begin the Thursday morning following Memorial Day. Anyone desirous of picking up their wreaths or decorations should do so prior to Thursday. All decorations are disposed of at the county landfill.

GENERAL CLEAN-UP – All flowers and decorations not in permanent containers and those that are wilted or damaged in permanent containers will be removed from the cemetery during the last week of March and the first week of April each year. All flowers and decorations picked up are taken to the county landfill for disposal. Those who bring in decorations for use during the entire year are encouraged to wait until the spring clean up is completed before freshening up their displays.

PLANTING OF FLOWERS, TREES, AND SHRUBS – City ordinance prohibits the planting of any trees, shrubs, or flowers in the cemetery without the permission of the sexton. The sexton will designate an appropriate planting area for any such donation or gift.

BURIALS

ORDERING A GRAVE OPENING - Arrangements for a grave opening can be made by the funeral director or a responsible party. The required permits need to be filled out and fees paid. The information required is the name of the deceased, the place of interment (obtained from the cemetery master file, unless new purchase), the location, date, and time of funeral services, and the name of the funeral director or mortician. A genealogy sheet should also be submitted by the funeral director.

BURIAL PERMITS- A permit for burial must be filled out prior to the opening of a grave. The necessary information and fees should be given to the sexton by the family representatives or the funeral director. Proper and complete information is required for accurate record keeping. No person, except the owner of the burial rights on a lot, shall bury on that lot, unless a form provided by the sexton has been signed by the owner or legal heirs to those rights giving permission for the use of the lot. The permission slip must be returned in before the grave and will be kept as a permanent record.

HOURS FOR BURIALS – Burials are to be coordinated through the sexton or one of the cemetery commissioners.

BURIALS PER GRAVE- It is normal practice to allow only one burial per space, however, double vault burials can be accommodated provided the first burial is or was ordered for that purpose. A 24 hour notice is needed for preparation for regular burials. Special requests or requirements can be worked out with the sexton.

Special arrangements can be made for the interment of infants and cremains. More than one can be accommodated per full grave space.

VAULTS- Vaults are required for all burials. Vaults should be of concrete, steel or other structurally sound material as approved by the sexton. Wood vaults can only be used for infant and cremain interments.

ORIENTATION OF GRAVES - By convention, burial spaces are laid out in rows with the head of the grave to the west and the foot to the east. Individual grave tracts usually measure four feet wide by eight feet long. Traditional burial custom has the wife placed to the left side of the husband; however, placement is a matter of choice. The sexton will assist in the decision as needed.

DISINTERMENTS OR EXHUMATIONS – Cemetery grounds are sacredly devoted to the interment or repose of the dead. In those circumstances where it is necessary to disinter or remove remains from the cemetery all applicable state laws must be complied with. The sexton will schedule and direct the exhumation after applicable fees have been paid. Consultation with a funeral director is recommended for this procedure.

CEMETERY REGULATIONS

CEMETERY FEES - Fees for services are set by resolution of the City Council and are changed from time to time as needed. A copy of current fees charged is available through the cemetery commissioners or the sexton.

BURIAL RIGHTS – The city cemetery is a public park and will remain so as long as Elwood City exists. Only permissive burial rights are sold. The city retains title property. A certificate of burial rights will be issued to each purchaser after fees are paid in full.

Burial rights are conveyed to the person or persons named therein and their heirs forever. All legal heirs are presumed to have legal claim to the rights of burial, unless specified differently in a legal will or by probate court. Burials by or of heirs, after the original parties named on burial certificates are deceased, requires the permission of all living heirs, in writing, on forms supplied by the sexton.

The cemetery master file is considered to be the correct record. Any discrepancy between the master file and the certificate of burial rights will be considered a clerical error. The city reserves the right to recall, correct and reissue the correct certificate.

TRANSFER OF BURIAL RIGHTS – Owners of burial certificates may transfer their burial rights to other parties by filling out and signing forms provided by the sexton. Payment of transfer fees as set by city council are required before a new certificate is issued.

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PERPETUAL CARE FEES - This fee is collected and kept in a special endowment fund, the interest of which may be used for the general care, maintenance, and improvement of the cemetery. This fund aids in the maintenance of the cemetery after it is sold out or finally filled up. Perpetual care fees are included in the charges for certificates of burial rights. They are considered paid in full at the time of interment. If perpetual care fees are increased between purchase and interment, the balance will be added to interment charges. Voluntary contributions for the perpetual care fund will be graciously accepted.

OBSTRUCTIONS - No fences, foot markers or other obstructions or installations, except a headstone or monument will be permitted in the cemetery.

CEMETERY SUPERVISION - All work in the cemetery including but not limited to interments, disinterment's, plantings, landscaping, grading, record keeping, placement of grave markers, grounds keeping, construction, and all maintenance, improvement and beautifying of the grounds shall be done under the supervision of the sexton.

PURCHASE OF UNUSED TRACTS BY THE CITY - The city may buy back the unused spaces of those desiring the action when directed by the owner or all living heirs to do so at a buy back price established by resolution of the city council. The deed of burial rights must be turned in or other documented proof of ownership must be given to the sexton before the purchase can be authorized.

PERPETUAL CARE - The care and upkeep of the cemetery provided by the city includes but is not limited to mowing grass at reasonable intervals, resodding and reseeding, filling in sunken graves, sprinkler irrigation, trimming trees and shrubs when necessary, removing wilted flowers and decorations, edging around headstones, and other clean-up as needed. Perpetual care does not include repairing or replacing markers, monuments or other personal property.

RECORD RESEARCH - Copies of cemetery records for research, historical, or genealogical purposes will be made available upon payment of copy fees, which are set by resolution of city council.

REPAIR OR RESTORATION - The city council may order any person who has damaged, altered or changed any property of this city to repair or restore the property to its original condition prior to the damage, alteration or change.

MONUMENTS AND MEMORIALS

OWNERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY - Headstones are personal property. All monuments within the cemetery are the property of lot owners, their heirs, or the responsible party that ordered and placed them. All care and upkeep of the monuments is the responsibility of the owner. The cemetery is maintained by city crews who exercise great care in keeping the grounds groomed. The city will not be responsible for inadvertent scratches and chips that occur from routine maintenance. Such happenings are a condition that goes with the privilege of placing markers in the cemetery.

REQUIREMENTS - All headstones or markers must have a concrete border six inches wide installed flush with the surface of the lawn. All permanent vases must be attached to the monument, stone base or cast into the concrete border. No vases separate from the memorial will be permitted. Memorials will be placed in an orderly manner as directed by the sexton. Flat markers, level with the ground, with approval of the sexton may be installed between established rows. No flower vases or containers, permanent or otherwise, will be permitted on these markers. Only one raised marker is permitted per grave. Family monuments must comply with this section.

SIZE OF MONUMENTS - A monument must be placed within the boundary of the grave or graves of the owner in conformity with established rows. Raised markers in the same row must be a minimum of twenty inches apart, or a concrete base must extend between them. Raised monuments in adjacent rows must be a minimum of six and a half feet apart unless special arrangements are made with the sexton. If a monument is determined, by the sexton, to be oversized and interferes with the sprinkler irrigation system, the owner will pay for the necessary modifications.

INTERFERENCE WITH EXCAVATION - The owner or responsible party is responsible for the removal and replacement of a marker that must be moved for the excavation of a grave, or for the expenses of such services if contracted. If the owner or responsible party wishes, the city will make arrangements for the service with a local monument dealer at owner's expense.

RECOMMENDATIONS - Consult with a monument manufacturer on monument materials suitable to handle conditions at the cemetery. Markers are subject to temperature extremes, snow, ice sprinkler irrigation water and occasional nicks and chips from mowing equipment. It is recommended that raised markers have a rough nosed base or edge rather than a polished smooth surface.

VETERANS CROSSES - Veterans crosses are available from local veteran groups to be installed in or on the permanent cement base of a monument. Upkeep and maintenance is the responsibility of the monument owner. Crosses bent, broken, or twisted as a direct result of maintenance will be fixed by the cemetery staff.