

Corporate Report

REPORT NUMBER 031-2025-Infrastructure & Operations-Parks & Open Spaces	
DATE PREPARED	January 21, 2025
FILE	
MEETING DATE February 10, 2025	
SUBJECT Report Back - Feasibility of Including Pets in Cemeteries	

RECOMMENDATION

WITH RESPECT to Report 31-2025 – Infrastructure & Operations – Parks & Open Spaces, we recommend that Outstanding Item 2024-101-INO be removed from the Outstanding List;

AND THAT any necessary by-laws be presented to City Council for ratification.

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Sustainability – Plan and deliver cost-effective services at a level we can sustain.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Administration has determined that policy within the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO) does provide options for the burial of cremated pet remains within cemeteries. However, this cannot be applied retroactively to existing cemetery lands unless a separate designated area is defined authorizing this activity prior to development.

Currently the available land at the City of Thunder Bay Cemetery operations is very limited and would not be sufficient to create a designated area. Therefore, Administration has determined it is not feasible to offer cemetery pet burial services at this time.

DISCUSSION

At the June 3, 2024 City Council meeting Administration was directed to review the feasibility of including pet burials in City cemeteries.

Administration has determined that policy within the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO) does provide options for the burial of cremated pet remains within cemeteries. However, permission to include pets cannot be applied retroactively to existing cemeteries unless a separate designated area can be defined which permits this activity prior to developing that portion of the cemetery.

Currently the available land at the City of Thunder Bay Cemetery is very limited, with an estimate of 7-10 years capacity remaining at current usage levels. Therefore, Administration has determined it is not feasible to offer burial of pet remains at this time, but it could be considered if cemetery operations are expanded in the future.

Municipalities are not obligated to expand cemeteries to create continued capacity for additional burials. As the cemetery approaches full capacity Administration will evaluate potential expansion options to inform recommendations to Council regarding long term cemetery operations and service levels.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

CONCLUSION

Administration has determined it is not feasible to offer pet burial services at this time.

BACKGROUND

At the May 22, 2024 Committee of the Whole, By-law 116-2024, Cemetery By-law, was approved and presented to City Council for ratification on June 3, 2024;

On June 3, 2024 the resolution was amended and Administration was directed to review the feasibility of including pet burials in cemeteries and report back.

REPORT PREPARED BY

Cory Halvorsen, Manager – Parks & Open Spaces

REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY

Kayla Dixon, Commissioner Infrastructure & Operations

January 28, 2025