



Legislation Text

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Resolution to Modify Rules and Regulations for the Operation of Municipal Cemeteries

Department: Parks and Recreation
Council District:

Public Hearing: n/a
Advertising Date/By: n/a

Contact 1 and Phone: Parks and Recreation Director, Wade Walcutt, Ext. 2964
Contact 2 and Phone: Assistant City Manager Chris Wilson, Ext. 2002

PURPOSE:

Council's approval is requested authorizing the City Manager to direct staff to implement the proposed rules and regulations modifications, with the intent to increase visitation, enhance the experience of the visitor and allow for continued support and appropriate management of the unique and valuable botanical diversity at City owned and operated cemeteries.

BACKGROUND:

Staff was previously directed by Council to review and identify opportunities to make modifications to the rules and regulations of our cemeteries. This directive is in accordance to Chapter 8, section 8.5 rules and regulations of the Greensboro code of ordinances, which states the City Manager, shall establish rules and regulations for the operation of the City cemeteries. Upon approval by the Council, it shall be unlawful for any person to violate any rule or regulation established by the City Manager. To carry out Council's directive, staff researched operations of various cemeteries, collaborated with residents and the Friends of Green Hill Cemetery to develop rule modifications. Upon completion of this collaboration, staff presented the modifications to the Parks and Recreation Commission which voted unanimously in support of the changes. The full list of rules and regulations, previous and proposed, are attached. Often modifications only included slight re-wording to reflect updated terminology; however, the following provides a summary of the proposed changes:

- Free ground - In those cases where it is determined by the Cemetery Superintendent and confirmed by the guidelines provided by the Guilford County Social Services that a resident is impoverished and unable to pay for a grave, grave and all related services may be provided without charge. Such documentation as is required to make the determination shall be furnished to the Cemetery Superintendent. The location of the lot, date and time of the service will be at the discretion of the Cemetery Superintendent;
- Permitted plantings - No person shall plant, remove, or maintain any tree, shrub, or ground cover in a City Cemetery without the permission of the Parks and Recreation Director or Cemetery Superintendent or their designee. The Cemetery Superintendent is authorized to allow the plot owner's permission to install and maintain small flowering trees and dwarf evergreen shrubs, provided that such trees and shrubs are planted in line with monuments or in such areas so as not to substantially interfere with the maintenance of the cemetery. All trees and shrubs must be trimmed in a manner to encourage upward growth and not interfere with future adjacent grave openings. All approved plantings must be within the boundaries of the owner's lot. ONLY the owner or its representative is allowed to plant anything on lots. Application for permission to plant trees or shrubs shall be made to the Cemetery Superintendent and shall be made by the owner or owner's designated representative. Detailed plans showing the plantings desired shall be furnished with any application. In regard to public requests for additional plantings and with the intent to maintain a safe, beautiful and low-maintenance needed cemetery system, the following serves as a recommended

guideline to be followed, which could be subject to exception by way of written pre-approval from the Parks and Recreation Director, Cemetery Superintendent or their designee:

- Newly planted trees should be eight feet or more in height, except when planted by individuals on their family plot and only allowed in common areas;
- New trees will not be allowed within five feet of any paved street;
- Shrubs may only be placed in designated natural areas, with the shrub's adult form (height and width) taken into consideration. Trees or shrubs which produce excessive litter (i.e. sweet gum, female ginkgo) or that could provide a hazard to participants, volunteers or staff will not be permitted (i.e. thorns, vines, etc.).

The City reserves the right to trim, prune or remove from any lot or space any tree or shrub which is installed in violation of these regulations or which become unsightly or detrimental to walks, roads, or other lots. Other plantings not presently conforming to these regulations shall be made to conform therewith. The Cemetery Division will be held harmless when the decision is made to remove any existing tree or shrub that is interfering with maintenance practices or grave opening procedures, or which is detrimental to the overall appearance of the cemetery. No plantings will be permitted in sections that are subdivided and platted into grave sites after May 1, 1974.

- Conduct in cemeteries - Without prior approval from the Parks and Recreation Director or their designee, no person shall:
 - Use City Cemetery property for drop-in recreation, equipment/vehicle storage, discharge fireworks or firearms. Other personal conduct by any guest/visitor deemed to be unreasonable or unlawful in accordance to Parks and Recreation Rules and Regulations 19-1 and City of Greensboro laws and ordinances inside cemetery property is prohibited. Unreasonable behavior includes, but not limited to:
 - Failing to comply with rules, regulations and staff directions;
 - Trespassing outside of established operating hours;
 - Failure to remain on designated plots, roads and trails;
 - Failure to remove pet or service animal waste;
 - Behavior that deters the peace of the other guests and/or services
- Vehicles and recreational transportation considerations:
 - The speed limit for all traffic is 15 mph;
 - All motor vehicles and bicyclists must remain on designated roads and / or paths as directed by Cemetery personnel and be operated in accordance to State, local laws and ordinances;
 - Unless prior written approval is received by the Parks and Recreation Director or their designee, horseback riding is prohibited. Exceptions would be considered for services and/or ceremonies;
- Service animals and pets - Pets and service animals are permitted, and must remain on leashes at all times. Owners are responsible for the behavior of their pets and/or service animals and are required to remove all waste.
- Operating hours - All City Cemeteries shall be closed from sundown until 8:00 AM during the entire year. No person, other than law enforcement personnel or Cemetery Division employees may enter any City Cemetery while it is closed without the permission of the Parks and Recreation Director or their designee. The Parks and Recreation Director or their designee may change hours of operations needed, but not to interfere with previously scheduled services.

BUDGET IMPACT:

N/A.

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION REQUESTED:

The Parks and Recreation Department respectfully requests and recommends City Council approve the attached resolution permitting the City Manager to direct staff to implement the proposed rules and regulation modifications as written.