

September 23, 2013

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**City to provide nine-month grace period for removal of non-confirming items at cemetery**

In an effort to balance the community's need to grieve the loss of loved ones with safety concerns at public cemeteries, the City of Campbell River will introduce a nine-month grace period for the removal of non-confirming items adorning grave sites.

*"While the City's cemetery bylaw stipulates that only floral arrangements may be placed at a grave site, we recognize that people have different ways to mark the passing of a loved one, and over the last several decades, the bylaw has not been consistently enforced,"* says Ross Milnthorp, the City's general manager of parks, recreation and culture. *"As a result, extensive adornment of graves at both City of Campbell River cemeteries has drawn citizen complaints and are creating safety concerns for burial gatherings and maintenance staff."*

Beginning in October, notices will be posted at the cemeteries and letters will be sent to cemetery plot owners advising that the Parks Department will phase in enforcing the bylaw and removing non-confirming adornments at grave sites. A nine-month grace period will be in place for people to collect items. After that, staff will remove adornments from grave sites and store them for collection by the cemetery plot owner for a period of one year. Full enforcement of the bylaw is scheduled to be implemented by July 2014.

*"We recognize that people want to show respect and love for those interred in the cemetery, and that they have strong attachment to the grave adornments,"* Milnthorp says. *"Staff will make changes with caring and sensitivity, and a nine-month grace period will be in place for people to remove existing grave adornments that do not comply with the bylaw. Also, if necessary, staff will work closely with families to help them remove items that do not meet the standards required under the bylaw."*

The bylaw stipulates that: only floral arrangements may be placed at the gravesite, and floral arrangements that have become wilted, discoloured, unsightly, or seasonably inappropriate will be discarded by cemetery staff. Any non-floral items placed at the interment site including, ceramics, statues, lanterns, candles, fences, glass, benches, rocks or landscaping materials, will also be removed. Further, no person shall plant trees, shrubs, plants, flowers or bulbs in the cemetery other than cemetery staff.

The removal plan stipulates that: effective July 1, 2014, cemetery (Parks) staff will begin the process of removing all non-confirming items present in the cemetery. Items that are removed will be tagged and stored at the Dogwood Operations Centre, 385 South Dogwood Street, for a period of one year for collection by family members. Cemetery staff will assist any family members who require assistance removing items and restoring plots to bylaw standards.

At its September 23 meeting, Campbell River City Council directed staff to provide the Community Services, Recreation and Culture Commission with a report on the cemetery clean-up plan as soon as possible, and that the report include a copy of Cemetery Bylaw 1639 to ensure the bylaw reflects community values.

For more information on the adornment placement and removal policy, please contact the Parks Department at 250-286-7275 or visit our website at [www.campbellriver.ca](http://www.campbellriver.ca).

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