January 9, 2017

Executive Policy Committee
City Of Winnipeg

For consideration at the Committee meeting of January 11, 2017

Attachment to the email to the City Clerk January 9, 2017: FRONTAGE LEVY

The Friends of Elmwood Cemetery assumed the operation of Elmwood Cemetery in the late 1990s as a way to resolve a dilemma facing the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba. The Cemetery at the time was privately owned and had operated since 1902 by the same family. In short the owners owed taxes and other debts that could result in a bankruptcy, leaving a legal problem as to which of the above would take the operation over, or to deal with any other options. Information we have is that bankruptcy might put it in the hands of the Province without the City receiving any back taxes and/or having to take over administration and maintenance of the Cemetery.

A small group of private citizens including former Mayor of Winnipeg William Norrie took on the responsibility of the Cemetery operations with financial help from the Province and the City. Today the charitable company identified above manages the Cemetery without any direct financial assistance other than donors and perpetual care funds.

The following is an excerpt from a letter to Councilor Schreyer describing the situation.

"Frontage Levy
The Cemetery has been caught up with a lack of attention to detail in regards to the frontage fee levy. We believe that like business and property taxes, we should be exempt from the levy. We do not access sewer service yet we pay $600 of a total water and sewer billing of $ 1,000, for sewer charges. The water needs for the cemetery are minimal other than supplying families with water for watering cans. We could install a well, which would make the Cemetery not fall under the Levy. The city has increased our costs by $4,000 a year with no added or future benefit. A charge that is targeted to increase 10 fold. I would ask you to take up this issue with the committee that is responsible, or to advise whom I should meet with."

If fees like these continue to be "Levied" the Cemetery and many other like cemeteries may wind up in the City's lap. I would ask EPC To recommend a review of this matter that involves the participation of the various stakeholders or preferably an amendment to the levy details that would exempt not for profit, charitable or religion based cemeteries.

I would appreciate a reply indicating EPC's direction on the matter. I would also make myself available to discuss this further with anyone on EPC, or Mayor Bowman.

Yours truly,

Jim Baker
Executive Director
Historic Elmwood Cemetery

Frontage Levy

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