



Rainbow
Registered
Arc-en-ciel
Officiel

Town of Saugeen Shores
600 Tomlinson Drive, P.O. Box 820
Port Elgin, ON N0H 2C0

June 11, 2024

Sent via Email

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario

Dear Premier Ford,

**Re: Township of Clearview Support Resolution
Cemetery Administration Management**

At the March 11, 2024, Regular Council meeting for the Town of Saugeen Shores, the following resolution was passed:

Moved by Deputy Mayor D. Huber, Seconded by: Vice Deputy Mayor M. Myatt

Whereas at the Committee of the Whole meeting held February 12, 2024, a motion was passed to direct staff to prepare a resolution based on the Township of Clearview's circulated resolution on Cemetery Administration Management but with the added reference to Pioneer Cemetery's unique situation; and

Whereas the Pioneer Cemetery in Southampton is a historical marker for the Town that holds significant information about its past, not to mention the emotional connection for residents whose ancestors are buried in its boundary area; and

Whereas the Cemetery is located along a steep slope adjacent to the Saugeen River. Closed in 1902, the annual slope erosion (.78 meters) is impacting burial plots and has resulted in the exposure of human remains. The Town of Saugeen Shores has diligently worked with all applicable authorities to date and has projected the full cost of the required remediation at \$800,000; and

Whereas this work requires the execution of a sensitive multi-year remediation project potentially lasting between five and ten years. The Town would like to ensure this is done with care and respect; however, it is outside of the Town's area of expertise and capacity to undertake this project without multiple disciplinary subject matter experts, as well as Provincial financial support to remediate existing damage and prevent further deterioration of the site; and

Whereas this is a complex situation requiring a solid understanding of the erosion rate along the Saugeen Riverbank near the Southampton Pioneer Cemetery. There are both complexities in the history of the site and changing river dynamics due to climate change. The work also requires identifying at-risk burial site(s) and then creating a plan to relocate those sites, while ensuring all artifacts and human remains are intact and appropriately relocated; and

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Whereas cemeteries are not only symbols of respect, they also serve as the reservation of family memories, prominent citizens, and local history, in addition to some being local landmarks themselves and hold great historical and cultural value nationally; and

Whereas remediation and preservation repairs to older cemeteries are very costly and may require specialized services like archaeologists or anthropologists; and

Whereas the care, remediation costs, and ongoing maintenance funds of cemeteries are generally non-existent and continue to rise; and

Whereas cemeteries are important infrastructure where the reasonable costs for interment rights, burials, monument foundations corner stones, and administration charges do not sufficiently support the general operation of cemeteries; and

Whereas the revenue earned from the care and maintenance funds(s) of a cemetery do not provide adequate funding to maintain the cemetery with the rising costs of lawn and turf maintenance contracts and monument restoration.

Now therefore be it resolved that the Council of the Town of Saugeen Shores support other municipalities recommendations, including the Township of Clearview, and request that the Province of Ontario immediately provide a funding stream to municipalities for the preservation, repair, and ongoing maintenance of active and inactive cemeteries; and

Further that this resolution be forwarded to Jim Cassimatis, Interim CEO/Registrar, the Bereavement Authority of Ontario, the Honourable Todd McCarthy, Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery, the Honourable Lisa Thompson, MPP Huron-Bruce, the Association of Municipalities Ontario, and all municipalities in Ontario.

Sincerely,

Sarah Bonderud,
Deputy Clerk

Encl.

CC: Jim Cassimatis, Interim CEO/Registrar, Bereavement Authority of Ontario
Honourable Todd McCarthy, Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery
MPP Lisa Thompson
Association of Municipalities Ontario
All Municipalities in Ontario

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