

SALMON ARM OBSERVER PRINT THIS

New cemetery in City of Salmon Arm's plans

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Salmon Arm is currently ahead of the game when it comes to planning for cemeteries, but the city is being advised to consider adding a new cemetery site.

When it comes to existing cemeteries, Salmon Arm is keeping pace with demand. But Erik Lees, one of the members of Landscape Architects and Planners, who helped create the parks and recreation master plan, advises things could change quite quickly.

"It is not an area you want to fall behind in," says Lees.

He explains that Salmon Arm has an aging population and while 75 per cent of Salmon Arm residents choose cremation over burial, he warns that you need to be careful.

"You need to be prepared if this trend changes," says Lees.

British Columbia currently has one of the highest cremation rates in North America, but if something like fossil fuel goes up in price, this could change the number of people who choose this option.

A proposed new cemetery will span about 20 acres of land and will be located on 20 Ave SE at 30 St. SE.

Lees advised city council that a flexible plan that can be phased in over time should be adopted.

The new cemetery should last 80 years and will support any increase in burial patterns.

Lees explained that creating the cemetery in phases will reduce costs. If the city only clears sections of the land at a time, there will be no added cost of maintaining land that will not be used for years to come.

While Lees does not believe the cemetery will make the city money, he also doesn't foresee it costing money either if it is constructed over a period of time.

The proposed land does have existing, informal, cross-country skiing and snowshoe trails. Lees says he hopes these trails can be incorporated into the cemetery's plan.

This will keep the trails open to the public and possibly create a welcoming feature for those who would be looking into buying plots.

Lees suggested the cemetery not be modeled after the ones in places like Victoria or Vancouver.

While they are beautiful, he notes that Salmon Arm has a unique culture and history all it's own.

Lees would like to see these things incorporated into the overall plan of the cemetery, whether it is through pillars, walkways, or walls.

According to Lees, there currently are no residents living immediately adjacent to the property and an open-house meeting has been held to hear community concerns.

There will be a second open house in the fall, to give residents a chance to voice their concerns and ask any questions they might have.

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