

Corcoran Cemetery Once More

March 12, 2024

Summary

Both the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Kings County Civil Grand Juries did reports regarding the Corcoran Cemetery (cemetery). For the most part, the Corcoran Cemetery District (district) has followed the suggestions given in the Grand Jury reports. One notable exception is that the district has failed to publish a brochure that would be of great help to the Corcoran community in understanding the policies and fees for services that are available and provided by the cemetery.

Background

The 2021-2022 Grand Jury received complaints that the cemetery had dry grass, the grounds were unkempt with flags and flowers strewn about, and that headstones had sunk and were underwater.

The 2022-2023 Grand Jury found that the grounds were vastly improved by an organized effort on the part of the cemetery manager and staff. All of the recommendations made in the 2021-2022 Grand Jury report were being followed with the exception of a brochure being developed that would be made easily available to community members.

The price list of charges, fees, and rules (such as decorating gravesites) for the cemetery which is currently offered is not a professional publication but what appears to be a “last minute” effort at providing the costs of various burial services available (see Appendix).

If a professional brochure were available, it would help people better understand everything involved with respect to a burial service. This is important to those who are experiencing the death of a loved one. It would also provide a document that could be kept for future reference. The cemetery employees could also make the brochure available at all community church facilities and at places where community members frequent such as City Hall, Police Department, and community facilities thus reaching a wide audience. Including a clean-up schedule listing the date and what needs to be removed such as old flowers etc. would be an additional benefit so that all important information would be available in one publication.

Methodology

The 2021-2022 and the 2022/2023 Grand Jury reports were reviewed. The Grand Jury visited the district website on multiple occasions. On February 13, 2024, the Grand Jury made an unannounced visit to the cemetery to see how the cemetery appeared. The cemetery grounds were well maintained. It was obvious that much effort had been made to improve the general

appearance of the cemetery grounds. This included raising markers to ground level to avoid standing water covering them. During this visit members of the Grand Jury also spoke with one of the cemetery workers.

Discussion

The cemetery is managed by an elected Board of Trustees which operates under a special district authorized by the California Health & Safety Code. Special Districts are formed as divisions of local government to provide specialized services to a community. They are subject to state regulations governing special districts and must conform to the requirements of the Brown Act and Public Records Act. Special districts must submit an annual financial report to the Office of the State Controller and are subject to audits of finances. The cemetery operates with revenue from local property taxes and the sale of grave sites and cremation niches.

The cemetery staff includes the manager, an assistant manager, and several laborers. Work is assigned by the manager as necessary to meet the needs of pending burial services and to ensure proper maintenance of the cemetery grounds.

The price list provided by the cemetery is a one-page typed document. There are no rules listed as to decorating gravesites, etc. It is not a professional quality publication. To obtain a copy of services and fees provided by the cemetery a community member must drive to the cemetery or access the district website as those are the only locations the service/fee schedule is available. The cemetery also posts a separate “clean up” schedule on the office door, at the entrances to the cemetery and in the local newspaper.

Findings:

F1. The Corcoran Cemetery District has improved the upkeep of the Corcoran Cemetery grounds.

F2. The Corcoran Cemetery District has not produced a publicly available professional type of brochure.

F3. The Corcoran Cemetery District currently offers a single page typed “clean up” schedule that is only posted at the office door, entrances to the cemetery and in the local newspaper.

Recommendations:

R1. The Corcoran Cemetery District should continue to prioritize the upkeep and maintenance of the Corcoran Cemetery grounds.

R2. The Corcoran Cemetery District should immediately create a professional brochure in English and Spanish, that makes it clear to the community the burial service options, grave sites costs, and what all cemetery policies are.

R3. The Corcoran Cemetery District should add a “clean up” schedule to their professional brochure.

REQUIRED RESPONSE

Pursuant to Penal Code Section § 933 (c), provided in part: “No later than 90 days after the Grand Jury submits a final report on the operations of any public agency subject to its reviewing authority, the governing body of the public agency shall comment to the presiding judge of the superior court on the findings and recommendations pertaining to matters under the control of the governing body and every elected county officer or agency head for which the Grand Jury had responsibility pursuant to Section § 914.1 shall comment within 60 days to the presiding judge of the superior court...”

Board of Trustees
Corcoran Cemetery District
Post Office Box 805
Corcoran, CA 93212

INVITED RESPONSES

Corcoran Cemetery District Manager
Post Office Box 805
Corcoran, CA 93212

SEND FINAL REPORT RESPONSES TO:

Original to:

Judge Jennifer Giuliani, Presiding Judge
Kings County Superior Court
1640 Kings Court Drive
Hanford, CA 93230

Copy to:

Kings County Civil Grand Jury
P O Box #1562
Hanford, CA 93230

Appendix Corcoran Cemetery Current Pricing Publication

D42-2

CORCORAN CEMETERY FEES
992-3209

2020-2021

Single Adult	
Non- protected	Over size
Plot	\$1,080.00
Endowment Fee	\$280.00
Opening & Closing	\$800.00
Handing & Set- Up Fee	\$500.00
Liner Box	\$1,400.00
County Fee	\$60.00
Tax	\$105.00
Total	\$4,245.00

Single Adult Funeral	
Non- protected	
	standard size
Plot	\$1,100.00
Endowment Fee	\$280.00
Opening & Closing	\$700.00
Handing & Set- Up Fee	\$500.00
Liner Box	\$600.00
County Fee	\$60.00
Tax	\$45.00
Total	\$3,285.00

\$700.00
\$500.00
\$600.00
\$60.00
\$45.00
\$1,905.00

COMPANION FUNERAL	
Funeral Standard Size	
Non protected liner	
First Funeral	
Plot	\$1,100.00
Endowment Fee	\$280.00
Opening & Closing	\$1,000.00
Handing & Set- Up Fee	\$500.00
Liner	\$1,000.00
County Fee	\$60.00
Tax	\$75.00
Total	\$4,015.00

SATURDAY FEE	\$700.00
MARKER SIZE 10X20	\$200.00
MARKER SIZE	
SINGLE PLOT 12X24	\$280.00
SINGLE PLOT 12x30	\$280.00
DOUBLE PLOTS 12X36	\$300.00
ZINC VASE	\$75.00
TAX	\$ 4.87
NICHE	\$30.00
TAX	\$2.25
BENCH	\$1,800.00 \$2,200.00
TAX	\$135.00 \$135.00
TOTAL	\$1,935.00 \$2,335.00

Second Funeral	
Endowment	
Opening & Closing	\$700.00
Handing & Set- Up Fee	\$500.00
County Fee	\$60.00
Total	\$1,540.00
Total for first & second	\$5,555.00

Bench Foundation

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