



Subject: Memorial Bench Program Update

Report Number: RCP 25-011

Department: Recreation, Culture and Parks Department

Submitted by: Adam Kannawin, Manager of Parks and Facilities

Meeting Type: Council Meeting

Meeting Date: Monday, February 24, 2025

RECOMMENDATION

THAT report RCP 25-011 titled “Memorial Bench Program Update” be received as information.

BACKGROUND

At the January 27, 2025 Council meeting, resulting from a presentation from Mr. Woods regarding cost increase for memorial benches, the following resolution was passed:

Resolution #2025-033

Moved By: Councillor Spencer

Seconded By: Councillor Rosehart

THAT Council refer the information to staff for a report to inform Council of the number of benches sold and at what cost, since the year 2022, as well as a status update on the waitlist.

Carried

DISCUSSION

One of the services provided by the Parks Department and administered by the Cemetery Registrar is the Memorial Bench Program, which allows for purchase and installation of a memorial bench within the town, typically at a park, parkette, trail or cemetery.

A number of benches are purchased annually and kept as inventory at the cemetery. The program is offered to the public on a ‘first come, first served’ basis. Memorial bench prices have increased annually since 2022.

Below is a summary of memorial bench sales since 2022:

RCP 25-011 Memorial Bench Program Update

Year	Benches Sold	Fee (tax included)	Details
2022	3	\$2,260	2022 Rates & Fees By-law
2023	1	\$2,260	Bench sold at 2022 rate to Military History Club. This was approved by the Parks and Cemetery Supervisor as the Military History Club raised money for the bench at the 2022 rate.
	1	\$3,164	Sourcing issues lead to changing the standard bench. Resulting cost savings reflected in the decreased purchase price. This was approved by the Manager of Parks and Facilities, however not approved by Council as an update to the rates and fees bylaw.
	6	\$3,616	In 2023 the fee was right-sized to encompass full cost of labour and materials and 10% perpetual fee. This 2023 fee was approved on December 12, 2022 through by-law 2022-087.
2024	4	\$3,819	2024 Rates & Fees By-law
2025	1	\$3,938	2025 Rates & Fees By-law

A total of sixteen memorial benches have been sold since 2022. Current pricing includes the bench, a custom plaque, labour and materials of installation, as well as a perpetual care and maintenance fee.

A waitlist was initiated in 2022 as a result of the difficulties sourcing benches. Down payment is not required, the price is reflected at the time of sale when the benches have arrived. Customers are advised that the fee is for the year that the bench is purchased as per the rates and fees by-law and there is a disclaimer on the price sheet that notes: All the above prices will be honored for the year (current year noted) and have been approved by the Town of Tillsonburg Council.

Due to the supply issue, 13 people were placed on the waitlist in 2022. Once benches were available in 2023 through another supplier, those on the waitlist were contacted regarding availability. Those contacted provided the following feedback: one is undecided, five are not interested at this time, two are no longer interested due to price, and two were unreachable. 2 people from the waitlist purchased benches, one purchased in 2023 and paid the 2023 fee and the other purchased in 2024 and paid the 2024 fee. No one on the waitlist that chose to purchase a bench paid the 2022 fee.

Paul Woods is the only person from the waitlist who has not purchased a bench as he is disputing the price that he was provided with and has asked that an exception be made. Upon investigation of this issue, Paul was not contacted from the waitlist by the

Cemetery Registrar as he was working directly with the Parks and Cemetery Supervisor. Although unable to confirm the price Paul was provided by the Supervisor, it is confirmed that he was provided with the 2024 price of \$3819 in December when he stopped by the cemetery to ask about a bench.

Currently, the Town has no stock of memorial benches. An order will be placed in February with expected delivery 6 – 8 weeks from time of order.

Based on the information gathered in this review, the memorial bench program will undergo a full review in 2025 to address any gaps and ensure a fair and equitable process. The review will include the feasibility of taking payment for benches at the time of order given that there are not currently supply chain issues.

CONSULTATION

This report was prepared in consultation with the Parks and Cemetery Staff.

FINANCIAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

There is no financial impact resulting from this report.

CORPORATE GOALS

How does this report support the corporate goals identified in the Community Strategic Plan?

- Lifestyle and amenities
- Customer service, communication and engagement
- Business attraction, retention and expansion
- Community growth
- Connectivity and transportation
- Not Applicable

Does this report relate to a specific strategic direction or project identified in the Community Strategic Plan? Please indicate section number and/or any priority projects identified in the plan.

Not Applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

None.