THE CITY OF BURLESON TEXAS

Department Memo

Public Spaces and Cultural Heritage Board

DEPARTMENT: **Parks and Recreation**

FROM: **Eric Oscarson, Deputy City Manager**

MEETING: **November 10, 2026**

SUBJECT:

Receive a presentation, hold a discussion, and provide staff feedback regarding access to Burleson Memorial Cemetery as well as items placed on gravesites. *(Staff Contact: Sarah Heath, Senior Administrative Specialist)*

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AND GOAL(S):

Strategic Priority	Strategic Goal
Beautiful, Safe, & Vibrant Community	3.1 Encourage a clean and healthy community

SUMMARY:

This presentation summarizes current ordinances governing access to Burleson Memorial Cemetery (490 Memorial Plaza), along with the findings of a regional benchmark regarding items placed on gravesites.

Per current ordinance, the cemetery is closed from sundown to sunup. Current practice is to leave the front gate open for ease of access. Currently, the fencing encloses the cemetery on three sides with an opening on the west side along the trail. Additionally, there are not regulations specific to permitted and prohibited interaction with the fountain at the cemetery other than prohibiting any substance which will or may pollute the water. Staff is requesting feedback from the Board if further consideration and possible action is recommended, additionally accounting for staff capacity and impact to the community.

Additionally, staff researched current practices for cemetery regulations regarding items left by visitors at local cemeteries. The benchmark examined 68 municipalities within the Dallas-Fort Worth region with populations between 10,000 and 100,000 residents. Of these, 12

municipalities were found to operate cemeteries that could be readily identified as municipally owned, and eight of those municipalities maintain ordinances or other regulations addressing decorative or personal items. An additional 15 Dallas-Fort Worth area municipalities with populations exceeding 100,000 residents were reviewed to provide further context on regional practices.

The benchmark addresses the following areas:

- Prohibited items, such as personal or decorative items, flags, candles and additional lighting
- Exceptions for prohibited items for holidays or other occasions
- Removal responsibility and cadence

This regional benchmark provides a foundation for evaluating the City's current ordinances governing items at Burleson Memorial Cemetery. Staff recommends using these findings to guide further discussion on balancing the cemetery's appearance and maintenance needs with the community's desire to honor and remember loved ones.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Public Spaces and Cultural Heritage Board may recommend that current city ordinances address the concerns and no further consideration for possible action is needed regarding access and items at Burleson Memorial Cemetery, recommend that staff consider adjusted communication or enforcement practices in alignment with current city ordinances, or recommend further consideration by City Council for possible action.

PRIOR ACTION/INPUT (Council, Boards, Citizens):

The Public Spaces and Cultural Heritage Board met on August 11, 2026 and conducted a site visit to Burleson Memorial Cemetery. During the visit, Board members and staff observed and discussed the placement of items at the cemetery. While current City of Burleson Code of Ordinances Chapter 18 addresses regulations regarding cemeteries including prohibited structures and floral arrangements, the Board requested that staff to conduct a benchmark study of municipal cemeteries within the area to review policies governing other items.

REFERENCE:

§ 18. Cemeteries.

§ 34-290 Litter in fountains, lakes, etc. No person shall throw or deposit litter in any fountain, pond, lake, stream, bay or any other body of water within the city.

§ 58-9 Sanitation. No person in any city park shall: (1) Throw, discharge, place or cause to be thrown, discharged or placed in the water of any fountain, pond, lake, stream or other body of water in or adjacent to any park, any substance, liquid or solid, which will or may pollute said waters.

§ 58-14 Swimming and bathing. No person in any park shall swim in any water or waterway in any park, except in areas designated for same by the director during hours designated for swimming. Bathing is prohibited in all city parks at all times.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

STAFF CONTACT:

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