

**CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION 98-081  
MARCH 2, 1998 AGENDA**

**SUBJECT:**

**CEMETERY CONSULTANT SURVEY  
CONTRACT**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

**DONALD TRIPP  
PARK AND RECREATION DIRECTOR**

**SYNOPSIS –**

Award of bid contract to American Public Opinion Survey & Market Research Corporation (APO) to provide market research services which will determine the demand for mausoleum and columbarium burial facilities at Glendale and Laurel Hill cemeteries.

**FISCAL IMPACT –**

Approved expense of \$12,910 from the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Fund. Cost includes all personnel, materials, travel, communication, and lodging expenses to complete the project. Anticipated results will include a strategy to increase sales revenues at the Municipal Cemeteries.

**RECOMMENDATION –**

**Approve award of bid to APO.**

**BACKGROUND –**

By Park and Recreation Board Resolution #11515, dated May 9, 1995, the Cemetery Evaluation Committee was formed to review and finalize a draft Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire a cemetery management consultant. The consultant would assist the Park and Recreation Board and staff in an overall evaluation of the operations of the City's cemeteries. The special Cemetery Evaluation Committee was composed of cemetery industry business people, Park and Recreation Board members, and citizens at large. After consideration, the Committee chose to not hire a consultant and undertook the cemetery study on its own. Among several recommendations to the Park and Recreation Board and City Council was the suggestion that they "include expense/revenue projections [in the CIP budget] for constructing garden-style mausoleums,

niches, and/or columbariums for both Glendale and Laurel Hill cemeteries". The importance of these facilities to any cemetery operation is the variety of burial opportunities which can be offered to the clients. Mausoleums allow for above-ground burial inside a structure. Garden-variety mausoleums allow for above-ground burial in an outdoor, landscaped setting. Niches, repositories for cremated remains, are often recessed within the ends of both indoor and outdoor mausoleums. Columbariums are usually garden-variety niches which stand alone from, but sometimes adjacent to, mausoleums. The demand for spaces for cremated remains has been increasing rapidly in the United States for the past several years. The City cemeteries currently cannot offer spaces to meet this need. The mausoleum located at Glendale Cemetery has been fully reserved for many years. If the demand is there, the City's existing facilities cannot compete for these profitable elements of cemetery business.

In late Spring of 1997 the Citizens Cemetery Committee of the Park and Recreation Board was asked by staff to take action on this recommendation. Funds had been approved in the CIP for Fiscal Year 1998 to initiate a study of the feasibility of building a mausoleum and/or columbarium at one or both of the above mentioned cemeteries. The Committee soon felt an outside consultant would be valuable in amassing the information and performing a survey from which a recommendation could be made to the Park and Recreation Board and City Council. An RFP was prepared and sent out for bid response. Four companies expressed an interest, but only two submitted a proposal. After evaluating the proposals, the Committee and staff strongly recommended that APO of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, be awarded the bid. The company offers 37 years of experience in marketing and research services, a professional staff, and exemplary performance in similar work throughout the world. Of the two responses, APO also was low bid.