

# MANLIUS TOWNSHIP CEMETERY ORDINANCE

## Ordinance Number 2011-2

Adopted: June 13, 2011  
Effective: July 13, 2011  
Amended July 11, 2011  
Effective: August 11, 2011

AN ORDINANCE TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY AND GENERAL WELFARE BY ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE OPERATION, CONTROL, AND MANAGEMENT OF CEMETERIES OWNED BY THE TOWNSHIP OF MANLIUS, ALLEGAN COUNTY, MICHIGAN; TO PROVIDE PENALTIES FOR THE VIOLATION OF SAID ORDINANCE; AND TO REPEAL ALL ORDINANCES OR PART OF ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN THE CONFLICT THEREWITH.

TOWNSHIP OF MANLIUS, COUNTY OF ALLEGAN, MICHIGAN ORDAINS;

### Section 1: TITLE

This Ordinance shall be known and cited as the Manlius Township Cemetery Ordinance.

### Section 2: PURPOSE AND INTENT

The Manlius Township Board recognizes and concludes that the proper and reasonable maintenance, appearance and use of the cemetery or cemeteries owned or controlled by the Township is an important function of the government of the Township. It is also important that burials, disinterments and other matters associated with a municipal cemetery are handled in a respectful and proper way in order to promote the safety, public health and general welfare of the community. The Township Board finds that the adoption and enforcement of this Ordinance is in the best interests of the property owners and residents of the Township.

### Section 3. DEFINITIONS

- A. A "cemetery plot" shall consist of an area in a Township cemetery sufficient to accommodate one burial space for one deceased person. It shall consist of a land area at least thirty-eight (38) inches wide and ninety-six (96) inches in length.
- B. "Township" means Manlius Township.
- C. "Township cemetery" or "cemetery" means any cemetery owned, operated and/or controlled by the Township.

**Section 4. SALE OF LOTS OR BURIAL SPACES; PURCHASE PRICE AND TRANSFER FEES;  
REPURCHASES OF PLOTS OR BURIAL SPACES**

- A. Each adult burial space shall cost \$300.00 for a resident and \$750.00 for a non-resident. Cemetery plots may be purchased from the township.
- B. Any transfer of a burial space from an original purchaser to a qualified assignee shall cost \$100.00. Burial rights may only be transferred to those persons, kin or not, eligible to be original purchasers of cemetery lots or burial spaces within the township and may be affected only by endorsement of any assignment of such burial permit upon the original burial permit form issued by the township clerk, approved by said clerk, and entered upon the official records of said Clerk. Upon such assignment, approval and record, said Clerk shall issue a new burial permit to the assignee and shall cancel the original burial permit upon such records.
- C. The foregoing charges shall be paid to the township treasurer and shall be deposited in the general fund.
- D. The Township Board, by resolution, may periodically alter the foregoing fees to accommodate increased costs and needed funds for cemetery maintenance and acquisition.
- E. Cemetery plots may be sold back for the original purchase price to the Township (for resale by the Township), upon the written request of said owner or his or her legal heirs or representatives. Cemetery plots are nontransferable without prior written approval by the Township.
- F. The Township Board shall have the authority to place a limit on the number of cemetery plots sold to a particular person, as well as such person's family and relatives. Furthermore, the Township shall have the absolute right and discretion to determine whether a particular cemetery plot or plots will be sold to a specific person and where such cemetery plot or plots will be located and within which Township cemetery. Such decision shall be based upon reasonable factors, including, but not limited to, the number of vacant cemetery plots available and whether family or relatives of the person seeking to purchase a cemetery plot or plots are buried adjacent or nearby the cemetery plot or plots requested.

**Section 5. GRAVE OPENING CHARGES**

- A. The interment of ashes, shall be \$175.00 or at a cost to be determined by resolution of the Township Board, payable to the Township.
- B. No burial spaces shall be opened and closed except under the direction and control of the Cemetery Sexton. This provision shall not apply to proceedings for the removal and reinterment of bodies and remains, which matters are under the supervision of the local health department.

## **Section 6. MARKERS OR MEMORIALS; NO MONUMENTS.**

- A. All markers and memorials must be comprised of stone or other equally durable composition and shall face the same direction as the markers and memorials around them.
- B. Except for monuments that existed in a Township cemetery before the effective date of this Ordinance, all monuments shall be within said guidelines. For purposes of this Ordinance, "monument" shall be defined as any marker, memorial, statue or similar item which exceeds thirty (30) inches in height above normal ground level or which has a ground surface area exceeding thirty (30) inches in width (or forty-eight (48) inches in width for a double marker), with an overall height of no more than thirty (30) inches above ground level, including the foundation. Only one (1) marker or memorial shall be permitted per cemetery plot, or one marker or memorial in total where two adjoining plots share that one marker or memorial. Markers shall be no more than (30) inches in width (or forty-eight (48) inches in width for a double marker), with an overall height of no more than thirty (30) inches above ground level, including the foundation. Individual markers for cremains shall be flush with the ground and shall be no more than twelve (12) inches by twenty-four (24) inches in size.
- C. The footing or foundation upon which any marker or memorial must be placed shall be constructed by the Township, or such person(s) as may be designated by the Township Board. Fees for such work shall be set from time to time by resolution of the Township Board, payable to the Township. Footing or foundation require a 2 inch border beyond marker or memorial on all sides.
- D. Should any monument or memorial (including any monument or memorial that was in place before this Ordinance became effective) become unsightly, broken, moved off its proper site, dilapidated or a safety hazard, the Township Board shall have the right, at the expense of the owner or the heirs of the cemetery plot, to correct the condition or remove the same. The Township shall make reasonable attempts to contact the owner or heirs of the cemetery plot prior to any such work beginning.
- E. The maintenance, repair and upkeep of a cemetery memorial, marker, urn or similar item is the responsibility of the heirs or family of the person buried at that location. The Township has no responsibility or liability regarding the repair, maintenance or upkeep regarding any such marker, memorial, urn or similar item.

## **Section 7. INTERMENT REGULATIONS**

- A. Only one (1) person shall be buried in a cemetery plot, except for a parent and infant child or two (2) children buried at the same time when approved by the Township, or two (2) cremains on one (1) lot.
- B. The Township shall be given not less than 36 hours' prior notice in advance of any funeral to allow for the opening of the cemetery plot. The opening and closing of cemetery plots shall be done only by the Township or such person or persons as are designated by the Township.

- C. The appropriate permit or form issued by the Township for the cemetery plot involved, together with appropriate identification of the person to be buried therein and the burial-transit permit from the health department, shall be presented to either the Township Sexton or the Township Clerk (or designated Township official) prior to interment. Where such permit or form has been lost or destroyed, the Township Clerk must be satisfied, from his or her records, that the deceased person to be buried in the cemetery plot is an authorized and appropriate person for that space before any interment is commenced or completed.
- D. The surface of all graves shall be kept in an orderly and neat-appearing manner within the confines of the cemetery plot involved.
- E. All burials shall be within a permanent burial vault.

### **Section 8. DISINTERMENTS**

- A. No disinterment or the digging up of an occupied grave shall occur without a Township disinterment permit.
- B. No disinterment or digging up of an occupied grave shall occur until and unless any and all permits, licenses and written authorizations required by law for such disinterment or digging up of an occupied grave have been obtained from any applicable state or county agency, governmental unit or official, and a copy of the same has been filed with the Township.
- C. The Township Board shall have the authority to refuse to allow a disinterment or the digging up of an occupied grave (and to refuse to issue a Township disinterment permit for the same) if the disinterment or digging up of an occupied grave is not done pursuant to a court order (issued by a court of competent jurisdiction) or does not have a reasonable basis.
- D. No disinterment permit shall be issued by the Township until the Township disinterment application form (as authorized by the Township Board) has been fully completed (and signed by a properly authorized person) and filed with the Township.

### **Section 9. WINTER BURIALS**

- A. The township may charge additional fees for winter burials.
- B. No winter burials shall occur without the prior consent of the Township Sexton.

### **Section 10. CREMAINS**

- A. Cremains shall be buried in a permanent cremation burial vault.
- B. No cremains shall be scattered or dispersed within a Township cemetery.

## Section 11. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

- A. Flower pots, urns and grave blankets may be placed and maintained at the head stones of graves no earlier than May 1 and must be removed no later than October 1 of each year. No artificial flowers allowed, only flowers planted and growing in a approved flower pot or urn. Decorations will be permitted for holidays falling outside of these dates, but only for one (1) week prior and one (1) week following the holiday. Veteran flags and flag holders shall be governed by the Veteran's Administration rules and guidelines. *(Amended 7-11-2011)*
- B. No flowers, shrubs, trees or vegetation of any type shall be planted outside of an urn. Any of the foregoing items planted without Township approval will be removed by the Township or the Township Sexton.
- C. The Township Board reserves the right to remove or trim any existing trees, plants or shrubs located within a cemetery in the interest of maintaining proper appearance and the use of the cemetery.
- D. Mounds, bricks, blocks and any borders that hinder the free use of a lawn mower or other gardening apparatus are prohibited.
- E. The Township Sexton shall have the right and authority to remove and dispose of any and all growth, emblems, displays, containers and other items that through decay, deterioration, damage or otherwise become or are unsightly, a source of litter or a maintenance problem.
- F. Surfaces other than earth or sod are prohibited.
- G. All refuse of any kind or nature including, but not limited to, dried flowers, artificial flowers, wreaths, papers and plastic flower containers must be removed from the cemetery within 10 days after a burial. If left beyond 10 days, removal and disposal will be carried out by cemetery sexton. *(Amended 7-11-2011)*
- H. No glass containers or items are allowed.
- I. Except for markers, memorials, flowers, and urns expressly allowed by this Ordinance, and veteran flags as authorized by law, no other item (including, but not limited to, ornaments, signs, trellises, statues, benches, landscaping, bricks, stones, grave border materials or other structures) shall be installed or maintained within a Township cemetery, nor shall any grading, digging, mounding or similar alteration of the ground or earth occur except as authorized by this Ordinance or by the Township.

## Section 12. DISCLAIMER OF TOWNSHIP LIABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Every person who enters, remains in and travels within a Township cemetery does so at their own risk. The Township is not responsible for any injury, accident or other calamity that might occur to any person present in a Township cemetery. Furthermore, the Township is not responsible for any damage or vandalism to, theft of or deterioration of any burial monument, headstone, flower urn or other item placed at or near a cemetery plot, burial site or anywhere in a Township cemetery. The

purchaser or transferee of any cemetery plot or the equivalent (and all subsequent transferees, assign, heirs, or beneficiaries) hereby releases, waives, indemnifies and holds harmless the Township for, from and against any injury, damages, causes of action, claims, costs and expenses associated with, relating to and/or involving the cemetery plot or similar right, and headstone, monument or similar items, and any matter related to the cemetery involved. Such waiver, release and hold harmless provision shall apply not only to the Township, but also employee, officer, official or agent.

### **Section 13. FORFEITURE OF VACANT CEMETERY PLOTS OR BURIAL SPACES**

Cemetery plots or burial spaces sold after the effective date of this Ordinance and remaining vacant for forty (40) years or more from the date of their sale shall automatically revert to the Township upon the occurrence of the following events;

- A. Notice shall be sent by the Township Clerk by first-class mail to the last known address of the last owner of record informing him/her of the expiration of the 40-year period and that all rights with respect to said plots or spaces will be forfeited if he/she does not affirmatively indicate in writing to the Township Clerk within sixty (60) days from the date of mailing of such notice of his/her desire to retain such burial rights; and
- B. No written response to said notice indicating a desire to retain the cemetery plots or burial spaces in question is received by the Township Clerk from the last owner of record of said plots or spaces, or his/her heirs or legal representative, within sixty (60) days from the date of mailing of said notice.

### **Section 14. RECORDS**

The Township Sexton shall maintain records concerning all burials, cemetery plots, issuance of burial permits and any other records of the Township related to Township cemeteries, and the same shall be open to public inspection at all reasonable business hours.

### **Section 15. VAULTS**

- A. Vaults are not required.

### **Section 16. CEMETERY HOURS**

Using otherwise specified by the Township Board by resolution, all Township cemeteries shall be closed during the hours from 9 p.m. until 7 a.m. the next morning. During those hours, no person shall be present in a Township cemetery. Such prohibition on being present in a Township cemetery during the time when a Township cemetery is closed shall not apply to the Township Sexton, and Township official, a person accompanied by the Township Sexton or other Township official, or any law enforcement or firefighting official when engaged in the lawful duties of any such office or position.

## Section 17. PROHIBITED USES AND ACTIVITIES

The following prohibitions shall apply within any Township cemetery:

- A. No person shall destroy, deface, apply graffiti to or otherwise injure any monument, sign, tree or other lawful item located within a Township cemetery.
- B. No person shall disturb the peace or unreasonably annoy, harass or disturb any other person who is lawfully present on the grounds of any Township cemetery.
- C. There shall be no entry or presence in the cemetery by any person when the cemetery is closed or outside of authorized times.
- D. There shall be no destruction of cemetery property.
- E. There shall be no destruction, defacing, cutting, etc., of any tree or plant within a cemetery.
- F. There shall be no headstones, ornaments, vases, plastic flowers, artificial flowers, fences, benches, trellises, statues, illuminated items, signs or any other item placed, kept, installed or maintained in a cemetery except those expressly allowed by this Ordinance. *(Amended 7-11-2011)*
- G. There shall be no disturbing of the peace or engaging in any loud or boisterous conduct.
- H. There shall be no digging, grading or mounding unless expressly authorized by this Ordinance.
- I. There shall be no driving of an automobile, truck or any vehicle on any portion of a cemetery except the designated roads or drives.
- J. There shall be no motorcycles, snowmobiles, four-wheelers, go-carts or similar vehicles.
- K. There shall be no gathering of persons in excess of 75 people without prior Township approval (except during or incidental to a funeral occurring concurrent with burial).
- L. There shall be no disinterment or grave openings unless approved by the Township.
- M. There shall be no possession or consumption of any alcoholic beverage.
- N. There shall be no picnicking or consumption of food without prior Township approval
- O. There shall be no music, playing of any radio, or the use of any amplification device or similar item, except pursuant to a military ceremony or a funeral.
- P. There shall be no solicitation or peddling of services or goods or any signs or placards advertising any goods or services.
- Q. There shall be no littering or dumping.

- R. There shall be no unlawful interference with or disruption of a lawful funeral or funeral procession.
- S. There shall be no private signs, lighting, moving displays or changeable copy on a sign.
- T. There shall be no fires, candles or open flames
- U. No children under twelve (12) years of age shall be allowed in any Township cemetery unless accompanied by an adult and are properly supervised by an adult.
- V. There shall be no exceeding of posted speed limits.
- W. There shall be no domestic animals of any kind or pets allowed within the cemetery grounds. However, this prohibition shall not apply to dogs assisting handicapped persons.
- X. No firearms or archery arrows shall be discharged or shot except that military, law enforcement or other veterans organizations may carry arms for the purpose of firing over the grave at the burial of a member.
- Y. No person shall engage in any fight, quarrel or disturbance.
- Z. There shall be no dumping, vandalizing or tipping over of any lawful garbage container or receptacle.

**Section 18. AUTHORITY OF THE TOWNSHIP SEXTON**

- A. The Township Board shall appoint a Township Sexton, who shall serve at the discretion of the Township Board. The Township Sexton may be a Township employee or independent contractor for the Township at the discretion of the Township Board.
- B. The Township Sexton shall assist other Township officials with the enforcement and administration of this Ordinance.
- C. The Township Sexton shall have such duties and obligations with regard to Township cemeteries as may be specified from time to time by the Township Board

**Section 19. FEES**

The Township Board shall have the authority to set fees pursuant to this Ordinance from time to time by resolution. Such fees can include, but are not limited to, a fee or fees for a burial permit, disinterment permit, grave opening, setting of foundations, grave closing, winter or holiday burial, the price for a new cemetery plot, transfer fees for cemetery plots, and other matters.



## **Section 20. APPLICABILITY OF THIS ORDINANCE**

- A. This Ordinance shall apply only to cemeteries owned, controlled or operated by the Township.
- B. The provisions of this Ordinance shall not apply to Township officials or their agents or designees involved with the upgrading, maintenance, administration or care of a Township cemetery.
- C. The provisions of this Ordinance shall not apply to police officers or firefighting officials or officers involved in carrying out their official duties.

## **Section 21. INTERPRETATION/APPEALS TO THE TOWNSHIP BOARD**

- A. The Township Board shall have the authority to render binding interpretations regarding any of the clauses, provisions or regulations contained in this Ordinance and any rule or regulation adopted pursuant to this Ordinance, as well as their applicability. The Township Board (or its designee) is also authorized to waive application of the strict letter of any provision of this Ordinance or any rules or regulations promulgated under this Ordinance where practical difficulties in carrying out the strict letter of this Ordinance or any rules or regulations related thereto would result in hardship to a particular person or persons or the public. Any such waiver, however, must be of such a character as it will not impair the purposes and intent of this Ordinance.
- B. Any party aggrieved by any interpretation or decision made by the Township Sexton or any Township official, agent or contractor pursuant to this Ordinance, as well as any matter relating to a Township cemetery, rights to a cemetery plot, or other matter arising pursuant to this Ordinance, shall have the right to appeal that determination/decision or matter to the Township Board. Any such appeal shall be in writing and shall be filed with the Township within thirty (30) days of the date of the decision, determination or other matter being appealed from. The Township shall give the aggrieved party who filed the written appeal with the Township at least ten (10) days' prior written notice of the meeting at which the Township Board will address the matter unless an emergency is involved, in which case the Township shall utilize reasonable efforts to notify the aggrieved party who filed the appeal of a special or emergency meeting of the Township Board at which the matter will be addressed. Pursuant to any such appeal, the decision of the Township Board shall be final.
- C. The Township Board may set a fee or fees for any such appeal from time to time by resolution. Fee set at adoption of the ordinance is one hundred dollars (\$100.00)

## **Section 22. AUTHORITY OF THE TOWNSHIP TO REMOVE UNAUTHORIZED OR UNLAWFUL ITEMS FROM A TOWNSHIP CEMETERY.**

Any monument, marker, planting, trellis, personal item, urn, flowers or foliage (whether real or artificial), structure, flag (except for lawful veterans flags), or other item that has been placed, installed, left or maintained in any Township cemetery in violation of this Ordinance, any Township rule or regulation regarding Township cemeteries, or any county, state or federal law, statute or regulation may be removed by the Township from the Township cemetery at any time and destroyed or disposed of by the Township without any prior notice to, permission from, or liability or obligation to the person or persons who left, installed, maintained or kept such item in the Township cemetery. No such item (including, but not limited to, a monument, marker, planting, trellis, personal item, urn, flowers or foliage, structure, flag, or similar item) can be installed, placed, maintained or kept in a Township cemetery unless expressly authorized by this Ordinance or a written rule or policy of the Township. Even if such an item is authorized to be installed, kept, maintained or left in a Township cemetery, the Township shall still have the discretion to remove any such item at any time and dispose of the same without prior notice to, consent from or liability to the person or persons who installed, maintained or left such item in a Township cemetery.

## **Section 23. PENALTIES**

A violation of this Ordinance (or of any rule or regulation adopted pursuant to this Ordinance) constitutes a municipal civil infraction. Any person who violates, disobeys, omits, neglects or refuses to comply with any provision of this Ordinance, or any permit or approval issued hereunder, or any amendment thereof, or any person who knowingly or intentionally aids or abets another person in violation of this Ordinance, shall be in violation of this Ordinance and shall be responsible for a civil infraction. The civil fine for a municipal civil infraction shall be not less than five hundred dollars (\$500.00) for the first offense and not less than one thousand dollars (\$1000.00) for subsequent offenses, in the discretion of the court, in addition to all other costs, damages, expenses and remedies provided by law. For purposes of the section, "subsequent offense" means a violation of the provisions of this Ordinance committed by the same person within twelve (12) months of a previous violation of the same provision of this Ordinance or similar provision of this Ordinance for which said person admitted responsibility or was adjudged to be responsible. Each day during which any violation continues shall be deemed a separate offense.

A violation of any permit or permit condition issued pursuant to this Ordinance shall also constitute a violation of this Ordinance.

## **Section 24. TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS WHO CAN ENFORCE THIS ORDINANCE**

Unless otherwise specified by the Township Board by resolution, the following officials or officers shall have the authority to enforce this Ordinance and to issue municipal civil infraction citations/tickets pursuant to this Ordinance:

- Township Supervisor
- Township Clerk
- Township Sexton
- Township Zoning Administrator
- Township Ordinance Enforcement Officer
- Any deputy of the county sheriff's department
- Any State Police officer

**Section 25. SEVERABILITY**

The provisions of this Ordinance are hereby declared to be severable and should any provision, section or part thereof be declared to be invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall only affect the particular provision, section or part thereof involved in such decision and shall not affect or invalidate the remainder of this Ordinance, which shall continue in full force and effect.

**Section 26. EFFECTIVE DATE; CONFLICTS**

This Ordinance shall become effective thirty (30) days after a copy of this Ordinance (or summary thereof) appears in the newspaper. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

The above Ordinance was offered for adoption by the Manlius Township Board Member Hertel and was seconded by Township Board Member Csapos the vote being as follows:

YEAS: Hertel, Lubbers, Van Gelderen, Csapos, Israels

NAYS: No

ABSENT/ABSTAIN: No

ORDINANCE DECLARED ADOPTED: June 13, 2011

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby declare that the above is a true copy of an ordinance adopted by the Manlius Township Board at a Township board meeting held on June 13, 2011 at the Manlius Township Hall, pursuant to the required statutory procedures.

Dated: June 13, 2011

Respectfully submitted,

By Kathy Lubbers Township Clerk, *cmc*