



Town of Smithfield
Department of Public Works
Cemetery Operations

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Table of Contents

- I. Brief History**
- II. Records**
- III. Town Code for Cemeteries**
- IV. Operating Procedures**
- V. Fees**

History

Historically speaking, the Town of Smithfield has been in the cemetery business since the beginnings of this great country of ours. John Smith, from whom the Town gets its name, deeded to the Town a parcel of land along the Neuse River to be used as a burial ground in 1777. This parcel is known today as Riverside Cemetery.

In the late 1800's, John D. Thomas, with his passing, gave his lands to his heirs. His will shows the first recorded information of a burial ground for his descendants. Known today as John Thomas Cemetery, this burial ground is located approximately at the intersection of Second and North Streets.

Resthaven Cemetery was once owned by the Broadhurst family. It appears to have been divided from a larger piece of property for use as a burial ground for persons of African-American descent in 1911. It is located near the end of Twelfth Street.

Realizing that Riverside could no longer be expanded in 1924, the Town Commissioners bought a 12-acre parcel of land from the Austin-Stephenson Company. They named the new cemetery Oakland. It is located north of the intersection of North and Fifth Streets.

Sunset Memorial Park, created in 1937, was a privately owned cemetery until it was given to the Town in 1980. It is located at the intersection of Highway 70 and Highway 210. Sunset along with Riverside Extension are the only cemeteries in which the Town has grave lots for sale to the general public.

Riverside Extension Cemetery is the town's newest addition, created in 2008. It is located at the intersection of Front and E Church Streets, directly across from the oldest cemetery the town owns "Riverside Cemetery". This cemetery offers a wide selection of grave purchase options to the general public. The outer perimeter wall was hand built to resemble the stonewall around Riverside Cemetery.

Records

A great number of the original records for the cemeteries owned and managed by the Town have been lost over the years. However, a good number still exist.

Though Riverside is the oldest cemetery in Smithfield, there are a number of records available for the property. The Town possesses a large number of copies of original deeds, an original lot sale record, and a map of the cemetery showing lot owners as of 1959. This map is still used today to locate lots and grave spaces. Until 1989, there were no interment records maintained for the cemetery. While the records maintained since 1989 may not contain information as to the exact location of a specific grave, they provide a starting point for those individuals wishing to research their ancestry and the location of their loved ones. The deed records have been placed in a searchable computer database for fast and easy access.

Beyond those records of the transfer of the property, no record of interments exists for John Thomas Cemetery. Additionally, there is no known map of the cemetery.

The Town maintains a number of records for Resthaven Cemetery. These records include the original lot sale record, a large number of original deed copies, and a map of the cemetery. Records of interments have been kept since 1989. While the records maintained since 1989 may not contain information as to the exact location of a specific grave, they provide a starting point for those individuals wishing to research their ancestry and the location of their loved ones. The deed and lot sale records have been placed in a searchable computer database for fast and easy access.

Records maintained by the Town for Oakland Cemetery include the original lot sale record, a large number of original deed copies, and a map of the cemetery. Records of interments have been kept since 1989. While the records maintained since 1989 may not contain information as to the exact location of a specific grave, they provide a starting point for those individuals wishing to research their ancestry and the location of their loved ones. The deed and lot sale records have been placed in a searchable computer database for fast and easy access.

The Town has, and maintains, extensive records for Sunset Memorial Park and Riverside Extension Cemeteries. These records include the original lot sale record, the original interment record, a large number of original deed copies, map of the cemeteries, and comprehensive interment information which enables Town officials to locate the exact location of all deceased persons interred in the cemeteries.

**The Town of Smithfield
Code of Ordinances**

Chapter 6

Cemeteries

Cemetery Operating Procedures

The Operating Procedures outlined herein shall apply specifically to the locating and marking of specific graves for opening/closing services. Generally, there are two procedures to follow. The procedure to follow is determined by the cemetery in which an interment is to take place.

Interment services in Riverside, Resthaven, Oakland and John Thomas require a meeting with an immediate family member of the deceased, or an individual representing the family of the deceased who has reliable information about the specific grave and/or lot into which a burial is to take place. This meeting is required to establish the specific gravesite that is to be utilized for a burial. Once this meeting has taken place, the grave is marked and the opening/closing contractor is contacted. Graves may be marked with a cone, small flags, or with ground paint.

Information regarding the orientation of bodies interred in these cemeteries indicates that bodies are to be oriented so as to have the head of the deceased placed in, or toward, the center of the lot. If this is not to be the manner of interment, the family shall notify the Town, or the individual providing the location services.

In keeping with tradition, bodies interred as outlined above should be placed so as to allow for the future burial of a surviving spouse in the appropriate location. Tradition dictates that the deceased husband with a surviving wife be interred so as to leave a space to the deceased's left. Conversely, a deceased wife with a surviving husband is to be interred so as to leave a space to the deceased's right. In other words, she should be on his left, and he should be on her right.

At Sunset Memorial Park, the orientation of the body is dependent upon the section in which a burial is to occur. Body orientation is as follows: Sections A, B, C, E, F, and the mausoleum, feet toward 70 Hwy; Sections D and G, feet toward Town. The information outlined above, regarding the location of the deceased with a surviving spouse, applies to Sunset as well.

The location of lots and graves at Sunset Memorial Park and Riverside Extension is a straightforward undertaking. If the lot number is known, it is simply a matter of looking it up on the map, and going to the cemetery and uncovering the numbered and un-numbered corner markers that are located on the outer corners of the lot. These numbered markers are usually under a few inches of soil, but have been known to be as deep as one foot. All numbered markers are on the end of the lot that joins the path which divides the double rows of lots.

If the lot number is not known, it will be necessary to meet with a family member of the deceased, an individual representing the family of the deceased who has reliable information about the specific grave and/or lot into which a burial is to take place, or review the property deed. Once the specific lot is located, it will still be necessary to uncover the numbered and un-numbered corner markers located on the outer corners of the lot to ensure the location is correct, and to obtain information needed by the opening/closing contractor. Once the grave is marked, the opening/closing contractor may be contacted. Graves may be marked with a cone, small flags, or with ground paint.

In all sections of Sunset Cemetery, with the exception of Section A, lot numbers increase from left to right. Therefore, the grave numbers within the lot increase from left to right. A four-grave lot, measuring approximately 7' X 18', is two graves wide and two graves deep. A six-grave lot, measuring approximately 11' X 18', is three graves wide and two graves deep. The actual lot area extends from the numbered marker to the next consecutive higher numbered marker to the right.

In Section A, all lot numbers increase from right to left. The individual graves are numbered from left to right. The actual lot area will be on the right-hand side of the higher numbered marker and will extend to the next consecutive lower numbered marker.

In Riverside Extension Cemetery the orientation of the bodies are feet toward S Second Street (East) and Head toward Front Street (West). Lot numbers increase from left to right. Therefore, the grave numbers within the lot increase from left to right with each grave space measuring 3.5ft X 9ft. A four-grave lot, measuring approximately 7' X 18', is two graves wide and two graves deep. In certain areas within the cemetery four grave lots are measuring approximately 14' X 9', being four graves side by side. A six-grave lot, measuring approximately 11' X 18', is three graves wide and two graves deep. The actual lot area extends from the numbered marker to the next consecutive higher numbered marker to the right.

Please use the form provided when notifying the Town of your weekend/holiday burial. Notification should be sent to the Town on the first workday following the burial. This form may be hand delivered to the Public Works Office at 231 Hospital Road, or faxed to 919-934-1688, Attention: Lenny Branch

The Town utilizes the services of Craft Digging Service for the opening and closing of graves in all Town owned cemeteries. They can be reached at (919) 735-5376. When notifying the opening/closing contractor, please provide the coordinates of the grave for burials in Sunset. For example, Section C, Lot 43, Grave 3.

If an error occurs in the marking of graves by a funeral home, for opening and closing services, it will be the responsibility of that funeral home to cover all costs associated with making the necessary corrections.

Cemetery Fees

Single Grave and Lot Sales for Sunset Memorial Park:

Single Grave	\$1,000.00
Two Grave Lot	\$2,000.00
Four Grave Lot	\$4,000.00
Six Grave Lot	\$6,000.00

Lot Sales for Riverside Extension Cemetery:

Single Grave	\$1,250.00
Two Grave Lot	\$2,500.00
Four Grave Lot	\$5,000.00
Six Grave Lot	\$7,500.00

Opening and Closing Fees:

Grave Opening/Closing	\$700.00
Burial under 36 inches in length (Including Cremation Burials)	\$400.00
Crypt Opening/Closing	\$700.00