

§3107. Abandoned cemeteries

1. Abandoned cemetery. For purposes of this section, "abandoned cemetery" means a cemetery in which no burial has been made in the previous 40 years and the lots or grave sites of which have not been maintained within the previous 10 years, except for maintenance rendered by the municipality in which the cemetery is located.

[PL 2005, c. 225, §1 (NEW).]

2. Acquisition by municipality. A municipality may acquire an abandoned cemetery, including ownership of any unoccupied lots or grave sites in the cemetery. The municipality shall use due diligence in identifying any owners of the abandoned cemetery or any of the cemetery's unoccupied lots or grave sites and provide notice to the owners of the municipality's intention to acquire the abandoned cemetery. If a municipality cannot locate an owner pursuant to this subsection, the municipality shall publish notice of its intention to acquire the abandoned cemetery for 3 successive weeks in a newspaper having general circulation in the county in which the municipality is located.

[PL 2005, c. 225, §1 (NEW).]

3. Notice. The notice required in subsection 2 must give a basic description of the abandoned cemetery by referencing the municipality's tax maps, set a date and place where objections to the acquisition of the abandoned cemetery by the municipality will be received and heard and, if there are unoccupied lots or grave sites in the abandoned cemetery, state the municipality's intention to acquire the unoccupied lots or grave sites.

[PL 2005, c. 225, §1 (NEW).]

4. Reassertion by owner. If an owner who receives notice under subsection 2 objects to the municipality's acquisition of the abandoned cemetery or an unoccupied lot or grave site in the cemetery, the owner must in writing object and reassert the owner's right of ownership over the abandoned cemetery or unoccupied lot or grave site within 14 days of the date of the notice. An owner who reasserts ownership rights under this subsection shall promptly conform to all municipal ordinances concerning the abandoned cemetery or unoccupied lot or gravesite.

[PL 2005, c. 225, §1 (NEW).]

5. Reversion to municipality. Title to an abandoned cemetery and any unoccupied lots or grave sites described in the notice required under subsection 2 reverts to the municipality if an objection by an owner of the abandoned cemetery or unoccupied lot or grave site within the cemetery is not received by the 15th day after notice is sent to an identified owner or the last notice is published in a newspaper of general circulation as required under subsection 2. After title has reverted pursuant to this subsection, the municipality shall record a confirmation of the acquisition of the abandoned cemetery, including a basic description of the cemetery referencing the municipality's tax maps, in the registry of deeds in the county in which the cemetery is located.

[PL 2005, c. 225, §1 (NEW).]

6. Maintenance of title and characteristics. Once title to an abandoned cemetery has been recorded by a municipality, that municipality shall maintain the title in perpetuity and may never transfer title to the cemetery. The municipality shall also maintain the characteristics of the cemetery with no change in use of the cemetery land.

[PL 2005, c. 225, §1 (NEW).]

7. Survey and preservation plan. Prior to acquiring an abandoned cemetery under this section, a municipality may cause a survey to be done of the cemetery for which it is acquiring title in order to ascertain the true extent of the cemetery. The municipality may develop a preservation plan with guidance from a local cemetery corporation or association and local or state archaeologists.

[PL 2005, c. 225, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2005, c. 225, §1 (NEW).

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