



KING CETSHWAYO

DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

GREEN CEMETERIES, PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

Cyril Mtambo

Present status of cemeteries



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Introduction

- *“We`ve made innovations in how we live, but what about how we`re laid to rest?, with the ever increasing environmental toll caused by traditional funerals, yet the growing modern burial movement seeks to find simpler, more graceful way of returning to earth”* Laura Yan
- In an environment where resources ,especially , land is scarce and contested
- The capacity of local authorities to provide for the disposal of the dead in a sustainable manner is challenging.
- Innovation to deal with such challenges is difficult to implement due to cultural and religious sensitivity in our community.



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Introduction cont..

- Innovation to deal with such challenges is difficult to implement due to cultural and religious sensitivity in our community.
- The subject of re-use of graves, promotion of cremations, stringent environmental controls and public resistance to changes regarding traditional practices become a muted discussion .



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Synopsis of the KCDM and its Regional Cemetery

- King Cetshwayo District Municipality formerly known as Uthungulu District Municipality is one of the 11 districts municipalities of the province of KwaZulu Natal in South Africa.
- It is named after Cetshwayo kaMphande, King of the Zulu Kingdom from 1872 to 1879, who led his nation to victory against the British in the **Battle of Isandlwana**
- The district is a home to five local municipalities: City of Umhlathuze, Umlalazi, Mthonjaneni, Nkandla and uMfolozi local municipalities.
- Regional Cemetery is approximately 20 hectares in size, but the land is not for burials only, it includes buildings, access roads, parking lots and any other areas that may be found to be Geotechnically constrained as we move along.



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Synopsis of the KCDM and its Regional Cemetery cont..

First phase of the cemetery with 5988 graves was officially opened to the public in 2005.

The areas are cleared in phases as we progress with accommodation of funerals, currently the cemetery has registered over 7000 graves, which gives an average of 325 burials each year if it is calculated under constant mortality rate in the District.

The Cemetery is completely fenced off with the latest durable High Tech Clear View Fencing which is environmental friendly and transparent for see through view and the two lockable gates for access control.



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Present Status

- Traditional burial trends
 - ✓ Burials within approved cemetery
 - ✓ Burials within unregistered/illegal cemeteries
 - ✓ Burials on private land e.g. Farms and homesteads



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Present Status Cont..

Tombstones – Memorial System

- Commonly preferred, high commercialized and popular in our communities.
- Extremely expensive
- Heavy material used (Marble and Granite) exerting pressure on the ground, therefore causing graves collapse.
- Difficulty in ground maintenance, e.g. Grass cutting and excavating in between
- Lack of appealing status
- Grave sagging



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Present Status Cont..

Administration of records

- Conventional cemetery records – Hard copy books
- ✓ Burial Register – contains columns for as many details as possible, deceased information, grave number, next of kin details and receipts numbers of fees paid towards the grave
- ✓ Grave plot/Block book – blocks or section where the grave is.
- ✓ Index books –alphabetical order of the names of those buried at the cemetery and the year of death and burial.



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Future cemeteries

LANDSCAPED ,ECO- FRIENDLY CEMETERIES

Green burials

This is a form of interment/s of the body of a dead person in the soil in a manner that does not inhibit decomposition but that allows the body to decay natural.

How can this be achieved?.

- ✓ The enforcement and the use of bio-degradable coffins
- ✓ No embalming fluids to delay dead bodies to decay
- ✓ Allow natural plants and shrubs to grow in the cemetery as they don't demand a lot of water and maintenance
- ✓ Attraction of birds life and various species of butterflies, promote Biodiversity.



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Cremation

- The process of reduction of a dead body to ashes by fire in an authorized crematorium
- ✓ It is a sustainable burial alternative
- ✓ It addresses the issue of land availability
- ✓ It addresses the issue of under ground water contamination
- ✓ Prevents Pathogenic organisms- viruses and bacteria
- ✓ Cost effective
- ✓ Ashes is kept in urns and place at the Wall of Remembrances within cemeteries and church premises, homes, buried at existing graves or scattered either on land or at sea.



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Berm system

- This is a lay out where memorials are only installed at the head of or at the end of a grave site.
- ✓ No pressure on the ground
- ✓ Easier to maintain e.g. grass cutting
- ✓ Aesthetically pleasing
- ✓ Affordable



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Electronic Data System

- **Administration of burials**
- The recording of burials is an act of recording the history of our citizens and it plays a huge role in connecting families and individuals to their past.
- Hence it becomes necessary to ensure the preservation of those records for posterity.
- The recording of the information has to be without error hence all information received must be verified and audited.
- All old registers should be scanned electronically, to ensure information is preserved, should the records perish.
- Modern technology systems are now developed and introduced to other countries and to some few municipalities which are proven to be effective e.g. GIS, Synopsis etc.



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WAY FORWARD

Future Provisions/Trends

- **Burial space limitations**
 - ✓ Land shortages (development vs burial)
 - ✓ Existing cemeteries – sterile land –limited space
- **Adoption of alternative practices**
 - ✓ Multifunction usage of cemeteries e.g. Public parks, Tourist attractions
 - ✓ Cremations
 - ✓ Mausoleums- above ground burial, Recycling and Reuse of graves by families.
 - ✓ Promession – Freezing of the body, Resomation – Alkaline hydrolysis (melting)
- **Inclusion of cemetery development in Land use Planning Framework**
- **Legal compliance of development of cemeteries , in accordance to legislation framework**
- **Public participation and orientation processes by both Administrative and Political principals.**



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FUTURE: WILL THIS STILL BE THE PLACE?





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OR THIS, A GREEN SPACE?





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Called a Memorial Park!





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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.