

Committee: Committee of the Whole – Administration & Operations

Date: October 15, 2024

Department: Administration

Topic: Roadside Memorials

Background: Concerns have recently been brought to the attention of staff regarding roadside memorials within the Township.

While some individuals believe memorials should be erected and remain in place, others feel that there may be a time limit to provide for the victims and their families to live their mourning in a restricted period. There have been growing discussions within Ontario municipalities that the roadside memorials that remain for long periods of time may cause safety concerns for both visitors and passing motorists as well as the potential reminder to first responders that continually drive by and relive some of the tragedies they had to witness.

Motor vehicle accidents are a leading cause of death in Canada and around the world. Roadside memorials are erected near the sites of the traffic fatalities, which are becoming a common way for public expression of grief and mourning. There are others in communities that see the memorials as eyesores that are either unmaintained, distracting, uncomfortable reminder of someone passing, or cause for safety concerns. In many cases, there are areas, other than the roadside where the victims and their families may continue to process and grieve their loss.

Thoughts for Committee to consider:

- Remain status quo and not interfere with roadside memorials?
- Set limitations to areas such as: time-limit, size, location, illumination etc.?
- Impact to victims and families
- Impact to first responders
- Alternative locations for memorials
- Distracted driving, unexpected stopped vehicles and pedestrians along the roadside, general roadside safety concerns
- If the roadside memorial is accidentally damaged during Township maintenance – liability and responsibility to restore?
- Ongoing maintenance of memorials

- Staff understand this is a very sensitive matter and are seeking direction from Committee if there is interest in exploring a policy for roadside memorials.



Clerk



CAO