

# STEVE TSHWETE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY



# DRAFT HEROES ACRE POLICY

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## 1. INTRODUCTION, HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1. According to *Wikipedia*, the Heroes' Acre (Afrikaans: Die *Heldeakker*; Dutch: *De Heldenakker*) is a section of Church Street Cemetery in Pretoria, South Africa. It was established in 1867, and it contains the graves of renowned citizens and public figures. It is the burial place of a number of historical figures including Andries Pretorius, Paul Kruger and Hendrik Verwoerd. Australian Boer War, war criminal Harry "Breaker" Morant (executed by the British for war crimes during the Second Anglo-Boer War) is also buried there. The central part of this historic cemetery is known as The Heroes' Acre. This is how South Africa adopted the principle of Heroes' Acre.
- 1.2. Historically those buried in a Heroes' Acre were generally uniformed personnel who died whilst on active duty, either in the military or police force. This effectively meant that such graves and the concept of Heroes' Acre became synonymous.

1.3. However, such spaces within cemeteries ignored the fact that communities experienced the need for an under range of burial to be accommodated and which would further include:

1.3.1. Acknowledged military combatants who died during the struggle against apartheid;

1.3.2. Acknowledged activists who either died during apartheid or had dedicated their lives to bringing about a democratic South Africa and who have subsequently passed away;

1.3.3. Acknowledged Heroes of late who have contributed to South Africa as a country and/or to person(s) through good deed or act in a positive manner.

## **2. PREAMBLE**

2.1. Whereas the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality intends to institute a framework and regulate how to manage and oversee the passing away of Office Bearers and / or High Profile Public members (“Heroes”).

## **3. DEFINITIONS**

3.1. “Heroes” or “Hero” – means person(s) admired for their courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities in the community or country; member of the public who is attracting or attracted a positive attention by way of doing good deeds for the betterment of the community or country; renowned citizens and public figures; historical figure; struggle veteran; freedom fighters; military combatants; activists who were active during the struggle against apartheid or had dedicated their lives to bringing about a democratic South Africa; persons who performed a heroic act on

behalf of the country and/or a spouse of such a person; a person who in life or death distinguishes oneself extraordinarily in serving the community or the country; a person who has played a vital role in the community or the country and his deeds has impacted the community or country and can be acknowledged by that community or the country for such deeds;

- 3.1.1. Such a Hero must be residing or had resided in the area of jurisdiction of the municipality and declared as such by the Executive Mayor and / or Council as Heroes or Hero;
- 3.1.2. The word(s) “Heroes” “Hero” also refers to “Heroines”.
- 3.2. “Heroes Acres” – means an area of land or cemetery set aside for the burial of a hero or heroine;
- 3.3. “Heroes’ Funeral” - means a funeral which is held to honour prominent people (usually high ranking public officials) who have given long and outstanding services to the country and/or the community within the municipality;
- 3.4. “Heroes Acre Policy” – means the official policy of the municipality that regulates the burial of Heroes;
- 3.5. “Municipality” – means Steve Tshwete Local Municipality and its geographic area determined in terms of the Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act, Act No 27 of 1998;

- 3.6. "Council" - means the Municipal Council of the Steve Tshwete Local Municipality, its legal successors in title and its delegates;

#### **4. PURPOSE**

- 4.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline the municipality's policy with regard to the burial of Heroes at the Heroes Acres.

#### **5. ELIGIBILITY**

- 5.1. The policy applies to the people declared by the Executive Mayor and / or the Council as Heroes in terms of paragraph 3.1.
- 5.2. The decision to declare a person as a Hero and / or to allow the person to be buried at the Heroes Acres is the prerogative of the Executive Mayor (or his/her nominee) and /or the Council.
- 5.3. Amongst issues to be considered by the Executive Mayor (or his/her nominee) and / or Council in determining whether to exercise this prerogative and declare a person as a hero and / or allow a person to be buried at the Heroes Acres, are the following conditions:
- 5.3.1. The deceased's public profile and standing within the community or country;

- 5.3.2. The extent and length of the deceased's service to the community or country;
- 5.3.3. The deceased's personal achievements.
- 5.4. No burial may take place in the Heroes Acres unless permission has been granted by the Executive Mayor (his/her nominee) and / or Council.

**6. PAYMENT OF BURIAL TARIFF**

- 6.1. Upon approval of the status of Hero on the deceased to be buried in the Heroes Acres, the relevant cemetery and crematorium tariff may be paid from the Mayoral Discretionary Fund.

**7. RECORD KEEPING OF DECEASED BURIALS IN HEROES ACRES**

- 7.1 Over and above the information required as per Cemetery By-Laws, the motivation of those buried as Heroes in the Heroes Acres should be included in the Municipality's burial records.

**8. DIMENSION OF GRAVE EXCAVATIONS AND ENLARGING & DEEPENING A GRAVE**

- 8.1 The current adopted Cemetery By-Laws of the municipality also applies to the dimension of the grave excavations and enlarging & deepening of a grave of Heroes.

**9. MONUMENTS, MEMORIALS AND TOMBSTONES**

- 9.1. A proposed monument for erection in the Heroes Acres must be approved in accordance with the procedures stipulated in chapter 8 of Cemeteries By-Laws of the municipality.
- 9.2. Heroes Acres requires an environment that is solemn, respectful and displays reverence.
- 9.3. Monuments, memorials and tombstones would be regularly monitored and maintained to prevent the deterioration of structures and to inhibit the growth of algae, lichen and mosses.
- 9.4. Monuments, memorials or tombstones in the Heroes Acre which have deteriorated, or have been affected by man or natural disasters, or been vandalized, would be repaired as soon as possible.
- 9.5. The sections of Cemeteries By-Laws of the municipality dealing with Gardening of Graves & objects on Graves (horticultural activities) and Memorial Works will be applicable to the Heroes Acres.

## **10. UPDATING OF DATABASE ON DECEASED HEROES**

- 10.1 Information relating to the deceased Heroes should be regularly be updated to ensure validity of information of the late heroes.
- 10.2 Such information would be made available to the public.

## **11. PROCEDURES FOR BURIAL IN THE HEROES ACRES**



11.1. GENERAL CRITERIA FOR CONFERRING “HEROES” STATUS

- 11.1.1. All ward councilors will be made aware of approved criteria for conferring Hero’s status on individuals.
- 11.1.2. The relevant ward councilor of the ward in which the deceased Hero would be buried, must submit an official request, detailing all required relevant information to the Municipal Manager, Executive Mayor (his/her nominee) and / or Council.
- 11.1.3. A standard formatted official form for the conferring of Hero Status would be made available at cemetery offices.
- 11.1.4. The request from the relevant councilor/s must reach the Director: Parks within five (5) working days prior to the intended burial ceremony.
- 11.1.5. The application will then be submitted to the Executive Mayor or his/her nominee.
- 11.1.6. All documents should comply with the approved Cemetery By-Laws.
- 11.1.7. The Executive Mayor or his/her nominee must finalise applications made in terms of this policy with two (2) working days.

11.2. INFORMATION REQUIRED WHEN APPLYING FOR BURIAL IN HEROES ACRES

- 11.2.1. The ward councilor(s) must submit a detailed motivation of the deceased’s accomplishments as measured against the approved criteria as indicated in the definition of “heroes” or “hero” in paragraph 3.1.

**12. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY**

- 12.1. The policy will be implemented after the approval by the municipal council.

- 12.2. The Corporate Services Directorate will be responsible for the implementation and annual review of this policy.
- 12.3. The policy may also be reviewed on urgent and compelling motivation by the Office of the Speaker.