

Celebrating 32 Years of Environmental Leadership in 2022!



Tuesday, July 05, 2022

Dear Mayor Fuller,

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On behalf of Green Newton, I'm writing to let you know that our group agrees with the Newton Tree Conservancy and the Newton Citizen's Commission on Energy regarding the Newton Cemetery and Arboretum's request for a waiver of the City's Tree Ordinance for its proposed expansion of burial space to the 7-acre "Knoll", we are told for the purpose of adding parking spaces for visitors, which in our view is not a justifiable reason to cut down 220 mature trees with diameters up to 40 inches. The Cemetery would plant 743 trees; however, this number falls 1558 caliper-inches short of that needed to meet Newton's tree ordinance requirement for replacement trees. The Cemetery concludes that paying the \$311,600 penalty consistent with the shortfall would be a financial hardship.

We concur with the NTC statement: "Climate Change is upon us – with the entire planet facing an unprecedented climate emergency, all citizens, governments, and businesses will need to change the way we operate. It would take 40 years for the requisite number of small-caliber trees to begin to match the current ecological benefit of the 220 mature trees the Cemetery would remove. The Cemetery's offer to plant 743 small trees falls short of the number needed to compensate for the trees being removed. While part of the area to be renovated is already a bulldozed "rocky debris field", the treed portion is the natural habitat of a mature mixed oak forest. The current ecological benefit of this forest cannot be compensated simply by adding small trees or dollars."

We suggest that the Cemetery consider sustainable burial options for the forested knoll area, reducing the number of trees to be removed. Such an approach would limit the Cemetery's liability under the Tree Ordinance, and more importantly preserve the ecological benefits of the current tree canopy. Note: [Consider Having a Green Funeral https://greennewton.org/?s=burial&post_type=post](https://greennewton.org/?s=burial&post_type=post)

We stand with Newton's Citizens Commission on Energy and the Newton Tree Conservancy in urging you to uphold the decision of Newton's Director of Urban Forestry in denying the Cemetery's request. We also urge you to ask the City Council to revise the ordinance language to clarify their intent that the Tree Preservation Ordinance not exclude any property owners from its provisions.

Thank you,

Marcia Cooper
President, Green Newton

CC: Newton Cemetery & Arboretum
City of Newton Forestry Department
City of Newton Urban Tree Commission