

Dear Committee members,

I'm writing as a North Salem resident who greatly values Greenlawn Cemetery as a place of respite and wonder. I walk in the cemetery daily and have spent many hours there with my family over the years. I volunteer with the arboretum and consider myself someone invested in the future plans of the cemetery.

I have watched the most recent video of the meeting and reviewed the pdf of the proposed plans for the slope in front of Dickson Chapel. I agree that this is a valuable piece of land that should be reimaged, but I have some concerns with the current proposals.

The addition of columbariums in any of the proposed formations seem extremely out of place in such a prominent focal part of a rural cemetery. I understand the need for more interment possibilities, but I think this is the wrong location for such cumbersome structures. In addition, I'm concerned that the grading required in the hillside will disturb the root systems of some of the important historic trees in this location. It is acknowledged in the proposal that the Chapel and its surroundings are a treasured focal point of the cemetery yet the current plans will decrease its beauty significantly.

Since the chapel is underutilized at the moment, it would be advantageous to elevate the use of the chapel in order to produce income, even more reason to prioritize the natural beauty of its surroundings. If well envisioned, Greenlawn has the potential to rise to the reputation of other rural arboretum cemeteries such as Mount Auburn Cemetery, where the chapel is even used for weddings. If large, morbid columbariums are installed right in front of the picturesque chapel, it will greatly limit the appeal of the chapel.

I heard mention of a scatter garden being designed on the slope and I think that would be a solution much more in line with the vision of the cemetery. A scatter garden would allow for an unlimited amount of internments, while possibly also leaving options for more discrete commemoration in the form of a path with engraving, a stone garden, or small flat stones in the ground.

In closing, I strongly think the safety of tree roots, preserving the natural appeal, while adding space to scatter ashes and reflect should be the priority of this special location in the cemetery.

Thank you,
Emily Goodale
Ward 6 resident