



## Newton Citizens Commission on Energy City of Newton, Massachusetts

<http://www.newtonma.gov/government/climate-and-sustainability/citizens-commission-on-energy>

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June 20, 2022

Dear Mayor Fuller,

We are writing to you regarding the Newton Cemetery' request for exemption from the Tree Preservation Ordinance. We urge you to stand with the Director of Urban Forestry in denying that request and any waiver of its consequences. 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.

The Newton Cemetery land and many of the trees the Trustees aim to clear cut were given by the government to be managed in the public interest. Adding another 15 years to the space availability at the cemetery hardly compensates for a proposed removal of 219 mature trees, many of which are hard woods, towering over 60', and have stood since before the Cemetery Corporation's Trustees were born. The proposed additional 743 new plantings will take more than two decades before they can re-establish a carbon absorption capacity approaching that of the mature 219. Until then, a waiver or exemption encouraging their removal would reduce Newton's capacity to absorb its emitted greenhouse gasses and will be a step backward in implementing Newton's Climate Action Plan.

The claim by Newton Cemetery that a precedent has been set when Mayor Warren has previously approved such an exemption is not persuasive; it essentially amounts to following one bad decision with another.

We sincerely hope that you will protect the interests of 85,000 Newton residents over the interest of a small number of families who might in the future not be able to bury their dead at Newton Cemetery. To be sure, every family the Cemetery proposes to serve by the addition of burial plots will have stopped visiting their loved ones long before the damage from killing the trees might be undone by the replacements.

Sincerely,

Halina Brown and

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Grody". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Stephen" and last name "Grody" clearly distinguishable. There is a faint watermark or text visible behind the signature that reads "Citizens Hospital 2014".

Stephen Grody  
Newton Citizens Commission on Energy