

Madame Mayor, members of City Council and staff: My name is Holly Newman, of 7300 Camino Tassajara, and I'm speaking on behalf of Friends of Tassajara Valley, an informal alliance of residents and friends united against the construction of the proposed Creekside Memorial Park cemetery in the Tassajara Valley. Tonight I'd like to address the comments made by former San Ramon mayor Abram Wilson at the Pleasanton City Council meeting on April 17.

- First, Mr. Wilson talked about the proposed cemetery as though it were a 'done deal,' but that isn't the case. A lot of problems were found with its Draft Environmental Impact Report, which was published last September. And the project has actually been formally suspended by Contra Costa County since February, due to issues with ownership of part of the site.
- Mr. Wilson is looking for Pleasanton, along with the other Tri-Valley cities, to financially support the proposed cemetery in some unspecified way. You should be aware, however, that there is a very high likelihood that this proposed cemetery would become a financial burden. In fact, this site is not really suitable for a cemetery at all - most of it is taken up by a ridge with very steep slopes, and of the existing flat areas, the largest are in a 100-year flood plain. So it would be very expensive to put a cemetery here, and also to operate it. On the income side, it could take a long time before the expected eleven hundred (1100) burials per year actually happens, since most people want to be buried in the same location where other family members are already buried. This means that it could be a financial burden for many years.
- You may be thinking, what about the lack of cemetery space in the area? Don't we need this? The answer is no. There are actually 18 cemeteries within a 15-mile radius of the

proposed cemetery, and four of these have enough capacity to meet all the expected burial needs for 50 years or more, especially given the large (and increasing) shift to cremations.

- And while most of us think of a cemetery as a peaceful, grassy, ‘open space’ kind of use, this proposed cemetery would not be like that. Its plans show that 60 acres would be developed in a fashion totally inconsistent with open space. There would be several oversized structures, totaling over 60,000 square feet, including two chapels, each with 138 seats, plus about 13 acres of impervious area (such as roads and parking lots for 82 cars). This kind of massive urban development is not the best use for the Tassajara Valley.
- In addition, this proposed cemetery would destroy a prominent ridgeline that is visible up and down Camino Tassajara and from the Windemere Hidden Valley trail, by removing up to 30 feet from the top and putting cemetery structures on the new, flat surface.
- And last but not least, its water use would be huge and unsustainable. The DEIR states it would be a “significant and unavoidable” environmental impact, even after mitigation.

To conclude, given all of the pressing needs that you, the City Council, are trying to address in these difficult times, it makes no sense for you to commit any of the City’s money, or the taxpayer’s money, on this environmentally flawed, unneeded, and financially risky proposal.

Don’t fall for this “pig in a poke”!

We’d be happy to meet with you to discuss this further. The handouts I’m giving to the City Clerk have additional details and also our website (www.stopthecemetery.org) and email address (owls@stopthecemetery.org). Thank you.